

Beacon Lights

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*“God is a Spirit: and they that
worship him must worship him
in spirit and in truth.”*

John 4:24

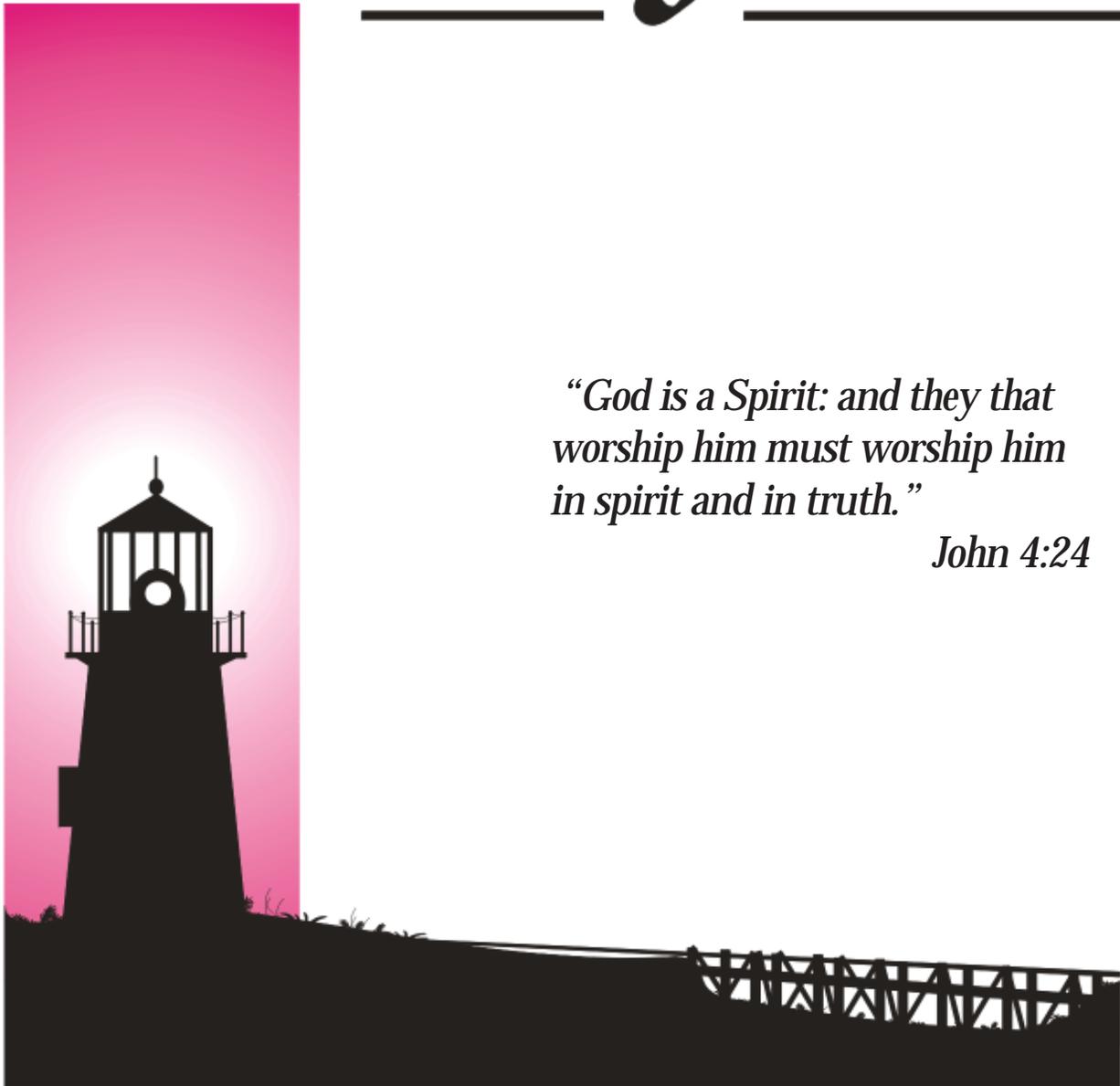


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Mega-churches: A Manifestation of the Spirit of the Age (2)



by Aaron J. Cleveland

In the last article we noticed the mega-church characteristic of a lack of clearly defined doctrine. In this article we intend to examine another characteristic which mega-churches in general possess a contemporary style of worship.

The following excerpts have been taken from an article in *The Christian Science Monitor*. The lifted quotes detail the style of worship found at Lakewood Church, America's largest mega-church in Houston, Texas.

After a rousing live performance of "Jesus is better than life," broadcast over three Jumbotrons in the Compaq Center, Victoria Osteen steps to the podium in front of 16,000 cheering Sunday worshipers and proclaims: "We're going to rock today. This place has been rocked a lot of times, but it's never been rocked for Jesus."

At Lakewood's recent groundbreaking services, Pastor Joel Osteen's sermon—given like a motivation speech—included phrases like: "Keep a good attitude. Don't get negative or bitter. Be determined. Shake it off and step up."

Worked into a frenzy by the 10-piece band and 300-member choir, dozens of slick music videos and, yes, the wave, congregants were enraptured. "We love it. We don't miss a Sunday," says Annette Ramirez, sitting in the arena's front row with her husband Joe. "The message is always very positive and the music is great."¹

Another article, found in *Forbes.com*, examines the marketing aspect of services at Lakewood Church. One paragraph reads,

As for the services themselves, Lakewood makes sure to put on a grand show. It has a 12-piece stage band, a lighting designer to set the mood and three large projection screens. The technology will be even more spectacular when it moves into its new home in the former Houston Rocket's stadium. "We really want it to feel like a concert," says Duncan Dodds, Lakewood's executive director. Something is working: Church attendance has grown from 6,000 in 1999 when Osteen became pastor to 25,060 today.²

The same article also refers to the founding of Willow Creek Community Church in 1975 in South Barrington, Illinois. As mentioned in the first article, founder and current pastor Bill Hybels went door to door asking people what kept them away from church. Using the answers, "Hybels then crafted his services to address their concerns, becoming one of the first pastors to use video, drama and contemporary music in church and encouraging a more casual dress code."³ Today, Willow Creek has 500 part and

full-time employees. Through the sponsoring of conferences and seminars and the publishing of literature, the Willow Creek Association teaches other churches how to market themselves in their communities. Thousands of churches belong to this association and put into practice, to one degree or another, the techniques used at Willow Creek.

There are two things which we must notice about the contemporary style of worship which characterizes the services of many mega-churches. First, these services are said to be “seeker sensitive.” A “seeker” is supposedly one with little or no church up-bringing, yet is seeking fulfillment in his life and has come to feel needs that must be satisfied and certain questions about life that must be answered. Not finding fulfillment or the answers to his questions anywhere else in the world, he looks to the church to address his needs. That a service is “sensitive” to the needs of the “seeker” means that the worship service must be as attractive as possible to the non-churched “seeker” who walks into the church for the first time. In other words, the atmosphere of the service must be “as un-churchlike as possible.”⁴ That which is church-like is done away with and is replaced with as much of popular culture as possible, including contemporary music, drama, and theater-like surroundings. Because the atmosphere of the service so closely resembles the experiences which the “seeker” has in the world, he does not find his visit to church intimidating or offensive and is willing to listen to the message offered by the pastor. Perhaps, because of the emotional fulfillment he experiences during the service, he will return and over time be attracted more to the messages he hears and become involved in the church.

The second thing we must notice about this contemporary style of worship is its purpose. One may think that the purpose of a worship service is to worship God. Yet, it becomes very evident as one examines contemporary worship that its proponents see church growth as the primary purpose of gathering on the Lord’s Day. Man, not God, is the object of the service. The worship service is not a gathering of God’s people assembled to have covenant fellowship with Him, but a grand theatrical production designed to entertain the audience and get as many newcomers as possible to come through the doors.

Prof. Barry Gritters explains this error of contemporary worship as its failure to distinguish between mission work and worship. He writes,

A third error is that these contemporary services do not distinguish between mission work and worship. Mission work and trying to preach to unbelievers is one thing. Public worship is quite another. Those who advocate contemporary worship, appealing to the example of Jesus on the seaside and Philip in a chariot, are making a simple but fundamental mistake; they confuse evangelism with public worship of the gathered people of God.⁵

The gravest error of contemporary worship is that preaching is pushed into the background. The fact that many mega-churches lack clearly defined doctrine is no surprise. They do not intend to preach doctrine. Their attendees do not want to hear it, and so the worship consists of what the people want to see and hear. How God is worshipped and what the elements of that worship are to be are determined by the desires of the people.

worship consists of what the
people want to see and hear.

As Reformed believers, we are familiar with the regulative principle of worship. This principle states that God is the one who sets forth in His Word how He will be worshipped by His church in public worship. Prof. David Engelsma defines the regulative principle as follows:

God regulates worship by clearly prescribing in his Word what his worship must consist of. God himself tells us *how* to worship him. This *how* refers to the inner, spiritual disposition of the worshippers: “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). It also refers to the elements of the service of worship: the preaching of the gospel; the two sacraments, rightly administered; prayers and congregational singing; and the offerings, especially for the poor.⁶

Any worship which sets aside elements commanded in God's Word and substitutes in their place elements which men find pleasing is despised by God. The Heidelberg Catechism, in its explanation of the second commandment, states that we may not "worship him [God] in any other way than he has commanded in his word" (Q & A 96). Those who disobey this command must answer to, "a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate" Him." Those who rightly worship God and keep His commandments experience His mercy (2nd commandment).

We must not be ignorant about what is going on in the church world regarding contemporary and "seeker sensitive" worship. In many ways, this kind of worship is calculated to draw young people out of the true church and into apostatizing churches. For those who are not firmly grounded in the truth, the lure can be very strong. It can seem that the excitement found in these churches is an indication that God is at work in them. Can 10,000 people be that mistaken about how to worship God? Is the truth purely preached that important? These people are excited; they are living for the Lord; they're out making a difference in the world.

Yet, the truth of God's Word opposes contemporary worship and its shunning of preaching. God is pleased to save His people by the preaching of the gospel (Rom. 10: 14, 15; I Cor. 1: 17-31). He does

not use drama, worldly-wise messages, or praise songs as means of grace. There ought to be no doubt that drama, contemporary music, and relevant messages are effective tools in "growing" a church, but they certainly are not used by God in the gathering of *His* people into the *true* church. Neither do they serve to strengthen the faith of those already members of the church. Excitement in these churches is not an indication of the work of the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit is present only where His Word is faithfully preached. The child of God must not be tempted to leave a church

where the truth is preached and where God is rightly worshipped and join another where the marks of the true church are not found. As our Belgic Confession states, our duty is to join ourselves to or remain members of the true church. That church is known by the preaching of the "pure doctrine of the gospel," the "pure administration of the sacraments," and the exercise of church discipline (Art. 29).

Having considered these two primary characteristics of mega-churches, next time, Lord willing, we hope to look at mega-church organization, leadership, and membership. ❖

...drama, contemporary music, and relevant messages are effective tools in "growing" a church, but they certainly are not used by God in the gathering of *His* people into the *true* church.

Footnotes

¹ Kris Axtman. (2003, December 30). The rise of the American megachurch. Csmonitor.com, Retrieved March 15, 2005, from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/1230/p01s04-ussc.html>.

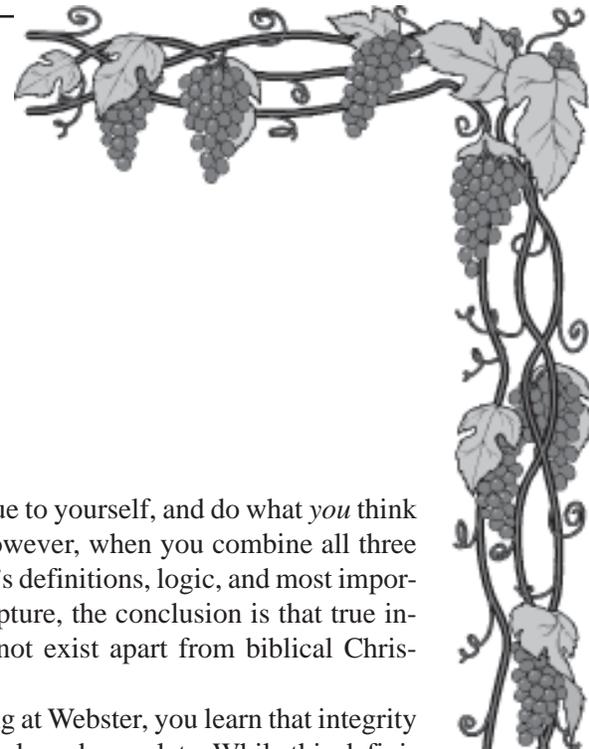
² Luisa Kroll. (2003, September 17). Megachurches, Megabusineses. *Forbes.com*, Retrieved March 5, 2005, from http://www.forbes.com/2003/09/17/cz_1k_0917megachurch.html.

³ Luisa Kroll. Megachurches, Megabusineses.

⁴ Barry Gritters, David J. Engelsma, and Charles Terpstra, *Reformed Worship*, (Reformed Free Publishing Association, Grandville, MI, 2004) p. 29.

⁵ Barry Gritters, p. 37.

⁶ David Engelsma, p. 2.



Integrity

by Lisa Baldwin

What is integrity? Webster defines it as “steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code,” “the state of being unimpaired; soundness,” and “the quality or condition of being whole or undivided; completeness.” When I looked up quotes on the Internet about integrity, however, almost all of them were about being true to yourself or being honest. If you had asked me before I read Webster, I would have told you I thought integrity was honesty. I have now come to a new conclusion. Integrity is more than telling the truth. Integrity is more than believing in yourself. Integrity is belief in the absolute Truth, and acting on this belief. As Peter Scotese, a successful business man, has said, “Integrity is not a 90 percent thing, not a 95 percent thing; either you have it or you don’t.” Either you believe the truth, and act accordingly, or you don’t. Either you are whole, complete, and sound, or you are empty.

When you look at Webster’s first definition, you come to the conclusion that integrity is morally relative. Integrity is holding to *a* moral code. This does not specify if there is one true moral code or 500 ethical codes that are possible to follow. The moral code established by the Bible and the code written in the Koran are two entirely different moral and ethical codes. However, ac-

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According to Webster, Islamic terrorists have integrity if they follow their moral code and commit acts of jihad. This is an extreme example, but it follows the same principle that many Americans accept. It follows the principle of the world’s definition of integrity: follow your

heart, be true to yourself, and do what *you* think is right. However, when you combine all three of Webster’s definitions, logic, and most importantly, Scripture, the conclusion is that true integrity cannot exist apart from biblical Christianity.

Looking at Webster, you learn that integrity must be whole and complete. While this definition was not written to apply to people, it is applicable. Gold, for example, is considered to have integrity if it is pure gold. Similarly, people have integrity if they are wholly dedicated to the truth. True integrity is holding to the one, true moral code and devoting yourself to following it. You must wholly and undividedly serve the truth. All people will admit that hypocrites do not have integrity. Everyone recognizes that in order to have integrity, you must act according to what you say.

The concept of integrity demands that there is absolute truth. Integrity does not allow for moral relativism. According to moral relativism, there is no truth and every man needs to decide for himself what is right. However, to have integrity, you must hold to truth. If you are holding to your own moral code, but it is not truth, you are holding to a lie. You are living a lie, and you are not in a state of “soundness.” The concept of integrity demands absolute truth. To have integrity, you must not only hold to absolute truth, you must act according to the truth.

To have integrity, you must not only hold to absolute truth, you must act according to the truth.

Isaiah 12— A Psalm

*Lord I will Thee praise
For I have been restored,
Thine anger turned away,
Thy comfort given, Lord.*

*My strength and song Thou art
And my salvation, Who
Will keep me from all fears
And give me hope anew.*

*Jehovah will I praise
For from salvation's wells
He makes me draw pure water,
As with my soul He dwells.*

*Praise the Lord with me
And call upon His name;
Declare His mighty acts
His wonders then proclaim.*

*Sing unto God on high,
His excellence display;
Let all the earth acclaim
His glory day by day.*

*O Zion, shout aloud
And of His greatness sing;
The Holy One of Israel
Within thee dwells: **The King!***

Thelma Westra

Jesus Christ said in John 14:6, "I am *the* way, *the* truth, and *the* life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me (emphasis added)." Jesus Christ is the absolute truth that is to guide our lives. Jesus did not say He was a way or a truth. He is the one and only standard by which we are to guide our lives. According to the conclusions previously made, integrity demands absolute truth. Christ is the absolute truth. Integrity demands belief in absolute truth. Integrity demands dedicating your entire life to following the truth. Christ has commanded in Ephesians 4:22-24, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." To obey Christ, our entire life should be changed. If you have integrity, you must not only believe in Christ as the way, you must live according to His moral code. Christ taught in Matthew 16:24, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." True integrity requires believing and following the Truth. Integrity is following Christ with your whole heart.

For as long as I can remember, I have been taught to follow Jesus Christ. My parents have taught me to serve Christ with my whole heart. I have also been taught the vitality of believing in Christ. As it says in John 3:16, 18, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.... He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Integrity is vital. Without integrity, and following Jesus Christ, you will be eternally condemned and separated from God. For as long as I can remember, I have desired to live close to God. As a result, integrity governs my life, as I want to live a life honoring and pleasing to my Lord and Savior. ❖

Lisa wrote this essay for a literature class.

Rev. C. Hanko

Chapter 2

Grand Rapids, Michigan

edited by Karen Van Baren

Editor’s Note: *In this chapter, Rev. Hanko takes us inside the Dutch enclaves of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The reader must understand that the Dutch banded together by the province from which they had come when they settled in this country. Thus we have the “Groninger Buurt,” or the neighborhood settled by many of the people from the province of Groningen. As you read, you will not find mention of any of the modern franchises and chains. All businesses were family owned and operated. Often the family took up residence behind their business.*

All of southeast Grand Rapids was divided into three parts. To the south of us were the Friesians, who occupied the “Oakdale Park area”, around Hall street. To the north of us, in the “Brick Yard,” were the “Zeeuws.”¹ They occupied the area around Fulton Street.

We lived in the “Groninger Buurt” in the area chiefly bounded by Eastern Avenue to the west, Fuller Avenue to the east, Franklin Street to the south and Wealthy to the north.

Our house was 903 Ella Avenue, which was later changed to 1065 Bemis Street. This was a very narrow street, with the sidewalk along the road. On the south side of the street were mostly barns, since the streets were so close together. Down on the corner of Diamond and Bemis was Baxter Christian School; beyond that was the black section, and on the corner of Bemis and Eastern stood our church.

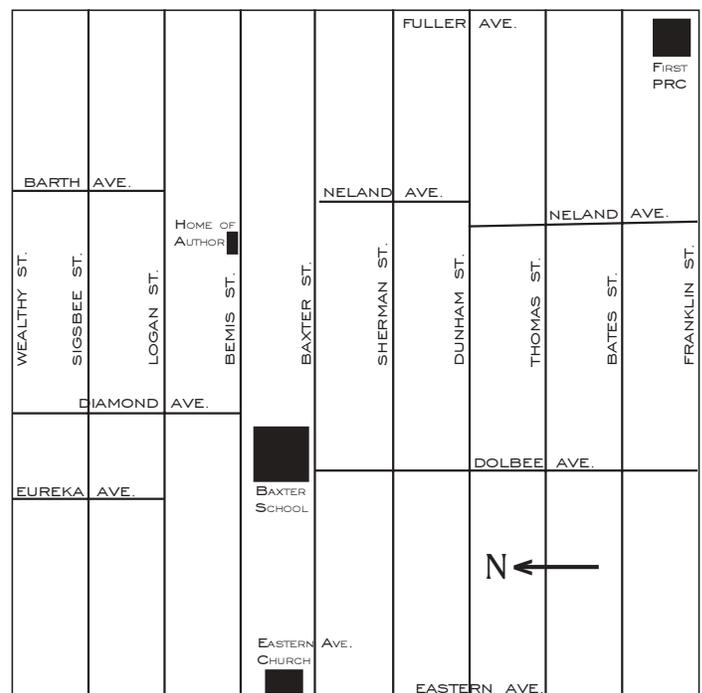
Fuller Avenue was the eastern boundary of the city. Beyond the city boundaries lay pastureland and trees. Every day we saw cows passing our house to be pastured beyond the city limits. At Dunham Street we would enter the woods, which extended all the way to the golf course, which is now East Grand Rapids. When Calvin College was built, it stood out in the woods. At Franklin Street we entered the sandy area, full of sand burrs, that

brought us to the sand banks where later Adams Street Christian School was built. Beyond the school were a brick factory and Silver Creek, where we children hunted for polliwogs.

Eastern Avenue was our main shopping center. Mainly the west side of the street was lined with stores from Franklin to a little beyond Logan Street.

On the corner of Franklin and Eastern stood the grocery store of “Oom Bakker,” related somehow to my mother. Going north was Pastoor’s meat market, then Kuiper’s Smithy. Next to that was Zaagman’s funeral home.

On the corner of Dunham was Kolkman’s furniture store, then a few houses with a tobacco store next door. Then one came to Kok’s bakery, Hoorn’s book store,



Map of “Groninger Buurt”

Zondag's bakery, Vander Laan's meat market, and on the corner of Sherman, Vander Veen's grocery.

On the north corner of Sherman stood a drug store, then Kwant's Dutch supply store. On the corner of Baxter was a paint store, with a barbershop next door, and then Vrouw Knol's ladies' hat shop.²

North of that, across from Vander Veen Court, stood a bank, then Eerdmans' bookstore, Hoeksema's shoe store (of which we will hear later). On the corner of Logan was Hamstra's tin shop, also significant in the history of 1924.

The only store beyond that was a very small place where Noordewier had his shoe shop.

On the east side of Eastern Avenue between Baxter and Sherman was Trompen's clothing store, a barber shop run by a black man, Carter, and Zins drug store on the corner of Sherman Street, Carter and Zins being the only two non-Hollanders in the neighborhood.

Across from Zins on the southeast corner stood Steel's lumberyard, in front of which was a watering trough for horses, like those seen around the city. Exactly one block south of that was the dormitory for the Calvin Seminary students, where my sister Lucy later worked.

On the northeast corner of Eastern Avenue and Bemis Street stood the Christian Reformed Church that was the center of attention in the 1924 controversy. On the south side of the street was the parsonage, where Rev. Groen lived.

Although Eastern Avenue was considered the shopping center, there were also many small neighborhood stores in the area. On Logan Street, beginning close to Eastern Avenue and going east, there was a hay and feed store; about a half block down was a grocery store (at one time run by Rich Newhouse and Bert Korhorn); next to it was located Vander Wagon's shoe store. A short distance farther one came to Wiersma's grocery store, located in front of his house, having a bell hanging over the door, which called him from the house whenever a customer arrived. Beyond Diamond Avenue, on the other side of the street, was Van Winsheim's front room grocery, and then not far from Fuller was another small grocery store. These stores had square boxes of cookies, mustard in a crock, sugar, vinegar, molasses and kerosene in large barrels.

But one was not compelled to go from Bemis to Logan Street for neighborhood shopping if one did not desire that, for on Baxter street, across from Baxter Christian School, on the south side was Hulst's grocery store.

Also on the northeast corner of Diamond and Baxter was De Vos' grocery store. The owner was the grandfather of Rich De Vos from Amway Corporation. He often served as elder in Eastern Avenue Church and First Church. A half block north was Westra's grocery. These three stores sold penny candy. Across the street one could visit the dry goods store of Nieboer and the meat market of Monsma.

Even so, the mother in the home usually did not go that far to obtain supplies for the needs of her family. Milk was delivered at the door every day, except Sunday. Those close to the dairy received their milk from a can poured into one of their pans. On Tuesday the fish peddler came by blowing his horn. Also the Polish banana peddler with his two-wheeled cart shouting his loud "Bananaaa," would drive by. On one of these days Kooistra came with his little pad and stub of a pencil which went into his mouth every time he was ready to write down an order. Later in the day he delivered his groceries in a little cart. Most any time one could also expect a visit from Oebele Westra, who slaughtered cows and delivered large slabs of pot roast in a basket covered with a bloody towel. He was not what one would call neat in his appearance. One received the impression that he had not changed his clothing after slaughtering the cow. His grunt always attracted our interest.

Then toward the end of the week the bakery wagon would stop, and the vegetable peddler would come by with his "Appois, tatoes, all kinds of vegebles." The oilman, the iceman, the beer wagon, and many others made their deliveries. All morning long the housewife stood ready with her coin purse. And the ice cream wagon with its shrill whistle came every so often to lure the kids of the neighborhood. On our street he had very few, if any, customers.

There were also the sprinkle wagon to settle the dust on the dirt streets, the man who swept up the horse manure, and the men from the honey wagon who from time to time came to clean out the outhouses.

We must not forget that there were very few automobiles. Not many families owned one. The common means of transportation was the horse and wagon. We had a chestnut colored horse, a wagon for the paint equipment of my father, and a buggy for special occasions. On Labor Day for example, the one-seated buggy would come out and we would ride to the mission festival on the north end of the city. There was a large, decorated wagon that served as a platform for the band and for the speakers. There were also confection stands for the children.

When winter settled in, the wagons were converted into sleighs. The wheels were removed and the runners attached to make it possible to travel on the snow covered streets. The man for whom I worked had a box sled to peddle milk in the winter. A lantern was placed in the center and the milk cases were covered with blankets. The deliveryman sat fully exposed to the wind and cold.

All the fire engines in the city were horse drawn. The firemen had their sleeping quarters upstairs and slid down a pole when the fire bell rang. The horses were in stables behind the engines. The harness hung in front of the engines, ready to be dropped and tied to the horse. Soon these stately horses were dashing on the way. Two pulled the ladder wagon and two the steam engine. If a large fire was expected a fireman began already along the way to build a fire in the boiler to get up steam, which added pressure to the fire hoses. A fire always drew a large crowd of spectators.

It was a thrill for the boys to go to a busy street, like Eastern Avenue, and ride people's sleighs by standing on the runners. Often the driver did not appreciate having riders so that one eye always had to be alert for a sudden sweep of the whip. But who would want to miss the fun of a free ride?

Into this turn of the century Grand Rapids I was born. ❖

Footnotes

¹ The Friesians were from Friesland, a province in the north part of the Netherlands. The Zeeuws were from Zeeland, a province in the south.

² Vrouw is Dutch for Madame.

Karen is a member of Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois, and a granddaughter of Rev. C. Hanko.

Church Family

A Church/School Dilemma

by Anonymous

The Christian day school is a mainstay of our Reformed heritage. History has shown that when the school is present the church will flourish. What a blessing when church, home and school work together in the rearing of covenant youth. But has it become a reality for many of us that our life is being lived out of the school as opposed to out of the church? Have Protestant Reformed schools taken preeminence over Protestant Reformed churches?

Could an unwavering commitment to Protestant Reformed schools actually be damaging our denomination as a whole? Absurd? Think about it. We establish a home mission, begin, or welcome into the denomination a new congregation and the little group begins to grow in its knowledge of the Reformed truths. Along with this increased knowledge comes a concern for the education of the covenant youth of the congregation. How long before some of the young families start moving away to where we have schools established? Do we encourage such moves? This small congregation will continue to struggle for existence until, eventually, it too can estab-

lish a school of its own. But as long as the young families continue to move away, a school will never be established. Perhaps the church will eventually need to disband. A beacon of light has been extinguished within the darkness.

There is a trend of families leaving our smaller congregations which do not have Protestant Reformed schools within their vicinity. Once a family has children which reach school age, or high school age if no PR high school is available, families are moving "back" to where our schools are located. What devastating effects this has on our mission efforts. What is realistically going to happen to our smaller congregations as the years go on? You can not have congregations comprised of the elderly, the single and the infertile. Will we eventually be a denomination located in only three areas of the United States? God forbid!

If a job was available, would we be willing to live in an area where there is a solid Protestant Reformed church but not a PR school? What about our ministers? Are those with young families willing to take a call to a church if a

school is not present? If not, then maybe we need to re-evaluate how our work is being done. Perhaps we should not allow the establishment of churches if we do not begin a school simultaneously. Ridiculous or realistic?

Has the school also come to take a more important place than that of the home in the raising of our covenant youth? At first glance, the man who is willing to commute 1-2 hours one way to work each day so his children can attend a PR school is making a noble sacrifice. But all those hours add up to time when that father is not home leading his family. Can the school compensate for that loss? Now, what if another PR church is located close by that place of employment but there is not a school? Again I ask, will we be a denomination located in just three areas of the United States?

The reason usually given when a young family chooses to move to where there is a PR school is that they are concerned about the future of their children. I guarantee you, we are all concerned for the future of our covenant youth. It is an impossible task, apart from the grace of God, to bring up godly children in today's world

regardless of what school they attend. But are we placing a sinful confidence upon our Protestant Reformed schools? I hope the parent who drops their child off at the PR school every morning prays for God's watchful eye upon that child as fervently as the parent whose child is going to the local non-PR Christian school. Do the parents of the PR schools discuss with and quiz their children about their daily Bible lessons as thoroughly as the parents whose children are attending a Baptist or Presbyterian school? Do the parents of the PR schooled children pray for God's never failing grace upon their children as sincerely as the homeschooling mother who faces her own weaknesses morning after morning? God forbid our Protestant Reformed schools ever give us an excuse to become lazy in the rearing of our own children.

What a blessing God has given us in the establishment of many of our own schools. May they never stand in the way of the spreading of the Gospel or the establishment and growth of true Reformed churches. ❖

Where We Stand

Rescuing the Unwanted

by Bruce Koole

At college or public high schools, students will soon need to confront the abortion industry and take a stand for the sanctity of all types of human life. They will be called simpletons and worse, but a witness for God's sake needs to be made. As a product of this debate, the need for Protestant Reformed Christian schools and high schools could never be the more pressing.

Without further introduction, we quote almost verbatim the following editorial from the "The Week" feature in the April 11, 2005 edition of *National Review* magazine (a bi-monthly),

The [so-called] Rev. Joanna Jepson, [a female] Anglican curate, asked the courts to investigate the 2001 abortion of a 28-week-old fetus with a cleft lip and palate. English law permits abortion after the 24th week only in case of children with a "seri-

ous handicap." Two doctors decided that the condition was serious, but the Reverend Jepson has reason to disagree. She was born with a jaw defect, and her brother has Down syndrome, yet both of them, she believes, have led full and satisfying lives. "The baby in this case did not have this opportunity." The courts have now dismissed...Jepson's complaint, recalling another Anglican, C. S. Lewis, who argued that mankind's power over nature, if it were ever achieved, would mean the power of one generation over all who followed.

That the Anglican Church installs, and *National Review* approves of, female office bearers is a sad testament to their unbiblical stands. It is also disappointing that only one person stood up to protest the action.

Lest you think that such an event is an isolated case, be assured that your children will confront these ideas in their public high schools and universities. One ex-

ample is revealed in the column of Editor Kathryn Jean Lopez' "Mercy!" column, a March 30, 2005 *National Review Online* article at <http://www.nationalreview.com/lopez/lopez200503300755.asp>. In the article she rebukes tenured bioethics professor Peter Singer of Princeton University for promoting infant euthanasia through his book *Practical Ethics*. Singer writes,

killing a defective infant is not morally equivalent to killing a person. Sometimes it is not wrong at all...Newborn human babies have no sense of their own existence over time.

After pointing out that we are talking about "out-of-the-womb, mom-has-delivered, right-here-with-you-and-me babies" Lopez chastises the administrators of P.U. (pun intended) for having hired Singer, since they knew at the time of initial employment of what his stand consisted.

Lopez points out that in Europe such ideas have taken hold with deadly consequence. For example, reports out of France indicate that 73% of doctors have "admitted to using drugs to end an infant's life," while Associated Press dispatches state that in the Netherlands "at least five newborn mercy killings occur for every one reported." She summarizes the attitude of many Dutch doctors in the following section:

Writing in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, two doctors from the University Medical Center, Groningen in the Netherlands confessed that "it is difficult to define" who, among infants, can or should be eliminated. Babies, obviously, can't tell you their pain is unbearable, so it becomes incumbent on "parents and medical experts" to determine what "hopeless" means.

With tongue-in-cheek Lopez points out that Dutch Law makes the mercy killing of babies illegal.

Lopez next examines Australian Resident Philip Nitschke, president of the Voluntary Euthanasia Research Foundation in Australia, who urged euthanasia "for anyone who wants it, including the depressed, the elderly bereaved, [and] the troubled teen." Nitschke also planned in 2001 a "euthanasia boat"—in the model of the 'abortion boat' that sails international waters to provide abortion to those women who live in countries where the procedure is illegal. He has rightfully been given the nickname "Dr. Death."

She ends in the USA. Way back in 1915, Chicago, Illinois doctor Harry J. Haiselden allowed the Bollinger baby, who would have lived with surgery, to die. It gets

worse. Haiselden later admitted that he had refused operation for many other 'defective babies,' thereby killing them too. His swan song was the propaganda film, *The Black Stork*, which attempted to popularize euthanasia and infant euthanasia.

Ninety years later he seems to have succeeded to a measurable degree as more than 42,000,000 babies have been aborted during the 32 years since SCOTUS (Supreme Court of the United States) ruled in favor of abortions. The year was 1973, the case was *Roe v. Wade*, and a majority of the justices ruled that the American Constitution allowed for abortions. Jane Roe has repented of her actions. America has not. Pat Buchanan shows in "The Execution of Terry Schavio," his April 4, 2005 WorldNetDaily column http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=43626.

In America, 3 in 10 in the dawn of life never see the light of day. They are destroyed in the womb because their existence embarrasses or would encumber their parents. In the twilight of life, we have begun to provide our elderly ill with the means of assisted suicide. In Europe, euthanasia has become involuntary in some nursing homes. In the shadows of life—the sick, the needy, the handicapped—there is now in this land once called "God's country" a chance the state will put you to death.... We have turned a sad page in the history of America's decline.

Unintended children are an embarrassment with the aged and dying being unwanted. Such are the tender mercies of the wicked. As a brief side note, more will be written on Mrs. Schavio in some future column.

One scriptural passage having application here is Matthew 18:6, wherein Christ instructs his disciples,

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Jesus will come and judge those who do not repent for killing the innocent. One can safely utter to such unrepentant monsters, "Maranatha," which being interpreted is "The LORD is coming." The question is, will the youth speak out at their public universities and high schools to witness that abortion is murder, (one could use Jane Roe for an example)? God's honor demands it.



Bruce is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.

Watching Daily At My Gates

by John Huizenga

Many of you have used the devotionals and we hope to continue providing good devotional material in the future. Writing them, however, is a very big job, especially when one works on four months worth of material. Even writing one month is a lot of work, but it is also very rewarding. I would really like to encourage anyone who has thought at all about writing devotionals, to give it a try. Even if you are willing to commit to a half a month, or could work with some friends to write a month, it would be appreciated. The men who have been writing have put in a tremendous amount of work and it has been much appreciated. They would welcome some help with this work.

This month I have chosen some topics that I have used in devotions with my sixth through eighth grade students.

Arguments with others

June 1 Read 2 Timothy 2:22-26

This week we will meditate upon some passages of God's word that warn us against ungodly arguments with others. So often our arguments are centered around "foolish and unlearned questions." The issue itself is really not that important, and what is really at stake is our pride. No one wants to back down, because that would look weak. We are more concerned about ourselves and not the glory of God. God tells us to avoid these questions. A wise person can see from the start the essence of such an argument and avoids it altogether. Pray for such strength and wisdom. Sing Psalter 80:1, 11 & 12.

June 2 Read Acts 9:26-31

Arguing about whether or not my idea or action is better than yours is an argument that is often rooted in pride, but not every argument is wrong. If our genuine goal is to bring another to a better understanding of a particular truth of God, or a debate is established to bring out the truth of God's word, then we give glory to God. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Proverbs 27:17. Paul went boldly in the true knowledge of God to confront unbelievers with the truth. He did not go in pride. Let this be our motive, and let us also be humble and ready to concede our mistake when we are proven wrong. Sing Psalter 21.

June 3 Read 1 Timothy 6:1-6

Sometimes our arguments rage around a single word. Here again we could look at a hundred different scenarios. Some criticize the church for destroying unity over debates about the meaning of a single word or even a single letter while overlooking the general plain teaching of Christ. Here again, pride shows itself when such a doting over words has as its motive the desire to justify a lifestyle that is contrary to God's word. Our depraved minds, acting as children of the devil himself, are masters at twisting the meanings of words to suit our own desire. Let us flee this trap and cling to the cross. Sing Psalter 151.

June 4 Read Titus 3:1-11

"But avoid foolish questions." Questions are asked for many different reasons. Some are good and profitable, but others are foolish and unprofitable. Foolish questions are often asked with the motive of raising an issue that will lead to strife. Perhaps we use a question to raise a controversial topic and we enjoy seeing others get riled up. Perhaps we raise a question that will serve to put someone down while we are lifted up in pride. We need to be careful every time we open our mouths to speak, and this includes asking questions. Ask yourself, "Why am I asking this question?" Will it be profitable? Sing Psalter 329.

Imitators of Christ

June 5 Read Ephesians 5:1-12

The word "followers" in verse one is a translation of a word that has the idea of being an imitator. Just as children imitate their father, so we are imitators "of God, as dear children;" How can we imitate God? We, of course, do not imagine that we are God and pretend to be a sovereign ruler. The next verse explains very plainly what we are to do. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." Pray for grace to look up to your heavenly Father and walk today as a child of His. Will those around you recognize you as a child of God? Sing Psalter 359.

June 6 Read Leviticus 11:43-45

Yesterday we noticed that we imitate God when we walk in love. In what other way must we imitate God? One important lesson that the children of Israel had to learn was to

be holy, even as their covenant God is holy. I believe the basic idea here behind the term holy is to be separate from everything else: all the other people who were not chosen out of fallen humanity, all that was left defiled with sin. God had chosen His people. He had redeemed them from death. To look back and long for the old life would be spiritual adultery. To reinforce this concept, God gave various laws to remind and teach His people the concept of separation. Do you flee temptation, or do you get as close to the dirt as possible? Be holy, even as God is holy. Sing Psalter 24.

June 7 Read Matthew 5:43-48

As imitators of our Father, we must walk in love, be holy, and in this word of God, we must be perfect. Yes, we must be perfect. Does this mean we must avoid doing anything wrong? It is more than that. To be perfect involves positive action on our part. We saw earlier that we must walk in love. But even that stops short at the real test. Even the publicans and sinners will love. What is that love of God that we must imitate? God loved us while we were yet enemies. We were in union with the Devil himself. Do you have that kind of love in your heart? Do you love that one who cut you down, who slandered you, who desires to rub you in the mud every chance he gets? By grace alone this sort of love begins to find a place in the heart of a child of God. Pray for that grace. Sing Psalter 35.

June 8 Read Luke 6:27-36

When we try to imitate God as our Father, we begin to realize how far short we fall and how great our God is. Today we are called to be merciful even as God is merciful. This mercy is closely tied to the concept of loving our enemies but is applied here in the area of giving. We are to give, not with the hope of getting something in return, but expecting never to see any profit for ourselves. We really have nothing of ourselves anyway. All we have is what we have from God. When we begin to realize our utter dependence upon God for everything, then we can also begin to give properly, and experience what it means to be a child of God. Do you spend more time looking out for yourself, or do you have a heart of mercy and quickly stoop to the needs of others and forget yourself? This mercy, along with all the other qualities of a child of God come by the grace of God alone. Sing Psalter 232.

June 9 Read Ephesians 4:25-32

God, for Christ's sake has forgiven us. Are you willing to forgive those who wrong you? Our sins have been blotted out before God. They are gone and will never come between God and His children again. As children of God, we also must seek to blot out and forget the wrongs others do to us. Do you have a reputation of one who is kind and tender hearted? Meditate upon God's word. Study God as a child studies his father, and imitate Him. Sing Psalter 140.

June 10 Read 1 Peter 1:1-16

Here too we are called to be holy. God repeats His word from Leviticus 11 in the context of believers facing persecution. When we face persecution, we ought not hide among the heathen as David once did, but rather turn to the wonder of our salvation, which even the angels desire to look into. When we ponder our salvation, we are strengthened and encouraged to continue in the holy life which is filled with difficulties in this sinful world. Sing Psalter 141.

Listening

June 11 Read James 1:19-25

In the next few days we will look at some passages of God's word that have to do with listening to others. The general principle we have in verse 19 is to be swift to hear and slow to speak. It is our nature to do just the opposite. When we are quick to speak and slow to hear, we do not function well as the body of Christ. Quick speech often is associated with a sharp tongue that cuts and stirs up anger and sin. Quick speech indicates pride and making our word more important than the words of someone else. Listening is the humble activity of one who esteems another better than himself. Try to keep track today of the time you spend listening in comparison to speaking. Sing Psalter 222:4-6.

June 12 Read Nehemiah 8:1-12

God has given us this day as a day to be set aside for rest and the hearing of His word preached. What a blessing it is to be able to hear the pure preaching of the word at least twice. Do you look forward to that opportunity? All too often a day of hearing is a distraction from our busy life. All the things we want to do for ourselves wait impatiently for tomorrow and we are reminded again how difficult it is to be swift to hear. God had sent his people at the time of Nehemiah many trials and they were swift to hear. Sometimes God needs to send us trials as well so that we come gladly to God's house to hear His word. Sing Psalter 349.

June 13 Read Proverbs 8:32-38

As children of God, our ears must always be swift to hear what our Father says to us. Christ is revealed to us in Proverbs 8 as the word and wisdom of God. Hearing is the means by which God reveals Himself to us. Hearing is more than registering sound; hearing means that the truth of God becomes a part of us and we are made wise. Hearing is also the way to blessedness and peace. Did you keep track of the time you spent hearing yesterday? How does the time you spend meditating upon God's word compare to the time you spend speaking to Him in prayer? Sing Psalter 1.

June 14 Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-3

God has strict words for our use of our hearing, thinking, and speaking while worshiping in Church. If we are not ready to hear, we are in danger of offering the sacrifice of fools. An acute awareness of what we are doing in church and Whom we worship must serve to put us in our proper place.

It is a place of hearing, and thinking carefully before we speak. Let us work diligently to curb the flow of words from our mouths lest the multitude of our words mark us as fools. Sing Psalter 11.

June 15 Read Luke 15:1-7

Jesus said in John 10:27 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:” This was clear every day as Christ went out to preach the gospel of salvation. The voice of Christ caused the publicans and sinners to draw near unto Him. They gathered around like sheep. These are the children of God who know their sins. They stray and become lost, and no sound is more beautiful and comforting than the gospel of salvation. Sing Psalter 55.

June 16 Read Acts 17:10-13

The Bereans are commended here for their diligent hearing. They received the word with all readiness of mind. They did not stop with hearing and pondering, they went another step and searched more deeply into the word of God to make sure that what they were hearing was true. Do you make sure that what you are hearing is the truth? This takes work, and it is often more fun and enjoyable to believe only what is pleasing to our flesh. The Bereans are commended for their diligent hearing. Will this be true of you today? Sing Psalter 64.

June 17 Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13

Our sinful nature makes it difficult to listen to others. We like to make known our needs and don't have the time to bother with listening to others. But our sinful nature makes it impossible to listen to God. Paul does not thank the Thessalonians for listening to them preach. He does not praise them for any special spiritual insight that enabled them to see that their preaching was the very word of God. He thanked God for this hearing. Clever arguments will never convince anyone to believe. These people were sheep of the fold of Christ. They heard His voice. Let us rejoice in the wonder of God's work in our hearts to believe His word. Sing Psalter 79.

June 18 Read Psalm 116

Many of the Psalms speak not of our listening to God, but of God listening to us. The Psalms by their very nature as prayers are petitions. But this does not mean that we spend all our time asking of God and not listening to Him. Earlier we meditated upon the truth that we must imitate our God. We must do that also with our listening. God listens very carefully to His children. The Psalmist sings, “I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.” What a blessing it is to know God hears us. Let us as God's children listen to one another as well. Sing Psalter 310.

Being First or Greatest

June 19 Read Mark 10:35-45

Do you get irritated when someone gets ahead of you? We like to be the first, and we like to be the greatest. In this world, we get to the top by strength of will, mind, or brute force. In the church, the whole system of getting to the top is turned upside down. If you want to be the greatest in the kingdom of God, you have to be the servant of all. Instead of fighting others, you fight your own sinful nature. Instead of extolling your virtues, you come to the realization of your sinfulness. Will you go out ready to serve others today, or are you going to fight your way to the next notch, even if it means stepping on some other heads? Remember, Christ gave His very life. Sing Psalter 97.

June 20 Read Mark 9:30-37

As children we openly argue about who is the greatest. As adults, it becomes more subtle and we try to prove our greatness in other ways. When the disciples argued, Jesus patiently had them all sit down so He could teach them a lesson. He reminded them of the basic truth that rules in the kingdom of heaven: greatness is measured by humility. How do you show your humility? One way is to receive into your fellowship those that may be considered small and insignificant. Do you stop to befriend those with no friends? Such are great in the kingdom of God. Sing Psalter 179.

June 21 Read Luke 14:7-11

Sometimes our desire to be first or greatest is clearly manifest by how we behave ourselves in society. Jesus pointed out to His disciples how some people made fools of themselves when they overestimated their importance. He used this example to show them again how the humble are the exalted ones in the kingdom of God. We live in this world, but we are not of this world. The world says you must be aggressive and assert yourselves to get to the top. To live by this philosophy is to be of the world. Do your actions show that you are not of this world? Sing Psalter 186.

June 22 Read Luke 18:9-14

When we strive to be first and greatest, we do not experience the peace and joy of our salvation in Christ. Everything may look great on the outside, but inside we are hollow. Our pride brings us spiritually low. When we humbly come before God to confess our sins, we know the joy and peace of our justification. Take a close look at yourself today. How do you present yourself to others? Do you put on a false front? Are you trying to be someone you are not? Let us be honest and humble before God and others, “for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Sing Psalter 366.

June 23 Read James 4:1-10

“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” These words come in the context of admonitions against fighting and being a friend of the world: two things

that seem to be a constant struggle in our lives. These problems are rooted in that desire to be first or greatest. God resists the proud. He puts troubles in their path. But to the humble He gives grace: that power that lifts the soul from darkness to everlasting life. “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” Sing Psalter 402.

June 24 Read Proverbs 13:1-10

Here again we see that all the fighting and strife we have is rooted in pride. In contrast to the proud are the “well advised:” those who are rooted and grounded in the truth of God’s word. That’s why children must be instructed in catechism. Only when we, by grace, begin to understand and believe the fundamental truths of the gospel will we see that humility is greatness. Do you work hard at learning your catechism? Do you listen carefully during the sermons? This is wisdom, and the wise live peacefully as humble Christians. Sing Psalter 325.

Submitting to Authority

June 25 Read 1 Peter 5:1-5

In close connection with being humble is the truth that we are to submit to those in authority over us. This passage addresses the church and those who are under the authority of the elders. We need to submit to the elders. In general, the younger members ought to submit to the older members. Addressing an older member as Mr. or Mrs. is one simple way to give them honor. Does this mean that the older look down upon the younger as unworthy of respect? Not at all. God calls us all to “be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” Sing Psalter 331.

June 26 Read Leviticus 19:30-33

Showing respect to the elderly is here connected with the fear of the Lord. A lack of respect on the part of children for the elderly is an indication of a lack of the fear of the Lord. When Israel walked in sin, God chastised them and “the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable” Isaiah 3:5. How do you view the elderly? Are you in the habit of standing to greet elderly visitors? Do you willingly give up your seat? Today would be a good day to pay attention to your attitude toward the elderly. Sing 366.

June 27 Read Hebrews 13:7-17

Everyone from the President to the police officer has been given authority by God to rule over others. This authority to rule is for the good of those under that authority. This is especially true for the elders who watch over our souls. It is tempting for those under authority to rail against authority because we feel oppressed. It appears to us that those in authority have it so easy. Such an idea is far from the truth. Those in authority are burdened with great responsibility. They all stand under the authority of God to whom they must answer. Do you walk in obedience and submission?

Not only is this pleasing to God, it makes the work of those in authority a joy and the church is blessed. Sing 370.

June 28 Read 1 Peter 2:13-17

This passage emphasizes our calling to submit not only to the elders in the church, but worldly authorities and their laws as well. Sometimes laws seem rather foolish to us and we quickly scoff at them. Those who constantly scoff at what appears to be foolish laws are, in verse 15 referred to as “ignorant” and “foolish.” Chances are good that the law has a good reason, but even a foolish law is to be obeyed. We ought not take part in such scoffing, but rather obey the rules and put them to silence. Sing Psalter 344.

June 29 Read Romans 13:1-7

This passage makes it perfectly clear that all authority comes from God. Any time we resist any authority, we resist God, and walk the path of eternal destruction. And when the authorities exact money in the form of taxes or tolls, we have no business withholding what we owe. It is not a game to see how much we can get away with. To do so is to play games with God. Is it really worth defying authority just to save a few dollars? When you fill out your tax form, do you hide as much income as possible so that you can keep a few extra dollars from the government? Pay what you owe and enjoy the peace of God. Sing Psalter 321.

June 30 Read Deuteronomy 17:8-13

There are times when authorities need to make judgments in a matter. It may be something as simple as an umpire making a call at a ball game or a supreme court ruling. What is your attitude when a decision is made? When the priest in Israel made a decision, God demanded that the people submit to that ruling. The ruling bodies in the church also need to make decisions, and there is a proper way to address grievances. To complain and deride a decision is wicked and wrong. We must address the problem properly or quietly submit. Is this how you deal with the decisions of your parents, your teachers, or your boss? Sing Psalter 223.

June 31 Read John 14:15-21

Do you love God? Do you love your parents? How do you show that love? The ungodly imagine that they can show love to God by doing what they think is best. Saul did this when he brought sacrifices to God instead of obeying him. The one most important way to show our love for God is to obey him. This is why it is so important for us to obey all those in authority over us. When we learn to submit to men who have been given authority, then, by grace, we are also able to obey God. When we walk in obedience to God, God promises that He will manifest Himself to us. This is the way to a walk of covenant fellowship with our God. Sing Psalter 305.



Christ's Words Shall Never Pass Away (1)

by Rev. Angus Stewart

Just days before His cross and in the midst of His Olivet discourse on His coming at the fall of Jerusalem and at the end of the world, Christ uttered these famous words: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

By speaking of the heavens and earth as passing away, Christ does not mean that they will be annihilated or cease to exist. Instead the heaven and earth *in their present condition and qualities* will pass away. This will happen at the return of Christ when the world is purged by fire (II Peter 3). The renewed world or "new heavens and new earth" will result. Earth will still be the same planet only much more beautiful and glorious. It will no longer be a world of sin and death and the curse, for it will be filled with righteousness and the knowledge of God will cover the whole earth (Hab. 2:14).

Man is like the grass of the field which withers and dies. Human houses—no matter what their owners might think—won't last forever (Ps. 49:11). Cities and empires decline and collapse—think of mighty Babylon! But the heavens and the earth, of all of created reality, are the most permanent and fixed. We take the solid ground underneath us for granted. It is terra firma. Sure it has existed for thousands of years!

But Christ states that God's Word is *more* firm, enduring and permanent. One day the heavens and the earth (in their present qualities) will pass away but Christ's words shall never pass away. The Greek text is emphatic: they shall *never never* pass away!

But why does Christ make this strong affirmation of the permanence of His words *in this context*? First, He has been speaking of *glorious* events which are hard to believe. The gospel will be preached to all nations (Matt. 24:14)! Think how incredible that must have appeared to the few disciples in the first century or the church in the middle ages. Christ will come again bodily

in the clouds "with power and great glory" (30) and His angels will gather His elect "from one end of heaven to the other" (31). Could all these wonderful things really happen? Yes, for Christ says that His words shall never pass away.

Also, this promise of the certainty of his words is necessary here, because Christ is predicting events so *terrible* that we are apt to wonder if they could really happen: wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes; great apostasy, false Christs and false prophets; great tribulation and persecution. The false Christs and false prophets "shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (24). But lest we doubt, Christ tells us that His words are more firm and enduring than the very earth under our feet! So believe it always, and don't doubt!

Christ's promise is all the more necessary today since almost 2,000 years have passed and He has not yet returned upon the clouds with His angels (30-31). The church is tempted to sleep and forget about her Lord's second coming. Moreover, scoffers have arisen who deny Christ's return (II Peter 3). Often these are renowned professional men with academic qualifications. "Man has come of age. We are scientific. The bodily return of Christ is a myth." Thus Jesus' words come to us: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *my words shall not pass away.*" So hold fast to this truth and do not be shaken by the wisdom of the world for it is "foolishness with God" (I Cor. 3:19).

Jesus does not say, "*These* my words shall not pass away," as if He were speaking only of a particular utterance. Instead, He says, "My words [understood inclusively] shall not pass away." Christ's words in Matthew 24 on His coming at the fall of Jerusalem and at the end of the world, *all* of Christ's words and all of Christ's words *in their context* (i.e. the four gospels) shall not

pass away. The NT is the words of Christ by His Spirit too. And would God promise to preserve the NT and not also preserve the OT? Thus Jesus here assures us of the preservation of the complete Word of God, OT and NT.

Christ's promise is absolutely trustworthy; no part of God's Word has passed away. There was no fifth gospel which was lost. The epistle that Paul wrote to the Corinthians before he wrote I Corinthians (I Cor. 5:9) has not come down to us for it was not inspired nor intended for the church of all ages. Similarly Paul's letter to the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16) was not God-breathed. The alleged gospels and epistles by various apostles (e.g., Thomas and Andrew) are spurious. It is not the case either that God wanted to tell us more about Christ's childhood or the forty days after His resurrection or Paul's life after Acts 28, but that these have accidentally been

lost to us. We have today *all* that God inspired for our learning for Christ's words will *never* pass away.

And it is not just the *ideas* of Scripture that are preserved for us. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). And how can we live by every word, if every word is not preserved? Beloved, every word of God is preserved according to Christ's promise. Feed on these words for this is your life! ❖

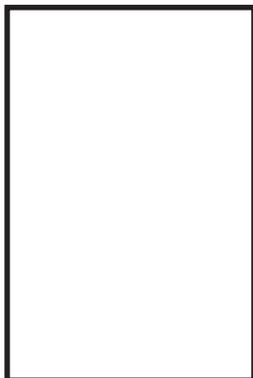
Rev. Stewart is a missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches to the Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Northern Ireland. This series is being reprinted with permission from the Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship website, <http://www.cprf.co.uk/> Volume IX, Issues 15 & 16.

Our Young People's Federation

Federation Board Nominations

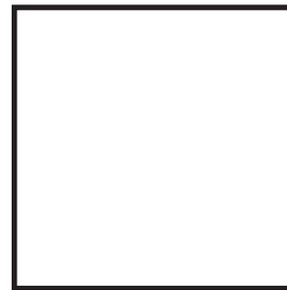
by Rachel Nagelkerke

With the convention coming up at the end of June, it is time to start thinking about new Federation Board members. At the convention, delegates from the young people's societies will vote for a Vice President, Vice Treasurer, Vice Secretary, Librarian, and Spiritual Adviser. The Fed Board has chosen the following nominees, who if elected, will serve on the Fed Board for two years.



Nathan Decker

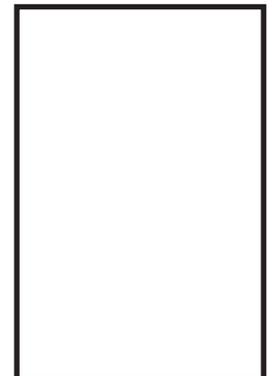
The nominees for Vice President are Nathan Decker and Kyle Thompson. Nathan is 19 years old and a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church. He is currently a student at Hope College. Getting the young people of our churches to understand the importance of their role in the church is a goal Nathan has for the Fed Board. In accomplishing this goal, the young people will become more active in their church life.



Kyle Thompson

Kyle is also 19 years old and is a member at First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. He attends college, and also works in construction oversight. If elected, Kyle hopes to provide the young people with a fulfilling experience; one that is both fun and spiritually enriching.

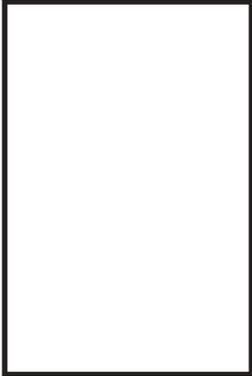
The nominees for Vice Treasurer are Kyle Kooienga and Eric Pols. Kyle is 20 years old and a member at Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. He works as a greenhouse manager, and is also studying accounting at Calvin College. His goals for the Fed Board are to increase leadership and encourage Christian fellowship of our young people.



Kyle Kooienga

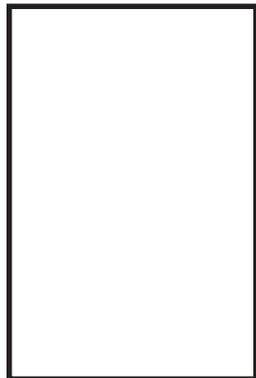
Eric is also 20 years old and a member at First Protestant Reformed Church in Holland. Eric is a sophomore at Calvin College. One of the goals he has for the Fed Board is the continued involvement of the young people in church functions. This continued involvement will lead to blessings in the spiritual lives of every young person. The spiritual growth of the young people of the church is very important for the church now, and in the future. He believes this should be the main concern for the Fed Board.

The nominees for Vice Secretary are Chelsea Hassevoort and Emily Hoekstra. Chelsea is 16 years old, and a member at Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church. Along with her work as a student at Covenant Christian High School, Chelsea does secretarial work at Innotec Corporation. She would like young people's societies to be more meaningful for young people so that they leave society really thinking about their spiritual lives. Applying what they learn will cause them to know their Savior more and more.



Chelsea Hassevoort

Emily is 18 years old and a member at Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. She is a student at Grand Valley State University. Emily would like the Fed Board to continue its important work of keeping the young people's societies and activities organized. This way young people are spiritually enriched and able to enjoy Christian fellowship with one another.



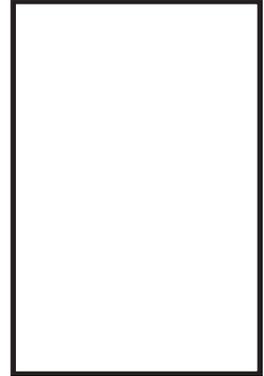
Kara Kamps

The nominees for Librarian are Kara Kamps and Denise Kooienga. Kara is 18 years old and is a member at Hope Protestant Reformed Church. She is a secretary at Kleyn Electric. Strengthening the spirituality of our young people is an important goal for Kara because young people are the future of the church.

Denise is 17 years old, and a member at Faith Protestant Reformed Church. She is currently a student at Covenant Christian High School. She would like to see more young people attending singspirations,

mass meetings, and other events held for them. She would also like to see more young people participation with the Federation Board.

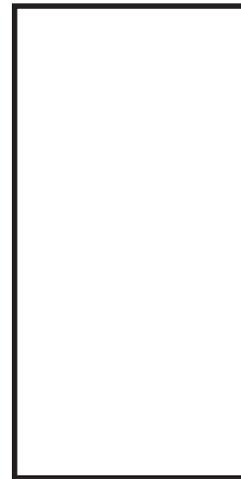
The nominees for Spiritual Adviser are Rev. Mitchell Dick and Prof. David Engelsma. Rev. Dick is the minister at Grace Protestant Reformed Church. His one goal for the Fed Board is that the members of the board would be able to give strong, godly, and



Denise Kooienga

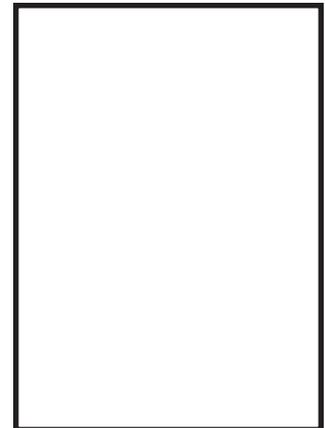
creative leadership. This way the young people of God's covenant might live the Grace Life to the full, in a world gone crazy without a doubt, for the Savior's praise in all the world!

Prof. Engelsma is 65 years old and a member at First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. He is a Professor of Theology at the Protestant Reformed Seminary. Prof. Engelsma has the same goal for the Fed Board as he did back in the 1960's, when *he* was president of the Fed Board. He would like the Fed Board to provide edification and good fellowship for as many Protestant Reformed young people as possible. Also, he would especially like to involve as many Protestant Reformed young people as possible.



Rev. Dick

After reading a little about the nominees for the Federation Board, the Fed Board asks the convention delegates to prayerfully consider who they will vote for. ❖



Prof. Engelsma

Rachel is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church and is Vice-Secretary of the Federation Board.

George M. Ophoff (22) As Old Testament History Scholar

by Prof. Herman Hanko

It is somewhat difficult to describe the writings of Rev. Ophoff in the field of Old Testament History. This difficulty arises from the fact that his writings are voluminous. He compiled massive syllabi for use in the school and he wrote literally hundreds of pages for the *Standard Bearer* in this field. It was truly his specialty.

There were few men who knew the Old Testament Scriptures as Rev. Ophoff did. And there were few who could make these Scriptures live the way he did. This was true in his writing as well as in his preaching. Those who remember hearing him preach will surely recall that he preached from the Old Testament most of the time, and that these sermons on the Old Testament were preached as few men could preach. He had a knack for bringing his audience into the history with him so that one felt he was actually present at the events which were described. All of this could characterize his work only because the Old Testament was his one great love.

Yet he preached in such a way that one heard the gospel as it is in these Old Testament Scriptures. He did not busy himself with storytelling. He was not content with pious moral homilies. He preached the gospel.

So extensive are his writings, that one could pick almost at random to find a sample of his labors in this area. I have chosen a section from his Old Testament History notes which does not deal directly with the subject of Old Testament History. It deals rather with Ophoff's views on inspiration. It is rather interesting, because Ophoff faced the same questions then already which are currently being faced in the church. Ophoff is dealing with various views of the inspiration of the Scriptures—especially the Old Testament. In the section from which we quote excerpts, he is dealing with what he calls "a would-be Reformed position" He writes:

What the men of this position hold is plain from the notes of Dr. Albertus Pieters of Hope College, Holland, Michigan. The doctor writes, "The position taken by the author of these notes (the author is Dr. Pieters himself) is that the Bible is the word of God

in all its parts—the position usually designated in theology as belief in the *plenary inspiration* of Holy Scripture.

He believes also that inspiration involves the *trustworthiness* of the Old Testament in its statements of facts of whatever kind, as well as in all its teachings with regard to religious truth and duty.

It is to be carefully noted however that the *trustworthiness* of the Old Testament is not the same as inerrancy in every detail. When it comes to statistics, dates, and similar matters, there are certainly errors in the Bible as we have it. It is possible that many, perhaps most, of these errors are errors in transmission, and did not exist in the original documents; but no one can be sure that this is true of them all. If the inerrancy of the original documents is asserted, this is not on the basis of evidence, but merely as an inference from the doctrine of verbal inspiration. This is not the same as plenary inspiration. The author of these notes holds to plenary inspiration, but not to verbal inspiration... A document can be a trustworthy source of information even though minor errors exist in it; and therefore it is not inconsistent with the position here assumed to believe that some minor errors may have existed in the original documents' So far Dr. Pieters.

...Our position is that inspiration was certainly plenary in the sense of verbal. What is meant thereby is that the men of God through whom God gave us His Word wrote under the infallible guidance of His



With the women.

Spirit so that their productions are in truth God's very own infallible Scriptures and thus incapable of error as to the form of all their words without a single exception, incapable of error therefore also in such matters as numbers and statistics.

The position of Dr. Pieters raises unanswerable questions. Why should God have withdrawn His infallible guidance respecting statements specifying times (dates)? Did the greatness of God prevent Him from troubling Himself with matters so trivial? But the greatness of God does not stand in His way of numbering the hairs of each man's head. Besides, the dates of Scripture are not of trivial importance. . . . Further, if the organs of revelation could err in their statements specifying time, and thus could err as historians, why could they not have erred as teachers of religion and ethics? Why limit the fallibility of the Scriptures, of the autographs, to statements respecting time and to the genealogical tables of the Old Testament? What is there to prevent one from going all the way? Nothing at all. For the proposition that the autographs are infallible in their religious and ethical teachings is purely an article of faith. Likewise the proposition that the autographs are infallible regarding their statements of historical facts, in particular as to their statements specifying time. Hence, to reject the infallibility of the autographs regarding their historical date, is to forsake the position of faith. Now if the student of Holy Writ forsakes the position of faith with respect to the historical data of the Scriptures, what is there to prevent him from forsaking the position of faith with respect to the whole of the Scriptures? Nothing at all.

Dr. Pieter's position is not that of faith. . . . The doctor actually advocates. . . . applying to the historical data of the Scriptures the touchstone of archeological findings to determine whether or not that data can be accepted as fact. What is there to prevent him from submitting the religious and ethical teachings of the Scriptures to the authority of the teachings, let us say, of Confucius, for the same purpose, or to the authority of his, Dr. Pieter's own reason? Nothing at all. To be consistent, the doctor should do one of two: he should either accept verbal as well as plenary inspiration or reject both. And any man who can occupy his position, will eventually do the latter, if he has not already done so in his heart. . . .

Our Bible, then, is a competently correct reproduction of the autographs. It makes therefore all the world of difference whether the autographs are the infallible or fallible Word of God. If the latter, our Bible is nothing more or less than a competently

exact reproduction of fallible autographs and in this case we know not whether it can be said of a single phrase in our Bible whether it is the very infallible Word of God. But if the autographs are infallible, our Bible is the competently exact reproduction of infallible writings and thus the very infallible Word of God.

The question may be asked whether there is on hand external historical evidence—evidence not contained in the Scriptures—to prove that the autographs were and that our Bible are the infallible Word of God. The question of course must be answered in the negative. The proposition that the autographs were and that the Bible is the infallible Word of God as to the form of all their words, is an article of faith. The proposition can be proved only by the testimony of the Scriptures themselves. But this testimony has worth only for God's believing people. God's people believe, are firmly convinced, that the Bible is God's infallible Word, only because God tells them so in their hearts by His Spirit testifying with their spirits through the Word, thus only because God causes the light of His Word to shine in their hearts unto the salvation of their souls. The believers need no other testimony. They rejoice at the findings of the archaeologist corroborating the statements of fact contained in the Scriptures. But their faith does not lean on these findings; and therefore should these findings clash with the Scriptures, they cleave to the Scriptures and they say with Paul, 'Let all men be liars and let God be true.'

It is also said by men who want to be known as Reformed that the testimony of the Holy Spirit gives certainty only regarding the religious and ethical teachings of the Bible and in particular of the Old Testament Scriptures but not regarding their statements of historical facts, such as the deliverance of the people of Israel from their Egyptian bondage. Thus the truth or falsity of the historical data of the Bible must be determined by external evidence. Such was the position of Dr. Janssen of Calvin Seminary. The doctor, sad to say, has many followers in the Christian Reformed communion of churches. The position is thoroughly modernistic, liberal. As has already been said, the religious and ethical teaching of the Bible is so intimately bound up with the history that it narrates, that the testimony of the Spirit necessarily involves both. The religious and ethical teachings of the Old Testament Scriptures lie firmly embedded in Israel's history. The history of Israel is symbol, type, and prophecy. As such is signifies and pre-indicates the great truths of the religion of the Scriptures.

After asking the question whether or not the presence of seeming contradictions in Scripture militate against its infallibility Rev. Ophoff quotes Dr. Gerhardus Vos:

The contradictions in themselves do not prove anything as long as: a) They can be harmonized; and b) The differences explained on other grounds.

And it can be confidently claimed that all of them have met with satisfactory solutions long ago.

Rev. Ophoff then goes on to say:

...Why then is the position taken that (the autographs leave errors)? Because it cannot be proved in a positive way that the autographs were flawless? If God causes His Word to dwell richly in our hearts,

we do not demand such proof. We then have all the evidence we need and desire. And that evidence is our faith. Then we refrain from saying that the mistakes in the transcriptions may also have existed in the autographs. What causes otherwise believing men to forsake the right position is their fear of the ridicule and contempt of higher critics, of the renowned scholars among the unbelieving students of Scripture. But there is nothing as unscholarly, truly unscholarly as the scholarship of an unbelieving man.

And this was written over thirty years ago! ❖

Prof. Hanks is professor emeritus of the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

The Islamic Slave Trade

by J. P. de Klerk

Dr. Peter Hammond of Cape Town, South Africa wrote a long article in the monthly “Christian Action” about the Islamic slave trade across the Sahara, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

He said that while the European involvement in the Trans Atlantic slave trade to the Americas lasted for just over three centuries, the Arab involvement in the slave trade has lasted fourteen centuries, and in some parts of the Muslim world is continuing to this day.

There are however some interesting contrasts. While two out of every three slaves shipped across the Atlantic were men, the proportions were reversed in the Islamic slave trade. Two women for every man were enslaved by the Moslems.

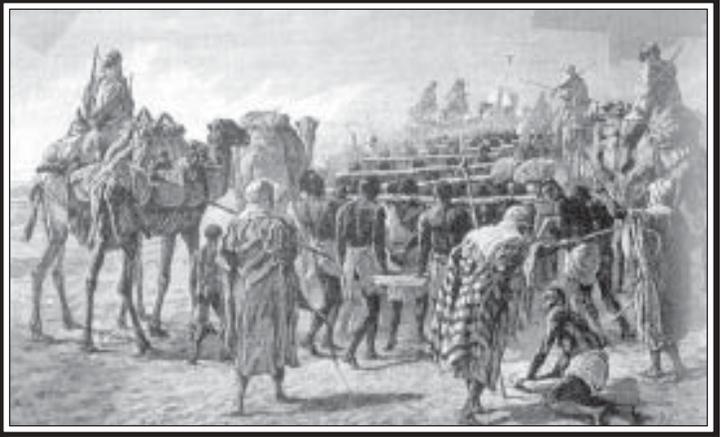
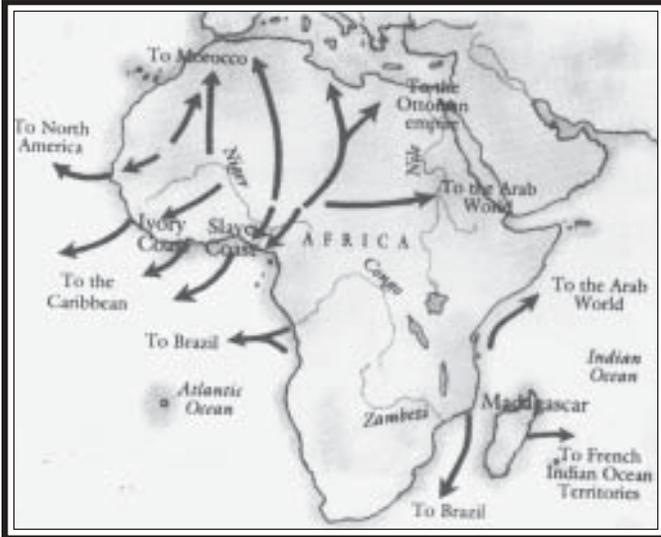
While the mortality rate for slaves being transported across the Atlantic was as high as 10%, the percentage of slaves dying in transit in the Trans Sahara and East African slave trade was between 80 and 90%!

While almost all the slaves shipped across the Atlantic were for agricultural work, most of the slaves destined for the Muslim Middle East were for exploitation in harems, and for military service.

While many children were born to slaves in the Americas, and millions of their descendants are citizens in Brazil and the USA to this day, very few descendants of the slaves that ended up in the Middle East have survived. While most slaves who went to the Americas could marry and have families, most of the male slaves destined for the Middle East were castrated.

Possibly as many as 11 million Africans were transported across the Atlantic Ocean, mainly to South and Central America. However, at least 28 million Africans were enslaved in the Muslim Middle East. About 80% of these captured by Muslim slave traders died before reaching the slave markets. The death toll from the 14 centuries of Muslim slave raids into Africa could have been more than 140 million people.

While Christian reformers spearheaded the anti-slavery movements in Europe and North America, and Great Britain mobilized her navy, throughout most of the 19th century, to intercept slave ships and set the captives free, there was no comparable opposition to slavery within the Muslim world! Even after Britain outlawed the slave trade in 1815, the Muslims enslaved a further 2 million Africans—this despite vigorous British naval activity and



Over 28 million Africans were enslaved in the Muslim world over the past 14 centuries. See on the map where they came from.

military intervention to limit the Islamic slave trade. Nearly 100 years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in America, and 130 years after all slaves within the British Empire were set free by parliamentary decree, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, in 1962, and Mauritania in 1980, begrudgingly removed legalized slavery from their statute books. Many international organizations document that slavery continues in some Muslim countries.

Slavery long predated Christianity; there were Christian slaves in the Roman Empire. The great civilizations of Mesopotamia, Babylon, Egypt, Greece, and all the civilizations in Central America and Africa were built upon slave labor.

People became slaves by being an insolvent debtor, being sold into slavery by their parents, being born to slave parents, being captured in war, or through kidnapping by slave raiders and pirates. Slave dealing was an accepted way of life, fully established in all societies. Most of these slaves were white people, or European. In fact the very word “slave” comes from the people of Eastern Europe, the Slavs.

The Greeks, from whom we derive many modern, humanistic ideas, were utterly dependent on slavery. Even Plato’s “Republic” was firmly based on slave labor. Plato said that 50 or more slaves represented the possessions of a wealthy man.

Under Roman law, when a slave owner was found murdered, all his slaves were to be executed. In one case, when a certain Pedanius Secundus was murdered, all 400 of his slaves were put to death. That was the rule.

Before the coming of Jesus Christ, the heathen nations despised manual work and confined it to slaves.

When Christ was born, half of the population of the Roman Empire were slaves. Three quarters of the population of Athens were slaves.

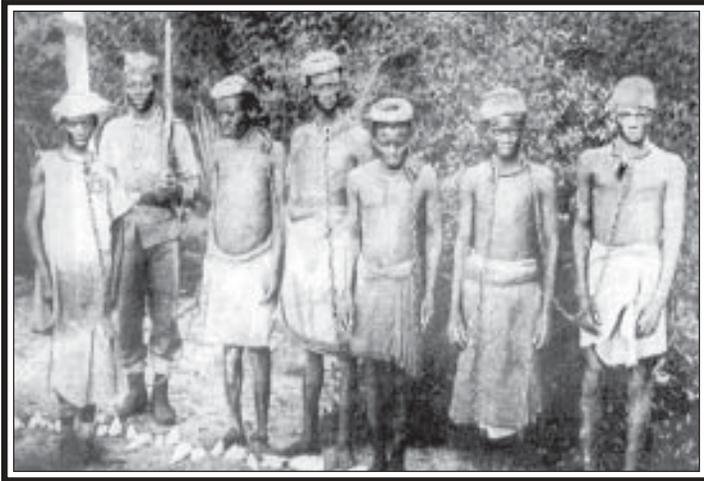
Slavery was indigenous to African and Arab countries before it made its way to Europe. It was widely practiced by the tribes of the American Indians, long before Columbus set foot on the shores of the New World. Ethiopia allowed slavery until 1942; Saudi Arabia until 1962; Peru until 1968; India until 1976; and Mauritania until 1980.

What is seldom remembered is that many black Americans in the 19th century owned slaves. For example, according to the United States census of 1830, in just the one town of Charleston, South Carolina, 407 black Americans owned slaves themselves.

Christianity undercut slavery by giving dignity to work. By reforming work, Christianity transformed the social order. Jesus took up the saw, the axe, the hammer and the plane. When the apostle Paul wrote to Philemon, concerning his escaped slave, he urged him to welcome back Onesimus as a brother in the Lord.

The Scriptures commands us to love our neighbor, to be a Good Samaritan; and to do for others what we would want them to do for us. Christians like William Wilberforce, John Newton, William Carey, David Livingstone, Lord Shaftsbury and General Charles Gordon worked tirelessly to end the slave trade, stop child labor and set the captives free. From the very beginning of the Christian church, Christians freed slaves. During the 2nd and 3rd centuries many tens of thousands of slaves were freed by people who converted to Christ.

St. Melania was said to have emancipated 8,000 slaves, St. Ovidius freed 5,000, Chromarius freed 1,400,



This photo was taken in 1910. Captured by Moslim traders, these are forgotten prisoners.

Hermes freed 1,200. Many of the Christian clergy at Hippo under St. Augustine “freed their slaves as an act of piety.” In AD 315, the emperor Constantine, two years after he issued the Edict of Milan, legalizing Christianity, imposed the death penalty on those who stole children to bring them up as slaves.

The emperor Justinian abolished all laws that prevented the freeing of slaves. St. Augustine (354-430) saw slavery as the product of sin and as contrary to God’s divine plan (*The City of God*). St. Chrysostom in the 4th century taught that when Christ came He annulled slavery. He proclaimed: “in Christ Jesus there is no slave. Therefore it is not necessary to have a slave...buy them, and after you have taught them some skill by which they can maintain themselves, set them free.” For centuries, throughout the Middle Ages, bishops and church councils recommended the redemption of captive slaves, and for five centuries the Trinitarian monks redeemed Christian slaves from Moorish (Muslim) servitude.

In 1102 AD, the London Church Council outlawed slavery and the slave trade. By the 12th century slaves in Europe were rare, and by the 14th century slavery was almost unknown on the continent of Europe.

However, with the birth of Islam came a rebirth of the slave trade. As Ronald Segal in *Islam’s Black Slaves* documents: “When Islam conquered the Persian Sassanid Empire and much of the Byzantine Empire, including Syria and Egypt, in the 7th century, it acquired immense quantities of gold... stripping churches and monasteries... either directly or by taxes, payable in gold, imposed on the clergy and looting gold from tombs. The



A Muslim slave trader in Europe kidnapped women for the Muslim harems around the Mediterranean.

state encouraged the search and sanctioned the seizure, in return for a fifth of the finds.”

Segal notes: “Female slaves were required in considerable numbers for musicians, singers and dancers. Many more were bought for domestic work, and many were in demand as concubines. The harems of rulers were enormous. For example, the harem of Abdal Rahman III (912-961) in Cordoba contained over 6,000 women. And the one in the Fatimid Palace in Cairo had twice as many.”

Islam’s Black Slaves notes that Islamic teachers throughout the centuries consistently defended slavery: “For there must be masters and slaves. Blacks lack self-control and steadiness of mind and they are overcome by fickleness, foolishness and ignorance. Such are the blacks who live in the extremity of the land of Ethiopia, the Nubians, Zanj and the like.” Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406); the preeminent Islamic medieval historian and social thinker wrote:

The Negro nations are as a rule submissive to slavery, because they have attributes that are quite similar to dumb animals....

By the Middle Ages, the Arab word “abd” was in general use to denote a black slave while the word “mamluk” referred to a white slave. Even as late as the 19th century it was noted that in Mecca “there are few families that do not keep slaves. They all keep mistresses in common with their lawful wives.

When the Fatimids (named after Fatima, a daughter of Mohammed) came to power, they slaughtered all the tens of thousands of black military slaves and raised an entirely new slave army. Some of these slaves were con-

scripted into the army at age ten. From Persia to Egypt to Morocco slave armies from 30,000 to up to 250,000 became common place.

Even Ronald Segal, who is sympathetic to Islam and prejudiced against Christianity admits that well over 30 million black Africans would have died at the hands of Muslim slave traders or ended up in Islamic slavery. The Islamic slave trade took place across the Sahara Desert, from the coast of the Red Sea, and from East Africa across the Indian Ocean. The Trans Sahara trade was conducted along six major slave routes Just in the 19th century, for which there are more accurate records, 1.2 million slaves were brought across the Sahara into the Middle East, 450,000 down the Red Sea and 442,000 from East African coastal ports. That is a total of 2 million black slaves—just in the 1800s. At least 8 million more were calculated to have died before reaching the Muslim slave markets.

Islam's Black Slaves records: "In the 1570's, a Frenchman visiting Egypt found many thousands of blacks on sale in Cairo on market days. In 1665 Father Antonios Gonzalis, a Spanish/Belgian traveler, reported 800–1,000 slaves on sale in the Cairo market on a single day. In 1796, a British traveler reported a caravan of 5,000 slaves departing from Darfur. In 1838 it was estimated that 10,000 to 17,000 slaves were arriving in Cairo each year" There was a high death rate and low birth rate among black slave women. Islamic civilization lagged behind the West in protecting public health. One caravan with 3,000 slaves proceeding from the coast in East Africa, lost two thirds of its number from starvation, disease and murder. In the Nubian Desert, one slave caravan of 2,000 slaves literally vanished as every slave died.

Records for Morocco in 1876 show that market prices for slaves in good health varied from \$48 to \$140. Attractive young women fetched between \$192 and \$386. The majority destined to become concubines in North Africa, the Middle East and sometimes further away.

White slaves from Spain, Central and Eastern Europe were seen in the Middle East serving in the palaces of rulers and the establishments of the rich. Historian Robert Davis in his book *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, has estimated that North African Muslim pirates abducted and enslaved more than 1 million Europeans between 1530 and 1780.

These white Christians were seized in a series of raids which depopulated coastal towns from Sicily to Cornwall! Almost all the inhabitants of the village of Baltimore, in Ireland, were captured in 1631.



Historic picture of the British Parliament in London, in 1807, when the slave trade was abolished by a vote of 283-16.

It was the enemies of the Reformation who brought Europe into the disgraceful trade. Emperor Charles V (whom Martin Luther defied with his historic "My conscience is captive to the Word of God ... here I stand, I can do no other..." speech) of the Holy Roman Empire, first authorized Europe's involvement in the slave trade in 1519.

Portugal, The Netherlands, France and Britain delivered slaves for the Spanish colonies in South America (2.5 million people), 2 million to the British West Indies, 1.6 million to the French West Indies, and half a million to the Dutch West Indies; half a million to North America, too. The United States, however, would eventually fight a war, in part over slavery. There came an enormous and vocal American opposition to slavery. This was in sharp contrast to the indifference that Muslims, Africans and many Europeans evidenced.

There was no need for the slave traders to risk their lives or venture into the jungles of Africa. They simply purchased the people from African chiefs and Muslim slave traders at the coast of Africa. Many chiefs found it more profitable to sell their enemies, criminals and debtors than to kill or imprison them. Slave ships sailed from Bristol or Liverpool loaded with cloths, beads, muskets, iron bars and brandy. This merchandise was then traded in West Africa in exchange for slaves.

The average man on the street was kept in the dark about this until in 1785 Thomas Clarkson wrote a book about it entitled *Slavery and Commerce in the Human Species*. William Wilberforce followed in his footsteps. After a fight in parliament of twenty years in the House of Commons in London (February 22, 1807), the slave trade was outlawed.

In 1809, the British government mobilized its navy to search suspected slave ships, even foreign vessels on the high seas. In 1810, the British Parliament declared slave trading a felony, punishable by fourteen years hard labor. In 1814, the British representative at the Congress of Vienna (Austria) insisted on the abolition of the slave trade being included in the international treaty. This treaty was signed by all the European powers on June 9, 1815. In 1825, Britain passed a bill making slave trading punishable by death. Finally, just three days before William Wilberforce died, by an Act of Parliament in 1833, the British abolished slavery itself; freeing all 700,000 slaves in British overseas territories.

The abolition of slavery was one of the great turning points in history. The long and vigorous crusade by the British navy throughout the 19th century against the slave trade ranks as one of the most extraordinary and

unselfish applications of national policy ever seen in the history of nations.

Meanwhile the East African slave trade was increasing. David Livingstone brought the ravages of that trade to light. His *Missionary Travels* exposed the horrors. Islamic law (Sharia) contains elaborate regulations for slavery. A slave had no right to be heard in court (testimony was forbidden by slaves). They had no right to own property, could marry only with the permission of the owner, and were considered to be chattel, that is, the movable property of the slave owner. (Traditional Islamic culture still condones slavery. It persists in Saudi Arabia and Sudan). ❖

J. P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from Ashurst, New Zealand. Illustrations are from the archives of Dr. P. Hammond.

Church News

BAPTISMS

"For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:
Raeanna Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ted Brummel—Faith, MI

Tobias Jack, son of Mr. & Mrs. Rick VanBaren—Faith, MI
Jonathan Daniel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dan Boeve—Faith, MI

Cody Allyn, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Scholten—Faith, MI
Evan Franklin, son of Mr. & Mrs. Rod Korhorn—Georgetown, MI

Anna Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Eric Bouma—Georgetown, MI

Spencer Rhys, son of Mr. & Mrs. Chris Dykstra—Holland, MI

Eleanor Claire, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brad Duistermars—Hope, MI

Riley John, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jon VanDyk—Kalamazoo, MI

Zachary David, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Holleman—Loveland, CO

Nolan J, son of Mr. & Mrs. Greg Bruinsma—Peace, IL
Jayanne Nicole, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tim denHartog—Redlands, CA

Grant Gilbert, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dale VanBaren—South Holland, IL

Lucas Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Zandstra—South Holland, IL

Alexis Emma, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brian Lenting—South Holland, IL

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Proverbs 22:6

Public confession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was made by:

Joshua Meulenberg—Grace, MI

Lynelle VanOverloop—Grace, MI

Brandon Wassink—Holland, MI

Elizabeth Parsons—Peace, IL

Carrie Haveman—Trinity, MI

Paula Zandstra—Trinity, MI

MARRIAGES

"For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." Psalm 48:14

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Doug Bekkering and Miss Lori Feenstra—Faith, MI

Mr. Jesse VanDonge and Miss Wendy Hoekstra—Hull, IA

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

The Ploughboy (4)

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

Much work had been done, but much more was needed. The English New Testament was off to the printers, and shipments had already been smuggled into the steelyard of London. But England needed the whole text! And revisions were still a great necessity.

Early in the work, William Tyndale knew he would never be able to translate the Scriptures in his beloved England. He would surely be caught and burned at the stake, and so would anyone who tried to print it. But much of Luther's writings were coming out of Wittenberg in Germany. Sympathy for Tyndale's work—and safety—would likely be found in that place.

On May 27, 1524 a new student signed into the register of the university there: "William Daltin"—a clever reverse of syllables in his last name. Although he was on friendly ground, Tyndale could not be too careful. The tentacles of the Romish church reached beyond national borders.

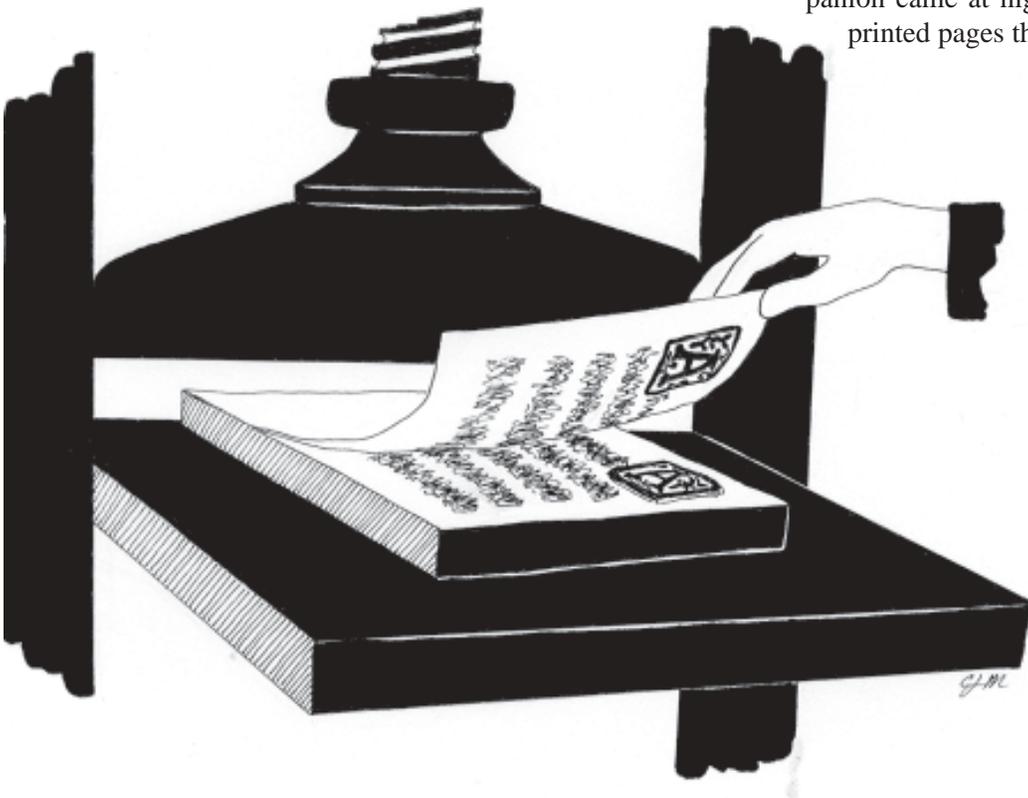
But Tyndale was safe here in Wittenberg, and in the haven of the university with its library and most illustri-

ous professor Martin Luther, he was able to complete the New Testament translation in less than a year. So far, so good. Now for the printing.

Tyndale went on to Hamburg and Cologne where the translation could be printed and shipped a little closer to England. In Cologne he found a printer, Peter Quentel, who was willing to do the work. Quentel was a staunch Roman Catholic, but a paying job was a paying job. The paper was handmade, the blocks rolled with ink, and the sheets were set out to dry. A big project—3,000 copies had been ordered and funded by the Luther-loving merchants back in England. The ploughboy would soon have his Bible!

But Cologne was a dangerous place. A conversation was overheard in the print shop. A man loyal to Henry VIII, king of England, and to the Church of Rome investigated further. Oh, what a prize, to uncover a plot to print the Scriptures in English!

But Tyndale overheard things, too. He and a companion came at night to the shop, gathered what printed pages they could, and fled... ❖



What kind of men does David seek to be delivered from, and what is under their lips? Read Psalm 140:1-3 to find out!

Connie is the mother of 5 children and a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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Royal Citizens in the Kingdom of God

I Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Rev. VanderWal—The Kingdom and Its Royal Citizens
Rev. Mahtani—Our Worship of the King
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