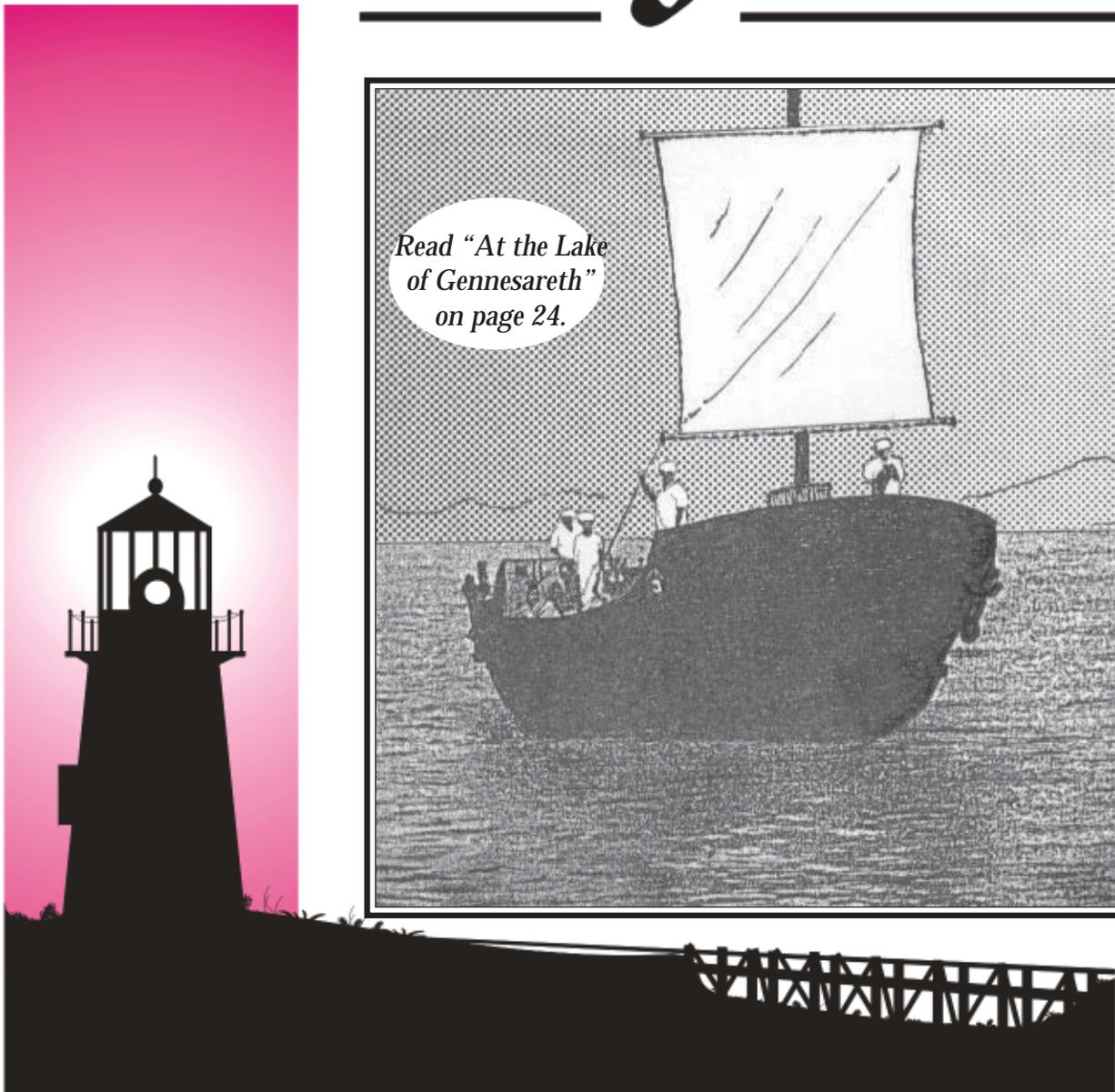
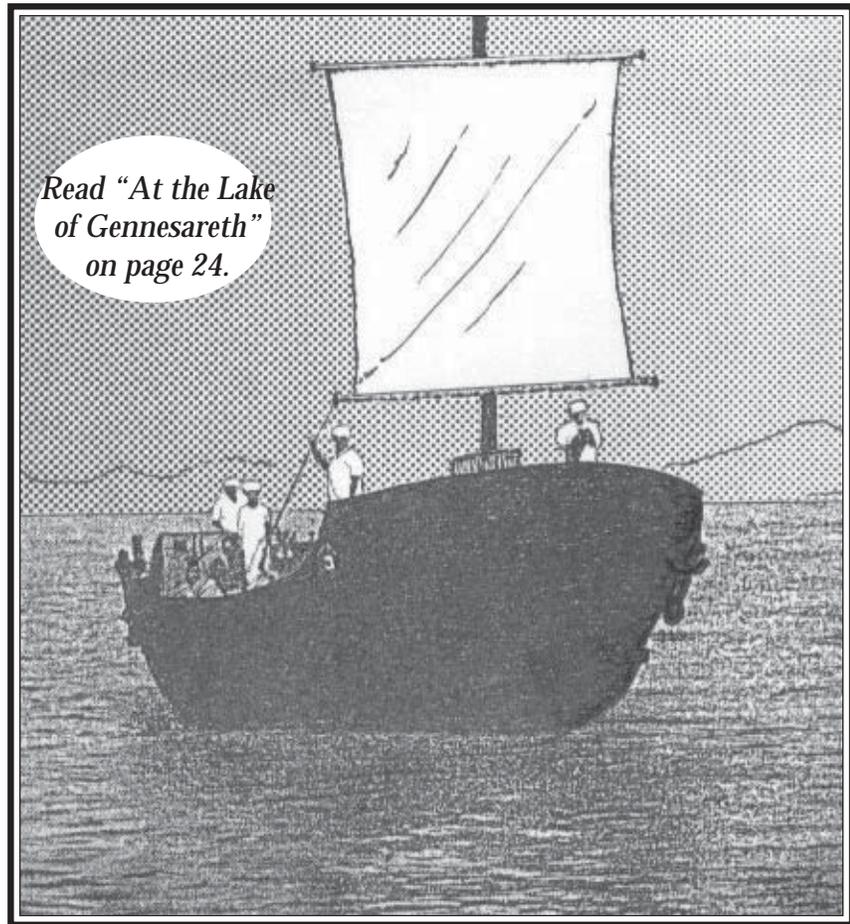


# Beacon Lights

June  
2006

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# Common Grace at Work in the Movie Studios

by John Huizenga



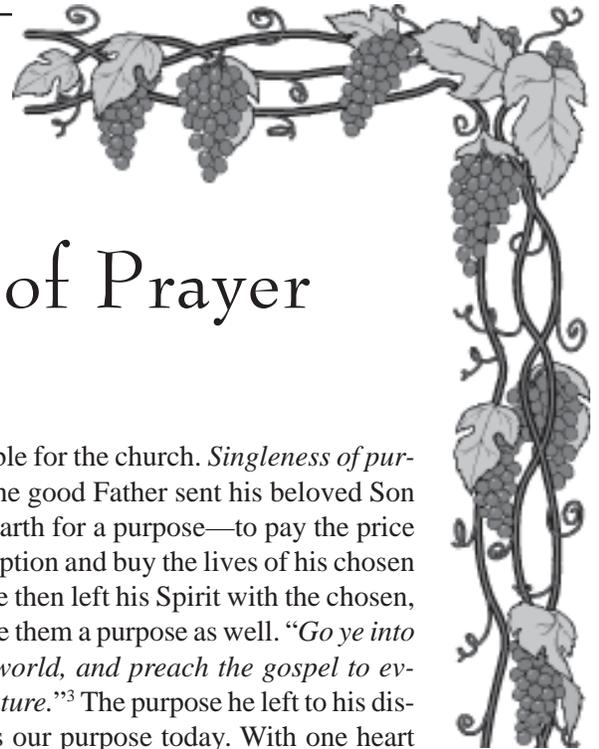
Even one who does not pay much attention to the movies and television shows being produced these days can't help but notice an increase in biblical quotes, themes, and images found in the productions. Secular magazines such as National Geographic are devoting more space to discoveries, stories, etc. relating to the Bible. Millions of people are reading fictionalized interpretations of the Bible. Excitement and tension surrounds the da Vinci Code. There seems to be a growing interest in the Bible and material relating to the Bible.

Some are hopeful that we are entering an age of renewed spiritual growth after a period of history filled with atheistic attacks upon the Christian faith. David Bruce, explaining the role of an organization called "Hollywood Jesus" writes, "There is more spirituality being expressed in films than ever before. Something is going on. 'Something is happening here, what it is I'm not exactly sure.' But, I'm amazed by it. Hollywood Jesus is dedicated to this amazing interest in spirituality." In fact, he goes so far as to say that the filmmakers today fill the same role as Jesus with the parables. He writes, "Jesus used parables about farming because he spoke to people who lived close to the earth. The country folk that Jesus spoke to of God's love were agrarian people who would understand his stories using farm illustrations. Our modern day parables have to relate to our culture as we know and live it—this is the role of our filmmakers." He gives the impression that the film industry is on the verge of realizing that they have been inspired by God to harness the power of the motion film for the ultimate modern version of the Bible. It would appear that this union of Christians with the culture of this world means that the triumph of common grace is at hand.

Such a "triumph of common grace," has more to do with the kingdom of antichrist than a golden age for the kingdom of Christ. God's word is stripped from most modern Bible translations, and unless the filmmakers themselves are directly inspired by God Himself, we can only expect the same from them. Reviews of the films from those who claim to believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God rate the factual accuracy of the films from "nice try" to "blasphemous." Yet, millions watch and seem to be convinced that God's word is to be heard through the entertainment. "Let the people believe they have the word of God while the Bible is thrown into the museum" is what Satan instructs his servants.

While some are convinced that common grace is at work in the movie studios, others are better able to apply some spiritual common sense to the trend. Dan Clanton, a professor at the University of Denver sums up his analysis in a paper where he writes, "Money, stories, characters, intrigue, conflict, ethical dilemmas—you name it, it's in the Bible, and it makes for good entertainment and engaging media." I don't know how much more the truth can be distorted when the world, and even the nominal church imagines that God speaks in order to entertain man!

God warns the church that such delusion will come in this, the day of the Lord. We read in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." In fact, such delusion has been around in one form or another throughout history. The amazing wonder is that the church and the truth of God's word is preserved through it all. May we continue to pray that God will preserve His church in our generations to the end. ❖



# Standin' in the Need of Prayer

by Rita De Jong

*“Hey buddy, thanks for sharing your story with me...it means a lot. Do you mind if I pray for you right now?”; “Girl, it is good to see you again. Tell me, what is the Lord doing in your life?”; “Pastor, thanks for being an incredible inspiration and a blessing to this church...if there’s anything you want me to pray about for you, let me know.”*

Typical Starbucks conversation openers, right? Maybe in some remote deserts of the world, where no eavesdroppers lurk, hearing these embarrassing topics. Being part of the body of believers in the Church of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, doesn’t require me bringing it up in conversation. Does it? Well, maybe sometimes. Perhaps after a car accident and one comes out alive, with a scratch here or there...sure, enter God. *“It could have been much worse; the Lord had his angels around that car.”* Maybe on Sundays too. *“Good sermon, eh? Pastor made some good points. Praise God for him.”* Good times to talk about Jehovah, to praise him for his goodness, but do these situational conversations reflect the innate desires of the gospel in our hearts? Are we, as believers, proclaiming His story in every area of our lives, every day of our lives? Or, are we living a ‘stained glass masquerade,’ feigning a life of vibrancy while the elements of life corrode our colored panes of faith? As pastors, are you encouraging your flock to open up to each other, to *“bear one another’s burdens?”*<sup>1</sup> As believers and as shepherds in the body of Christ, we must understand our purpose and step up to the uncomfortable and disquieting challenge of unity, learning to pray for and with each other. We need practical instruction from our pastors, and we need a faith that binds us in more than just a name.

To practice unity, we must first understand it. What does unity actually mean? We turn to the basics, the good ol’ dictionary. *“Unity: Singleness or constancy of purpose or action; continuity: ‘In an army you need unity of purpose’ (Emmeline Pankhurst).”*<sup>2</sup> Of the seven descriptions of unity in the dictionary, this one seems most

applicable for the church. *Singleness of purpose.* The good Father sent his beloved Son to this earth for a purpose—to pay the price of corruption and buy the lives of his chosen ones. He then left his Spirit with the chosen, and gave them a purpose as well. *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”*<sup>3</sup> The purpose he left to his disciples is our purpose today. With one heart and one desire, we must seek out the hurt, the lost, the poor, the fatherless, and bring them the word of the Lord. Singleness of purpose.

*“In an army you need unity of purpose.”* Soldiers accomplish little on their own. One man cannot siege, ambush or attack the enemy’s stronghold. Without his comrades, the warrior’s purpose is vain. An apt description of the Lord’s army is provided through lyrics of a song by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir from Brooklyn, New York. It says this: *“We are united in Jesus Christ; we are the soldiers of the light. We don’t wrestle flesh and blood, but principalities of the dark. We too are marching to one beat, crushing the enemies under our feet. We are mighty in our stand, with God’s Word in our hands.”*<sup>4</sup> Together we fight the enemies of the darkness. Together we march to the beat of the Lord’s drum. We are the Lord’s army, and the desire of the Commander-in-Chief is our desire. His wish is our command.

So, the Lord commands, we obey. Game over, right? Not quite. We need a strategy. This army needs a boot camp. We need to go through some obstacle courses together, and see some sweat, struggles, and blood. We need to slap each other on the back, give some thumbs up, and help carry packs up the hills, because *those that sweat together bond together.*

In the realm of Christian believers, spiritual sweating is lacking. We come together to play cards, sing around bonfires, compete in church leagues...activities profitable for social growth. But too often we isolate these activities, and claim these as our tools for “Chris-

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tian fellowship.” We put on the fancy apparel of piety for people to see us in, and shove our tattered, dirty rags of guilt and shame to the back closet. We cover up our pain, saving our tears for the refuge of the pillow, surrendering our sorrows to the Lord of the night.

“*My brethren, these things ought not to be so.*” Jesus himself retained a small group of friends to himself, friends that would be there for him when the going got tough. He told the twelve disciples things that he didn’t tell everyone. He shared with them his hopes, his concerns, his purpose. “*From this time forth began Jesus to shew forth unto his disciples, how he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed, and be raised again the third day.*”<sup>5</sup> Jesus even asked the disciples to pray for his work: “*The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*”<sup>6</sup> If the Prince of Peace can ask mere mortals to pray for his ministry, how much more should we sinners be imploring each other for prayers? As it’s said, “*The family that prays together stays together.*”

Staying together in the family of faith requires instructive leadership. We are blessed with ministers in our midst who are faithful to the preaching and exhorting of Scriptures. Week in and week out, they provide doctrinal truths for our spiritual nourishment. Too often, however, lack of practical application resounds as a common criticism of Protestant Reformed churches. As members slander and gossip about each other, and as teenagers ostracize their peers, spiritual growth decays and the fruit of the Spirit rots away in the body of believers. So we seek answers, looking to the leaders.

Although the importance of personal conviction ought never be minimized, the character of any business is oft reflected in its management. As pastors, do you ever confess personal, real-life struggles with your sheep? Do you ask for prayers on your behalf, other than when considering calls from other churches? If a company boss never acknowledges errors or struggles, what message comes to the workers? No one accepts blame for mistakes and no one confides in each other. Gossip thrives and cliques divide.

The purpose here is not to stereotype every pastor or church member, but to emphasize the intent of our existence. Areas do exist where Satan is squelched, and the truth shines forth, but for the ecumenical population, a confession must be made: Gossip, slander, sexual abuse and promiscuity, idolatry, hypocrisy, resentment,

racism, and every type of abominable sin that exists in the world, also abide within the walls of our theologically correct sanctuaries. Yes, while the Lord tarries, it is impossible to root out every sin in any church, but the call to stewardship still cries out to us. Jehovah-jireh, the One who sees over all things, calls out to the remnant to band together to combat evil. As Margaret Mead, a powerful female intellectual of the mid-1900s declared, “*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.*”<sup>7</sup> We are those thoughtful committed citizens of the kingdom of the Lord; we are the people we have been waiting for to bring light into a dark world. But if we insist on constructing walls of division among ourselves, then we provide food for that roaring lion, who preys on our weak and bleeding flesh of discordance.

Breaking these dividing walls involves building new structures. With the foundation of Christ’s atonement, we unite, preparing a fortress of faith for Christ’s spiritual warriors. We begin on our knees. Prayer provides a healing balm to our wounded hearts. “*Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*”<sup>8</sup>

As corporate believers, this is probably the hardest part of growing together. Sharing our social, marital, parental, spiritual and human inadequacies with each other opens us up to a world of pain and vulnerability. We are sharing potentially explosive information with each other, and entrusting the other not to light the fuse. And yet, this is exactly what the body of Christ is all about. Faith. It requires a step out of our comfort zone. *For when we step out of our comfort zone, we step into God’s.*

A huge part of this step of faith lies in the pastors’ arenas. “*All we like sheep have gone astray, and have turned every one to his own way.*”<sup>9</sup> We need the shepherd’s staff to lead us back to green pastures of prayer. Within church settings, bible study sessions provide prime opportunities for united growth among believers. When the Bible discussion ends, the time following opens the door to community. Here, the pastor can encourage believers to share stories of concern or praise, stimulating prayer requests and thanksgivings. Of course, with large groups, this can be a lengthy and drawn out process. A simple solution to that is encouraging saints to divide up into small groups and pray with each other. This provides an outlet from “stage fright”

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of large groups, and draws believers together, binding them in the love of the Cross. At the end, the pastor can again bring the group together, and close the time in prayer. As individuals leave, the stories shared in those small groups remain, and gossip ceases, as the love of Christ reigns.

Simple changes like this can provide an open and honest environment within the church without leading to a “slippery slope” of liberalism in the Reformed dogma. But when we refuse any change, clinging obstinately and unbiblically to tradition, we err, and send searching hearts elsewhere. As a young adult in our churches, I find it easy to turn to other churches, and investigate their ministries. So often it seems that our denomination is stuck in a rut, like the lukewarm church of Laodicea, ready for spewing. I see other churches working in the community, reaching out to less fortunate, and incorporating the youth in church activities, while much of our ministry seems inwardly directed or nonexistent.

The common refute for this argument lies in the acknowledgment of doctrinal discrepancies of “those other churches,” and the need to preserve the covenant. Yet, I cannot help but wonder, when will we start engaging our members in unashamedly proclaiming the gospel? We often lack courage for this task because disunity exists among members. When we band together in pain and sorrow, we can begin to see the benefits of incorporating ideas like small group bible studies, ghetto visits, and prayer partners into our religious community, rather than writing it off as showbiz faith. As we do this, we begin to look more to the needs of others, and less to ourselves. This concept finds its Scriptural support in James’ reprimand to the saints of the Dispersion in chapter 1:27: “*Pure religion and undefiled before God and*

*the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*”

To ignite this fire of the “*pure religion*,” one thing is certain: we must unite. Like the Hebrews of old who received the important message to cast off sin, and press on in faith, we too, feel the compulsion to obey. “*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...*”<sup>10</sup> The call to us, the army of the Lord, comes loud and clear. Together, let us come in the name of Jesus, and proudly proclaim what the Lord has done in *our* lives. Let us band together in prayer, casting off our clothes of pious insincerity, and instead donning the robes of righteousness; robes knit for a community of love. ❖

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Galatians 6:2

<sup>2</sup> *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000.*

<sup>3</sup> Mark 16:15

<sup>4</sup> Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir Album, 1999: “*High and Lifted Up*”

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 16:21

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 9:37-38

<sup>7</sup> [http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Margaret\\_Mead](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Margaret_Mead)

<sup>8</sup> James 5:16

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 53:6

<sup>10</sup> Hebrews 12:1

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*Rita is a member of Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois.*

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## Letters to the Editor

# Letters to the Editor

### Dear Editor,

In the March 2006 issue there was an article by Darren Vink entitled “Stewardship and Money: Giving God’s Way.” It gave the saddening statistics that the av-

erage donation that adult Christians give to the church is less than 10%, the standard tithe given in the Old Testament. It said in the article that giving to the church is the best thing that we can do with our money. Here in

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America God has blessed us with so much that the least we can do is give back to him what is already his. It may seem like we have so many debts to pay and things to buy that it would hurt us too much to give our money to the church. But I firmly believe that if you give back to God he will provide for you. Thank you for this article, it reminded me that it is not only important to give, but to give for the right reasons and have the right attitude.

Sincerely,

Shannon Haan (Lansing, Illinois)

**Dear Mr. Huizenga,**

I enjoyed reading your editorial, “Church Candy Challenge.” Although this may be true for some people, I doubt that candy can cause such a distraction in church. I have not experienced this in my church. More distracting is when parents have to take their crying children out of church, or parents do not keep a tight reign on their children and can actually have a positive effect, keeping the restless children from distracting others and giving their mouths something to do, rather than chat constantly throughout the service with their siblings.

Sincerely,

John Sikma

**Dear Mr. Sikma,**

Whether or not we agree whole heartedly with some of the details regarding various distractions during the worship service, I think we are both describing the symptoms of a deeper problem: taking good heed to the Word of God. I suppose that the worship service is a time when the devil works quite hard to do what he can to prevent the light of God’s word from reaching our hearts and minds. I realize that each church is unique and everyone is distracted by different things, but I decided to address this issue from the candy perspective and not misbehaving children to avoid the danger of minimizing the importance of children in church. I believe that God works even in the hearts of small children through the means of the preaching even if they are able to grasp very little of it. I did not want to come across like the disciples when they thought that the little children were too distracting and insignificant for the great work of Jesus.

I am sure there is a wide range of opinions regarding what is acceptable behavior, what age is appropriate, and how parents should deal with their children. As fellow members of the body of Christ, I believe most

conflicts between those who are very irritated with the distractions that children can cause and the parents of those children, could be resolved with some prayer for humility, understanding, and guidance before a talk with the parents of distracting children. “And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:15-16)

**Dear Editor,**

By reading *The Church, the Pillar and the Ground of Truth* by Rev. Stewart, it opened my eyes to the possibility of churches who might not uphold God’s truth. Many Christians believe that their church preaches the truth. Even within the same denominations, churches argue about how to interpret God’s word. Isn’t it possible that all these churches, although they interpret Scripture slightly different, all uphold the truth? Are those churches then considered false for different interpretations? This article made me think and brought these questions to mind. I wanted to thank Rev. Stewart for challenging the churches and the community to help preachers teach the truth.

Sincerely,

Natalie Kamstra

**Dear Editor,**

The article written by Deane Wassink on page nine was both informative and uplifting. Today there are so many different scientists and people trying to say that there is no God and that the world was created by some kind of bang or by chance. We as Christians know that this is wrong and that God is the creator of everything. I had never heard of Fibonacci before and now that I’ve read about it, it’s very interesting. I think that it’s awesome the way that God created everything perfectly and in such a unique order. When we take the time to look at a flower or leaves or rocks, we can see God’s power and how he put so much detail into everything he created. God created so many beautiful things and I think that it was a good idea that Deane Wassink decided to write about that subject and try to show and remind people about how powerful and awesome God really is.

Sincerely,

Steph Dykstra (Munster, Indiana)

## When I In Awesome Wonder...

### Michigan's Golden Coast

# Log Cock

by Deane Wassink

One of the most impressive birds of the Lake Michigan woods is the pileated woodpecker, known commonly as the “log cock”. If you ever see one, you will not forget it. It is the size of a small crow with a black body, broad white lines on both sides of its head and under its wings with a bright red pointed crown on its head. It has a very unique undulating flight pattern so that the white under the wings flashes when they stretch out.

When in the woods you may only hear its call, which sounds like a wild laugh, or its incredibly loud hammering of trees with its bill in search of food.

Recently, I watched two males in courtship competition for a female. They were so busy they never knew I was there. Chasing each other from tree to tree the flashes of color were awe inspiring.

They hammer out a new nest into a dead tree every year. It is ten to twenty four inches deep with a rectangular entrance. The cavities are so large that they sometimes weaken the tree so that it breaks off in the wind. Because they need the largest and tallest tree in the forest, lightning often strikes their home in thunderstorms. They usually lay four white eggs in the nest. Once they abandon their nest it becomes home to many other forest creatures such as owls, squirrels, opossums and raccoons.

They feed primarily on carpenter ants that live in dead and fallen timber. Their large gray bill pounds out fist sized chunks of dead wood through which they are able to reach the ants with their sticky tongue.

Unlike its nearly extinct cousin, the ivory billed woodpecker they are highly adaptable. Perhaps you read all the excitement about the alleged spotting of an “ivory” in a southern swamp. Loss of proper habitat led many to believe they were extinct. The “log cock” on the other hand has moved from old growth forests into younger forests near civilization. Though still rarely seen, it is making a rapid comeback from its past low population.

Its numbers were decimated by hunters who sold the colorful feathers.

Each nesting pair requires six to nine hundred acres of dense woods. If you once have them living nearby you will hear them all year long because they are very territorial and do not migrate.

I read a fascinating account written in the eighteenth century of one man's attempt to raise these birds in a cage. Though he had successfully kept many other “wild” species of birds he found the pileated woodpecker to be impossible. The young birds were filthy and destroyed nearly every wooden cage he put them into with their constant hammering. Frustrated he concluded that they were untameable and finally let them go.

I am amazed at the handiwork of the Creator in fashioning a bird with the ability to splinter wood with its beak over and over again without harming itself. God fashioned the woodpecker's bill, skull and muscles to be able to withstand the constant pounding. I get a headache just thinking about it. In seeking its food it speeds the breakdown of dead trees and makes homes for other creatures. In his wildest imagination man could not have thought of such an amazing creature.

This incredible bird is so striking that another nickname speaks of its testimony to its Creator. It is also known as the “Lord God Bird”. I believe that name is the surprised expression of the explorers and settlers when they first saw the pileated woodpecker swoop past them in the woods. They said “Lord God look at that beautiful bird!” It is as if God forced the acknowledgment of His great creative power from the lips of man.

May we never take God's creative power for granted. This bird is an amazing testimony of His handiwork. Its loud hammering declares His great power and providential care of His creatures. Try as he might, man cannot deny the earth's testimony of the great Creator God. Great is our God and greatly to be praised.

---

# Lord God

*Man can only wonder  
At the works of His hand.  
Earth's creatures further  
The grandness of His plan.*

*The heaven's birds soaring.  
The sea's myriad life.  
The jungle's life roaring.  
The forest's creatures rife.*

*Man can only wonder  
At God Who is so great.  
Whose creatures we ponder,  
Field and forest and lake.*

*Greatest of all wonders,  
Is that He loved us so,  
He died for poor sinners.  
That we His love might know. ❖*

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*Deane is a member of First Protestant Reformed Church  
in Holland, Michigan.*

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Story Time

## April 3, 1956

by David J. Engelsma

**T**hey stood on the knoll of the farmyard—the farmer and his sixteen year old helper, a high school senior—and watched it come in the southwestern sky.

It was early evening on April 3, 1956.

All of nature about the farmyard was suddenly, mysteriously still before the roaring monster approaching a few miles distant. Not a bird chirped; not a cow in the nearby barn uttered a sound or rattled its stanchion; not a leaf on one of the apple trees in the orchard surrounding the farmyard stirred.

An unearthly, ominous, green pallor colored everything—the color of impending death and destruction.

The young man had been milking the twenty cows of the Cliff Tanis Dairy and Fruit Farm, just west of Kenowa Avenue on Burton Street, in the area southwest of Grand Rapids, Michigan known as “Riverbend.” The area was—and is—so named because of the sharp bend there of the Grand River to the west and Lake Michigan. The farmer was eating supper with his family.

The milking would remain unfinished until later that fateful night. For the easy-going farmer ran into the barn, crying as he came, “A tornado!” “A tornado!”

Now the two of them watched it from the farmyard. It had probably just completed its devastation in

Hudsonville and was on the way, through what is now Georgetown, to a river-crossing a scant mile northwest of the farmyard where the two stood enthralled.

For years, tornadoes had held a special fascination for the young man. Throughout his grade-school years at the little, country school a couple of miles north of the farmyard, when he had finished his assignments he would wander to the bookshelves at the back of the room. From the set of encyclopedia, he would invariably pick out the volume, “T.” In this volume was the gripping painting of a Kansas farmer and his family fleeing for their storm-shelter before a funnel bearing down on them. The young man had studied this small painting for hours. Fear was on the faces of the family. The painting left doubt whether the terrified couple and their young children could make it to the shelter, or whether they would escape if they did. There was the same sickly green tint to the painting that the young man now saw, not on the page of a book, but in the air. Irresistibly drawing the attention and transfixing the imagination was the looming tornado, falling out of the billowing, black heavens upon a frightened, defenseless earth.

The reality was all the picture suggested, and more—much, much more.



*“The tornado would claim one last victim in the Hudsonville area near Baldwin Street and 28th Avenue. The tornado was photographed around this time from about 2 miles south. The photo shows a large tornado funnel in contact with the ground, along with the yellow sky and greenish storm clouds that were mentioned by many eyewitnesses.” Quote and pictures from [www.crh.noaa.gov/grr/science/10560403/vriesland\\_trufant/](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/grr/science/10560403/vriesland_trufant/).*

The tornado was huge, monstrously huge. It was not the slender, curved, even graceful cloud of the painting. It was hardly a funnel. Rather, it was an enormous, squat column, nearly as wide at its bottom as at the top. Its top was not high. The reason was the lowering mass of black cloud from which the tornado descended.

Nor was its color the almost attractive gray of the tornado of the painting. Instead, it was a deep and fearsome black—the black of the third horse of the Apocalypse.

One element of the tornado, the painting could not express, and for this the young man was altogether unprepared: the sound. It was a roaring, as though creation had found a voice.

The voice sounded from on high. It reverberated from the earth beneath. It echoed in all directions, especially in that toward which the tornado was moving, which, to the young man, was directly through the farmyard. As creation is vast, so its voice is loud. The volume, unbearable at a distance, increased as the tornado came on. It was the voice of fury and power.

The response of the young man was not so much fear, although he was afraid, as awe—awe as before Jehovah God of Israel come to judge the wicked world in the wrath of His holiness.

He did not cower before it, although he had immediately made up his mind to take flight at high speed. But it captivated him. He marveled at it with a wonder

foolishly bordering on admiration. He was determined to hold out on his farmyard vantage-point until the last possible moment—seeing, hearing, feeling.

Fifty years later, the memory is vivid and detailed. The tornado-scene of April 3, 1956 is as distinct as the painting on the page of the encyclopedia. There are the low, red out-buildings to the right; the barn a little farther off; the teenage boy in jeans and tee-shirt, with a container of salve for the chapped teats of the cows in his back pocket; Cliff on his left; the ghastly hue of nature; and the great, black, vertical cloud filling the southwestern sky, coming on inexorably like Death and Destruction.

Although the event would prove that the tornado was to pass the farmyard a little more than a mile to the northwest, on its appointed path to Standale, it seemed to the young man, as it seemed to the unexcitable farmer, that the farmyard was the bulls-eye

at which the tornado aimed.

“I’m going down the basement,” Tanis said. “Come with me.”

Hunkering down before the approaching storm appealed to the young man not at all. Deliberate exposure of oneself to this fury and power, basement or no basement, was simply unthinkable.

Flight and escape alone made sense.

The young man had the means at hand. He owned a 1953 Ford hard-top convertible. The stick-shift could do sixty or better in second gear. He knew this, because going sixty in second gear through Grandville recently, in order to let the twin glass-pack mufflers sound off when he let up on the gas pedal, had cost him a hefty fine, as well as a stern lecture from Police Chief Schipper in the presence of the young man’s frowning father. The car was parked in the farmyard.

Tanis ran for house and family. The young man sprinted for his car.

They stopped simultaneously, struck by the same thought. Charlie! In a converted chicken coop on the edge of the orchard just beyond the farmyard, in the direction of the tornado, lived Charlie, a sixty year-old drifter, who worked at odd jobs about the farm. His main task was trimming the apple trees during the winter months. That is, Charlie worked when he was not drunk, which was much of the time. He was drunk this evening. Responding to the pounding on his door and the shouts,

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“Charlie, wake up; a tornado is coming,” the bewildered sot stumbled out of the chicken-coop. His gray hair was matted. The old shirt and pants in which he had been sleeping the sleep of the drunken were wrinkled and spotted. He was barefoot.

In his stupor, Charlie had not the faintest idea of the impending peril. He never looked in the direction of the tornado. But one thing registered through his fog. From the look on the faces and the sound of the voices of his would-be deliverers, it became clear to Charlie that he must take immediate action to avoid real, though unknown, disaster.

At that point, Charlie made his second mistake of the day. He chose to flee with the young man, rather than to seek shelter with the farmer in the basement of his house.

With Charlie in the back seat and the young man’s blond German Shepherd in her accustomed spot on the passenger seat, the young man fled before the roaring tornado, which by now, he was convinced, was heading east on Burton Street behind him, and not very far behind him at that. His route was east on Burton Street, across Kenowa Avenue—the divider between Kent and Ottawa counties—to Wilson Avenue and safety.

Now fear reigned—sheer, naked fear. It commanded the accelerator. The young man floored it. He was doing fifty when he crossed the intersection of Burton Street and Kenowa Avenue. The intersection had neither yield nor stop sign in those days. Besides, it was a blind intersection. Had another car entered the intersection at that moment, the tornado would have been the cause of several more deaths than those that actually resulted.

As the car raced across Kenowa Avenue, every spring snapped. Neither Burton Street nor Kenowa Avenue was paved in 1956. Both of the gravel roads were deeply rutted. An earlier spring thaw had been followed by freezing temperatures. April 2 had been cold. April 3 saw a dramatic rise in temperature. The thermometer rose rapidly to 80 degrees. This clash of cold and heat explained the tornado, weather-wise.

The breaking of the springs did not slow the car down. But it did make a wild ride wilder as the car leaped from rut to rut.

From the farmyard on Burton Street to Wilson Avenue are half a mile and a couple of minutes. The trip was quicker that evening. When Charlie set out from the farmyard, he was dead drunk. When the car stopped at Wilson Avenue, Charlie was stone-cold sober, if only

temporarily. Terror had done it, not of the tornado, but of the ride. When in answer to Charlie’s demand for an explanation of the hair-raising ride the young man said, “tornado,” Charlie responded with what may have been the most heart-felt words he had ever spoken, “D—, I rather die in a tornado.”

Stopping was foolish. If the tornado had been following him, as the young man supposed and as might very well have been the case, it would have caught him there, and Charlie would have had his druthers. In fact, stopping gave the young man his second magnificent view of the tornado.

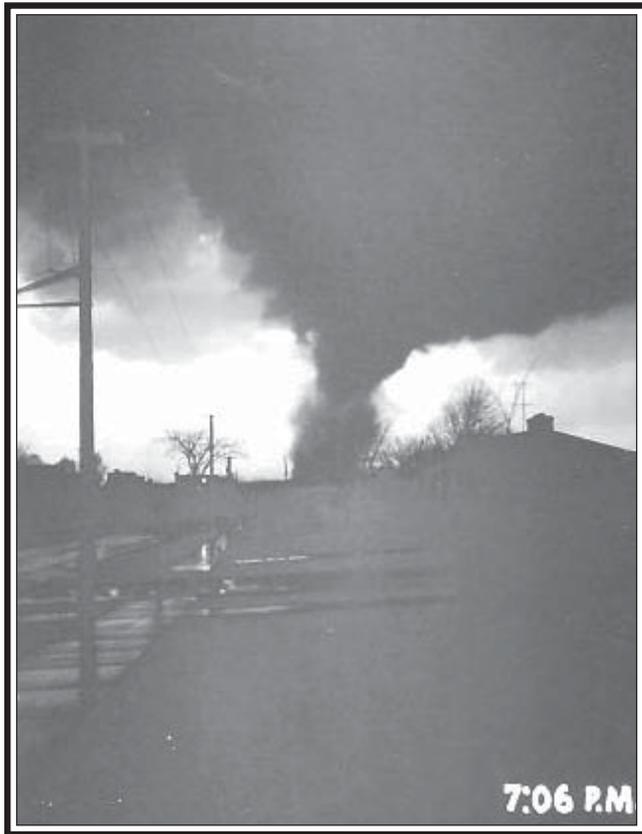
At the point where Burton Street crosses it, Wilson Avenue is high. It is the top of Johnson Park hill. The spot afforded, and still does afford, an excellent view down its straight length northward, past the muck fields at Hall Street, to the intersection of Wilson Avenue and Lake Michigan Drive, a distance of about three miles. The intersection of Wilson Avenue and Lake Michigan Drive was the western extremity of the little town of Standale, which extended eastward on Lake Michigan Drive a half-mile or so.



From the top of Johnson Park hill, looking about to discover the relationship of the tornado to himself, the young man saw the tornado crossing Wilson Avenue a little south of Lake Michigan Drive. It would make its way virtually down Lake Michigan Drive from west to east through the Standale business district.

It was massive. With the low-lying cloud-bank that was its base, it did not dominate the northern horizon; it

obliterated the northern horizon. Almost three miles away and moving away from the young man, it was still threatening—heart-shrinkingly threatening. Strangely, the tornado was gray in color now, even whitish on its fringes. It was not as sharply out-lined as it had been, though it was still unmistakably a tornado. High up its side, debris could be clearly seen—apparently large sections of lumber, indeed whole buildings.



Another man, who had also stopped to view the tornado, remarked, accurately as it turned out, “There goes Standale.”

Then the young man did something that puzzles him to this day. With Charlie in tow, he drove his sagging car south on Wilson Avenue into Grandville. The only conceivable explanation is that an irrational fear of the tornado moved him to put as much distance between it and himself as possible. Irrational, at that point, because he knew that tornadoes in general and this one in particular traveled from southwest to northeast. The tornado was not going to make a U-turn up Wilson Avenue.

No one who saw and heard the tornado at close quarters that evening would have criticized the young man for continuing his flight, or would even have had difficulty understanding his reaction.

The decision to keep running enabled the young man to get his third, clear look at the tornado. He stopped at the intersection of 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Wilson Avenue in Grandville. Today the intersection is large and busy. Both Wilson Avenue and 28<sup>th</sup> Street are busy, four-lane streets. The I-196 expressway adds its traffic. In 1956, Wilson Avenue and 28<sup>th</sup> Street were two-lane roads with little traffic. There was no expressway. On the north side of 28<sup>th</sup> Street, at the junction with Wilson Avenue, was a little, two-pump Standard Oil station. There, with the attendant and a few others, the young man had another good view of the tornado. By this time, it was north of Grand Rapids, having skirted the city on the west. Likely, it was in the vicinity of Alpine Avenue.

The tornado was farther away now. In addition, it was framed in a much broader horizon—the entire northern sky, stretching away both to east and west as far as the eye could see. As a result, the tornado appeared smaller. It now had the perfect shape of a funnel. There was even a slight curve to its form. The top of the tornado was much higher in the sky than it had been when first the young man saw it. Once again, the tornado was black. Oddly, its tip seemed not quite to reach the ground.

He watched it out of sight on its way to Rockford. Charlie did not get out of the car.

His fear abated, the young man returned to the farm. The farmer and he had to milk the rest of the now impatient, and noisy, cows by hand, and in the light of a lantern. There was no power.

It was the farmer’s suggestion that they drive into Standale to see the destruction.

In the farmer’s pick-up, they got as far north on Wilson Avenue as a few blocks south of Lake Michigan Drive. There the police had added their barricade to that of felled trees caused by the tornado as it came across the road. Back-tracking, the two turned up O’Brien Road to Cummings Avenue and took Cummings Avenue as far as the wreckage strewn by the tornado allowed. The two then walked through the fields into what had been Standale. They came onto the edge of the little town near the intersection of Cummings Avenue and Lake Michigan Drive. They crawled on hands and knees the last distance to avoid detection.

What met their eyes was utter devastation. Standale was no more. More accurately, Standale was rubble. Here was the effect on man and his works of the fury and power sensed earlier. Adding to the eerie atmosphere of desolation were the sea of flood-lights bathing the ruins and the flashing, multi-colored lights of a fleet of emer-



agency vehicles as men and women went about to recover the dead and rescue the injured.

Standale was rubble with two notable exceptions. These exceptions fixed for the first time in the young man's mind the problem of divine providence, which, as a Calvinist, he believed as firmly as he now believed the existence of tornadoes.

A little to the west on Lake Michigan Drive from where the two crouched in the underbrush, across Wilson Avenue from each other were two notorious dens of iniquity. One was the Vista Drive-in Theater. The other was a "beer garden." Among the Dutch Reformed in the Riverbend area in 1956, these two blots on the landscape had roughly the same reputation that the French Quarter during Mardi Gras has with Christians in New Orleans today.

Neither of these blots had been removed. Neither had been touched. The tornado had spared them both. *Providence* had spared them both. By a few hundred feet!

While honorable grocery stores, department stores, other businesses, and even residences were demolished and scattered, and their upright inhabitants killed or maimed, the Vista Theater and the unsavory tavern were passed by. The denizens of the tavern were as safe and sound as if they had been in a storm cellar in Kansas.

"The vagaries of capricious nature," explains the naturalist, although the explanation would not have calmed his heart, had he looked left and right, up and down Lake Michigan Drive that dreadful evening.

A severe test of faith for a sixteen-year-old Reformed believer, who had from childhood sung Psalm 104 with all his heart: "He rides on the clouds, the wings of the storm/ The lightning and wind His mission perform."

On some future April the third, when the grandchildren have grown up a little, around 6 in the evening, the young man, now fifty years older, plans to gather with his grandchildren on the knoll of the farmyard where once he watched the F-5 tornado of 1956. The farmyard remains much as it was then, although Charlie's chicken coop is gone. He will assemble also as many of his children who fail to escape the call to meet, shamefully using every excuse imaginable to avoid hearing the "tale of the tornado" yet again.

There, on the scene, he will try to describe the indescribable.

He will advise them not to attempt to outrun a tornado, as he himself did, but to find shelter in a basement. His advice, however, will go further (for the problem of providence that troubled him as he lay in the rain and darkness along Lake Michigan Drive fifty years ago by no means destroyed his faith): The ultimate refuge from the wrath of Jehovah God expressed a little in an F-5 tornado is the cross of Jesus Christ.

And the ultimate hope of men and women concerning such violent storms is not earlier detection and warning, although these are much to be desired. Comes the day when the Lord Jesus will say to the creation that now groans and roars in its fury and power, but also in its hope, "Peace, be still." ❖

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*The "young man" in the piece is the writer, David J. Engelsma. He is a native of Western Michigan, having been born in Grand Rapids and having grown up in the "Riverbend" area. He resides with his wife and youngest daughter in Grand Rapids.*

*Hundreds of times over the years, after April 3, 1956, to the present day, when in spring and early summer the dark clouds roll in from the southwest and the air becomes sultry, he has gone outside to scan the skies, dreading to see a funnel. He is glad he saw the tornado of April 3, 1956—three times. He hopes he never sees another.*

*The painting that fascinated him in childhood is Tornado Over Kansas by John Steurat Curry. The original, he has recently discovered, is at the Muskegon Museum of Art. He intends to see it.*

# The Important Calling of a Father

by Stephanie Koole

A father, as a parent, has an important calling in this world. When considering the calling and responsibilities of a father, one can look to the example which God has set as our Heavenly Father. In Ephesians 4:6, Paul says that there is, “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” There is no greater example to whom we can look than to God, the Father, who is above all.

One example our Heavenly Father sets is by ruling over us, His children. As ruler, He governs and directs our lives. An earthly father must follow this example by ruling his family in such a way that he controls and leads his family in the way they should walk. When he uses his authority correctly, the father will find there is order in the home.

Another example God our Father sets is that He cares for and supplies us with our needs. One who is a father must see that he provides for the cares and needs of his family as well. These provisions include both the physical and also the spiritual needs of his family.

God, our Heavenly Father, also communes with us. He listens to us when we come to Him, and He is patient with us. God talks to us in the preaching of the Word. So also, fathers are to make sure they have time to commune with their families. They must listen and talk with their families about what is happening in their lives. This takes great patience as fathers, but God will grant fathers the patience in dealing with their families.

Following the examples of God, a father must see the importance and seriousness of his calling which he must daily strive to perform. In all callings of life, a father is to teach and instruct his family in the ways of the Lord. In order for him to guide his family in this way, he himself must first know the Scriptures. Therefore, he must not be caught up in the things of this world, but rather must have time to read and study the Scriptures. Only by spending time in the Scriptures will he be able to answer the questions of his family when they come to him. He will also find strength and encouragement in his calling as he studies the Scriptures.

In today’s world, the role and calling of a father is not taken seriously, but is often shoved aside. The men and fathers of this world have no self-denial but rather seek only what pleases their own flesh. The dangers of this world often creep up and influence even our own fathers. One of these dangers is spending too much time and energy in one’s work whether it is because one’s work is busy or because one seeks to advance his status. Therefore, when the father gets home he is tired and has little, if any time at all, to spend with his family.

Another danger fathers face is being gone on vacations all the time, leaving family behind, so that they might chase after hobbies whether they be skiing, snowmobiling, hunting or fishing. Yet another danger is that one spends many nights away from his family playing in sports tournaments or going out with the guys, because he doesn’t want to grow up.

These are dangers which a father must seriously consider and take warning against lest they consume his time. If a father is too busy chasing after these things, he will have no time for his family. As a result, his family will suffer, because they aren’t being cared for or instructed as they ought to be.

When a father guides, teaches, and communes with his family as he ought, there will be great blessing. In ruling his family as he ought, there will be peace. Instructing his family, they together will grow in the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord. As he communes with his family, they will grow together in love for one another. Our fathers must pray that God might strengthen and lead them in bringing up their families. Those who are not fathers also need to pray for those who are or will soon be fathers. May they be thankful for the calling which God has given them and be comforted with God’s promise in Psalm 128:6, “Yea, thou shalt see thy children’s children, and peace upon Israel.” ❖

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*Stephanie is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

# Watching Daily At My Gates

## The Song of Zion

“A Psalter–Psalm Devotional of Praise to Our Sovereign Covenant God”

by John Huizenga

### July 1 Read Isaiah 29:18-24

**Psalm 22:26** In Matthew 5 we read that one of the characteristics of a citizen of the kingdom of heaven is meekness. We also read in Galatians 5 that meekness is one of the fruits of the Spirit. In today’s verse we read that the meek will be satisfied by God both physically and spiritually. He will care for their every need. The meek will be known because they praise Jehovah because they seek him. People of God, are you meek? Young people, if a character sketch were written about you, would meekness be one of your traits? Children, do you get along with your brothers and sisters? Did you fight today because you wanted your way? Meekness is a characteristic which needs to be cultivated. There is great blessedness in being meek. Pray to God for this precious fruit of the Spirit. Sing Psalter 48:4, 50:1, and 51:3.

### July 2 Read Matthew 28:16-20

**Psalm 22:27** The Jews of the Old Testament could not conceive of a church that encompassed all kinds of people. Sometime we as believers of the new dispensation have the same problem. But yet there are many evidences in both the Old and New Testament that the church of Jesus Christ is truly a catholic that is universal church. In the church triumphant are members from all places in the world. There are members of all skin colors. There will be many nations represented around the throne of God in heaven. But there will be one church. We sometimes forget this truth. We would like everyone in the church to look like us. Sometimes we are no better than the Pharisees of Jesus’s day. Let us remember our missionaries as we pray today. Let us remember those people of God who are in other lands. Let us pray that the gospel may be spread to all nations and realize by doing so that the day of the Lord draws closer and closer. Sing Psalter 48:5, 49:1 and 50:2.

### July 3 Read Revelations 4:1-11

**Psalm 22:28** The kingdom is the Lord’s and He is King. Is this our conception of heaven? Are we looking for the new Jerusalem in which God will reign and we will bow to His sovereign will? Or, are we looking just for an earthly utopia with out sin and its related troubles? This was the disciples’ conception of the kingdom even up until Christ’s ascension into heaven. As elect who have matured by much study of scripture, we, too, must realize that heaven’s glory will be found in God. We must be looking for that place in which God rules

and we will enjoy that rule. It is hard for us who are earthly to conceive of this. Let us work at it by daily study of the Bible and by prayers that ask for help in this idea. Sing Psalter 48:6, 49:2, and 50:2.

### July 4 Read I Timothy 2:1-8

**Psalm 22:29** People of God, do you pray for the salvation of those elect who are governing you? The passage in I Timothy is often misrepresented as teaching that God wants all men saved. This is not so as can be easily demonstrated from other parts of scripture. Our verse for today tells us that God gathers His church from all parts of society as well as all nations which we saw two days ago. As we celebrate our country’s birthday, let us remember that among its leaders may be God’s people and we have a duty to pray for them. We must pray for government that it carry out the will of God. This, too, is fact. But we also must pray for the salvation of those in authority over us who belong to the church. Sing Psalter 48:74, 49:3, and 50:3.

### July 5 Read Psalm 22:23-31

**Psalm 22:30-31** These final two verses of this Psalm indicate another group of elect believers. This is the covenant seed which God graciously gives to the church. We sometimes use the term church latent to refer to those yet to be born. God’s covenant faithfulness is evident here. He is faithful to His church. Do we reflect this faithfulness as we make decisions in our lives? Do we make decisions in marriage that show we wish to bring forth covenant seed and pray for a quiver full? Do we work hard to give to all of our children the covenant education that God demands of us? We read in these verses that the covenant seed will come. Will it come from us or will God remove our candlestick from our midst and raise up another generation to serve Him. These are serious things, and God’s counsel will be done. Pray for the covenant seed that we have, and pray for future seed who will declare God’s righteousness. Sing Psalter 48:8, 49:3, and 50:3.

### July 6 Read Psalm 23

**Psalm 23:1** This familiar Psalm has comforted saints young and old from age to age. David undoubtedly composed this as he sat with his sheep on the hillsides near Bethlehem. Is his confession your confession? What a beautiful thing to know that because Jehovah is our shepherd, we will want nothing. Even the youngest of our children can understand these words.

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As we enter God's house today, let us seek His word so that we truly can understand what it means to want nothing. Let us cast our every care upon Him because He careth for us in every situation in life. Teach the Psalm and its meaning to your families and they will walk in the green pastures all the days of their lives. Sing Psalter 52.

### **July 7 Read Ezekiel 34:11-16**

**Psalm 23:2** Yesterday we began our study of this familiar short Psalm. Today we wish to consider the idea of our Shepherd. Our Shepherd is heavenly meaning He has none of the frailties of earthly shepherds. We can count on Him to guide us in all ways. We can count on Him leading us in the places which are good for us. He will take us to the pastures which are lush with the good things for our spiritual lives. He will bring us to water which is good to drink; water which is living water. Are you following this shepherd? Are you staying on the paths marked out by His gracious care? Pray for the grace to do so and give thanks for the faithful shepherd that we have. Sing Psalter 53.

### **July 8 Read Luke 15:1-7**

**Psalm 23:3** In today's passage we read that our Shepherd is a seeking shepherd. We see this in the third verse of Psalm 23 as well. Our Shepherd not only looks after our physical needs, he also cares for our souls. Satan wants our souls, you know. He will try anything to capture them. But our Shepherd is caring for us. The second part of the verse speaks about leading us on the paths of righteousness. People of God, are you content to be led upon these paths? Are you willing to forsake the paths of pleasure in order to walk upon our Shepherd's carefully ordained paths? He does this for His name's sake. He does this so that He will be glorified. But for us the benefit will be the eternal dwelling place He is preparing for us. Walk those paths with the comfort that they are good paths and for a good purpose. Sing Psalter 54.

### **July 9 Read I Corinthians 15:51-58**

**Psalm 23:4** Death is all around us. We are born beginning to die. There is much evidence in creation that the punishment for sin is death. But we as the people of God do not have to fear death. We may mourn the death of a loved one. We will feel the pain that his death brings to us. But we have no fear of the consequences to the soul after death. Even as we traverse this world and its reminders of death on every side, we need not fear. Our Shepherd is near us. He watches over us. He gives to us the comfort needed to bear the pain the death of a loved one brings us. He does this because He loves us. The death of believers is precious in His sight. This should give to us the confidence to live our lives completely to the glory of God knowing that afterward He will lead us into that glory that is His now. Sing Psalter 55.

### **July 10 Read Joel 2:21-27**

**Psalm 23:5** A sheep has many natural enemies. Some of them are the parasites which inhabit its body and slowly drain its life force from it. Some of them are predators who seek to

kill the sheep for food. God's people have enemies as well. Satan has his predators and parasites whose goal is the kill the sheep of God. Our Shepherd knows this very well. He has experienced all of the temptations known to man except sin and has conquered them for us. He will lead us through the battles. With His word in our hearts and mouths we can fight off sin and Satan and rule victoriously with Him in heaven. Fight against sin, young people. Do not give into Satan and his wiles. Look to your Shepherd who will help you in all troubles. "Without Him we can do nothing," Sing Psalter 56.

### **July 11 Read Psalm 23**

**Psalm 23:6** We come to the victorious conclusion of this most comforting Psalm. Our Shepherd at the close of our lives or at the end of this world will lead us home to heaven. No matter what troubles caused us grief in this life, goodness and mercy will be ours in the life to come. We have this assurance now. That the victory is ours is sure because of the death of Christ. Of this we have no reason to doubt! What a comfort it is to know this. Do not doubt that heaven is a real place. Do not doubt that we will spend eternity in the house of our God in covenant fellowship with Him and the Lamb. Rejoice in this, confess this, and above all put your trust in the Shepherd who knows His sheep and will not let one of them be plucked from His hand. Sing your favorite of Psalms 52-56 or all of them if you are so inclined.

### **July 12 Read Psalm 24**

**Psalm 24:1-2** Do you believe in God? Do you believe that He created the heavens and the earth? The first two verses of Psalm 24 state creation as a fact and not an option. There is no maybe about whose earth we live on and who made it. It is God's, and all of it is God's. What a comforting fact this is to the people of God. We have a God who is so mighty that He created the earth on which we live. He sustains it by His providence, and it continues to exist. A God that is this powerful and mighty can surely ordain our salvation and carry it out until the end. Never let Satan snatch this comfort from you, people of God. Hold on to this truth, and it will sustain you all the days of your lives. Sing Psalter 57:1 and 59:1.

### **July 13 Read Matthew 5:1-12**

**Psalm 24:3-4** Are you a citizen of the kingdom of heaven? Do you follow the rules of that kingdom? That is the thought of today's verses. We read the passage commonly called the beatitudes. While sometimes they are held up as good guidelines for man, they are more than that. They are an expansion of the thoughts of Psalm 24:3-4. As you go or have gone about the day's work, were your hands clean and your hearts pure? Will God judge you as worthy of appearing at His holy hill? Have you determined to use only pure words in your business or play? If so then God will give you an audience in His holy place. How is this possible? Not by our works as we know that they are nothing but filthy rags. It is possible only by faith in Him who made heaven and earth. Sing Psalter 57:2 and 59:2.

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## July 14 Read Ephesians 2:1-10

**Psalm 24:5** In the meditation for the first verses of this Psalm I alluded to the fact that the creator God is also the God of our salvation. This is more fully brought out in today's verse. First of all we must see that verse 5 is a conclusion of yesterday's thoughts. The man of clean hands and pure heart will receive a blessing from the Lord. That blessing is nothing less than salvation. Notice that this salvation is not earned, but it is received. This salvation can only be found from God. The passage in Ephesians made this abundantly clear. What a benefit it is to have clean hands and pure heart. Pray to God for the grace to have these things and live the life of the true citizen of the kingdom. Sing Psalter 57:3.

## July 15 Read Isaiah 55

**Psalm 24:6** Young people, is it said of you that you are the generation that seeks after God? Do you look for the face of God daily and hourly? This is an important concept. Parents, you can not begin at too early an age to teach your children about seeking the Lord. This seeking is not a prerequisite to election, but rather this seeking is the walk of sanctification and gratitude for salvation. Young people, as you look for entertainment, is it entertainment that seeks the glory of God? As you look for a husband or wife, will he or she be someone who will seek Jehovah with you? To do anything less is not seeking the God of Psalm 24. As we read in Isaiah 55 seeking Jehovah has beautiful benefits. Let us seek Him with our whole being. Sing Psalter 59:3.

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Church Family

# Reflections on the Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Fayetteville

by Kris Moelker

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” These words of Jesus found in Matthew 25:40 come to my mind as I reflect on my recent trip to Fayetteville, North Carolina. This text is found in the passage where Jesus speaks of His final coming when He will separate the sheep (believers) from the goats (unbelievers). As children of God, we are called to care for our brothers and sisters in Christ, wherever we may come into contact with them whether they be those in our home, school, church or in small groups in the USA and throughout the world.

On March 29, 1998, the Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Fayetteville, North Carolina began to meet. At first, they heard the reading of a previously preached sermon. Later, they used videos and then DVDs to hear the preaching of the Word of God. The fellowship consists of two families and two individuals. They desire to establish a formal relationship with our churches. The Domestic Mission Committee of our churches has guided the fellowship for the past eight years. They have sent ministers and elders to encourage the fellowship on a regular basis. During the past year, the fellowship has had monthly visits from a pastor or an elder representing the Domestic Mission Committee.

Located sixty-three miles south of Raleigh, Fayetteville has a population of over one hundred twenty-one thousand. It is the home of Fort Bragg, an United States Army base, which is located northwest of the city.

On March 16-20, I accompanied my parents, Mr. and Mrs. David Moelker, to visit the Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Fayetteville, North Carolina, on behalf of the Domestic Mission Committee. This was my third visit, and I felt blessed to be able to be involved in this work. What a privilege to get to know them better as we visited and worshipped the Lord together.

As I reflect on the visit, I am grateful to God for the many opportunities we have in our congregations and on the mission field to gather together for Bible Study. In our congregations, we have Sunday School, societies and Bible classes for children, young people, young adults and adults. In Fayetteville, we had a Bible Study with most of the group and a few visitors gathered around the table eager to discuss the covenant and seeking a lifelong mate. It was an edifying experience for both old and young to discuss this important aspect of the lives of many believers.

As we prepared for the Lord's Day, we had opportunity to gather together on Saturday evening for a pizza supper and fellowship with the group. On this evening,

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the Lord gave us opportunity to meet more visitors. A young woman who had visited on Thursday evening brought her family and a friend to supper. We had an opportunity to visit with another woman who had supper with us. During this meal, we had Christian fellowship with each other. At the conclusion of the meal, we read a passage from Isaiah 53 reading and explaining proof texts for each text, and we sang a few Psalter numbers and prayed together. Then we had more time to visit and some played a few rounds of Speed Scrabble.

On Sunday, we met for worship services in the morning and evening. Three visitors joined us for worship in the evening. Worshipping with these fellow believers, I was again struck by the reality that each Lord's Day, God's people throughout the world worship their Creator assembled in large or small groups. God speaks to us through the preaching of the Word whether we are sitting in a church building, a small meeting room or wherever we have the opportunity to meet to hear His Word proclaimed. On this Lord's Day, we heard God speak to us through His servants by means of a DVD. We heard the powerful message of the gospel, and the

Lord was speaking to the heart of each person in the building. The group was also privileged to hear my mother use the keyboard to accompany the singing instead of singing with the DVD.

Our trip to Fayetteville once again impressed upon us the need we all have as believers for fellowship whether in our churches or with contacts outside our churches. All of us are called to encourage each other in our walk with the Lord. Our brothers and sisters in small groups like the Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Fayetteville often feel isolated. We need to remember them in prayer daily and as we go to church each Lord's Day. If we have the opportunity, we should go visit and spend a Lord's Day with them. In doing this, we show our love for all our brothers and sisters in Christ, and will experience the Lord's blessing now and on the final day when He shall say to His people "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" Matthew 25:34. ❖

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*Kris is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

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## Our Young People's Federation

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# Federation Board Nominations

by Emily Hockstra

The end of the school year is in sight once again. As school will be drawing to a close the summer will start; and the big highlight for our young people is the up-coming convention. As always, the delegates from each Young People's Society will meet at the convention to elect the new officers nominated by the Fed Board. The elected members will take their new positions in the end of Summer 2007.

The nominees for the office of Vice President are Jon Mingerink and Karl Dykstra. Jon is 20 and attends Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. He is a student at Grand Valley State University. He hopes that the Fed Board might continue in its faithful governance of the Protestant Reformed Young Peoples Federation and that all of the members "must know it to be his duty, readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts, for the advantage and salvation of other members" (Lord's Day 21 Q&A 55).

At age 19, Karl Dykstra attends Trinity Protestant Reformed Church. While attending Grand Valley State University, he also works for Dykstra Cement Contractors. He has great new ideas for the Fed Board, which include improvements made to the scholarship fund, as well as additional topics for the *Beacon Lights* magazine. He would like to see more articles written by ministers concerning current issues that young people face like "blogging," Internet use, and sexual purity.

The two nominations for Vice Treasurer are David DeBoer and Eric Pastoor. David DeBoer is 20 years old and attends Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. He is currently a student. His goals for the Fed Board are to continue to serve our young people to the best of his ability.

Eric Pastoor is 19 and attends Trinity Protestant Reformed Church. He is working for Kleyn Electric. He

hopes to bring different ideas to the Fed Board about the planning of conventions to the end that more young people stay involved and interested in the things of the church.

Holly Lotterman and Leah Koole are the nominations for the office of Vice Secretary. At age 21, Holly attends Grandville Protestant Reformed Church. She is working as a secretary at Mingerink and Associates. Keeping in mind the day and age in which we live, Holly hopes to see the Fed Board, as a mature, godly group of young people, continue to work hard to encourage all of our young people to live apart from the things of this world. The work of the Fed Board is, after all, the work of the Kingdom of God among His people and we cannot forget how precious the lives of His children are. Currently, she believes a wonderful job is being done, but as God says in His word, the devil never rests and neither should we.

Leah Koole is 18 years old and attends Hope Protestant Reformed Church. While attending Calvin College, Leah also works at Motman's Orchards & Greenhouses. Her goal is to continue the Fed Board's work in keeping the Young People's Societies organized and united. She also hopes to promote spiritual growth of the young people during each society year through annual mass meetings and singspirations; and encourage leadership among other young people.

The nominations for the office of Youth Coordinator are Kurt Van Overloop and Justin Koole. Kurt is 42 and is attending Trinity Protestant Reformed Church. He is current employed as a painting contractor. He wishes to continue the work of the Fed Board by giving sound advice to the officers.



Justin Koole is 28 and currently attends Faith Protestant Reformed Church. He works as a CPA. His goal for the Fed Board is to get the young people of our denomination (not just the members serving on the committee) more involved in church-related activities.

The final office is the office of Spiritual Advisor. Rev. William Langerak and Rev. Garry Eriks are the nominations for this office. Rev. Langerak is minister of the Word at Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. He is 40 years old, and his goals are to give biblical advice regarding the various decisions the Fed Board must make



*Rev. Langerak*

in order to promote energetic and measurable spiritual growth in Protestant Reformed young people, to the glory of God's name in Christ Jesus.

Rev. Eriks is 32 and labors as the pastor of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. He hopes that the Federation Board will continue to be a spiritual blessing to the young people of our churches in the way of uniting them at conven-

tions and other events so that the communion of the saints continues among our young people.

The purpose of this article is to inform our young people of who they will be voting for in the upcoming convention to carry on the work of the Fed Board. The Fed Board asks that our young people prayerfully consider each nominee and the wonderful qualities these brothers and sisters in Christ have for the work of His Kingdom. ❖

*Emily is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church and is Vice-secretary of the Federation Board.*

## Gem of the Month

# In the Beginning

*In the beginning  
Free from all sinning  
God made man good  
Obey he should  
But Adam fell  
Deserving hell  
God sent His Son  
The Holy One  
He paid the price  
A sacrifice  
To save His own  
And them alone*

# Rev. C. Hanko

## Chapter 13

### Hull, Iowa

edited by Karen Van Baren

*Editor's Note: The Hankos arrived in Hull ready and eager to take up their work there. They were newly married and Rev. Hanko newly ordained.*

**M**y new wife and I arrived in Hull on Tuesday morning, September 24. Rev. Verhil met us at the train station. That same evening, Rev. Verhil preached the sermon and ordained me as minister of the gospel in Hull Protestant Reformed Church. The congregation was invited to come into the basement to make acquaintance with the new minister and his wife, but none appeared except for Ed Vander Werff and his family. The wounds made by the trouble with Ben Danhof were still too raw for the people to become enthusiastic about a new minister.

The Hull congregation had started out with 39 families under Ben Danhof. Now there were but twelve families that remained faithful to the truth. Some who left were very bitter toward us. There was a feeling of discouragement among our members. A mere handful was left with the debt of the church and parsonage. There had even developed a spirit of distrust, as if they wondered whether their fellow members would remain faithful. It was a question of survival.

The auditorium that seated about 150-200 people was considered much too large for such a small crowd. On Sunday the congregation met in the basement, and before the service, the consistory met in the furnace room.

On the following Wednesday afternoon Andrew Cammenga was ordained in Rock Valley and in an evening service John De Jong was ordained in Doon. All of this had to be carried out as rapidly as possible, because the Revs. Verhil and Vos had to return to Michigan to attend the fall semester of the seminary. On their way home they had to stop in Pella to ordain Leonard Vermeer into the ministry.

They had to ordain these men while rain came down in torrents. This resulted in cars getting stuck in the mud between Doon and Sioux Center, so that Revs. Vos and Verhil had their prince alberts literally covered with mud.<sup>1</sup> When they arrived in Pella the next day, their suits went to the cleaners while they got some sorely needed sleep.

And so a new life began for my wife and me in our new home in Hull. We were both filled with excitement, especially waiting for the van that would bring most of our goods. This van with a trailer was delayed by engine trouble in the hills around Dubuque, Iowa, so that it did not arrive until three days later on Friday afternoon. Mr. Mulder and Mr. Korhorn, both from First Church, unpacked our part of the load on that same day. On Saturday they unpacked in Rock Valley and in Doon. Since they could not get back home before Sunday as planned, they stayed with us in the parsonage. Mr. Mulder who was a tall man, wore one of my suits with his arms hanging out. Mr. Korhorn, who was a short man, wore a suit with his hands hidden in the sleeves. But we managed. On Monday, they were on their way back home.

And I was faced with a death in the congregation. Grandpa Brunsting was failing rapidly. Before the week was over, I had my first funeral.<sup>2</sup>

Life was pleasant there in Hull. Our married life was like a continuous honeymoon. We had started a new home in what was practically a new house with eight large rooms and new furniture. We were undergoing a new experience of married life, as well as serving in the ministry. Our associates in the ministry were just a phone call away, and once a week we ventured out in our brand new 1929 Chevrolet (purchased for \$560 with money borrowed from my father) to visit one or the other in Doon or Rock Valley.

This new married experience created problems for my wife, who had been accustomed to preparing meals for as many as fifteen people every day. The first pan of

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soup proved to be far too much for two people. There were always plenty of leftover potatoes for frying the next day. Besides, we arrived in the Midwest in the fall of the year without any canned goods to carry us through the winter. We attempted to buy carrots, beans and other vegetables, but soon discovered that the only fresh vegetable available was cabbage. Eating cabbage every day did not sound very appealing. And canned vegetables from the store were rather expensive. But we did manage to get through that first winter with plenty to eat.

Our water supply came from the cistern, but this water was all filtered before it was drawn out. Our washing machine was hand operated, giving me opportunity to spend Monday mornings in the basement pumping the machine. It was only after a few years that we accumulated enough money to buy our first electric washing machine.

There was plenty to occupy my time in the parsonage. Suddenly, I was confronted, for example, with sick visiting. The great-great grandmother (Delia Gritters) of Prof. Barry Gritters was still living. She was in her eighties and needed a regular visit. Her son Egbert (or Ebbe) served in the consistory. Egbert's son Ben lived for a time in Hull, and I baptized one of his boys. Later this boy, named Egbert, moved to California. When I was later pastor in Redlands, I had Egbert in my congregation. And in Hudsonville, shortly before retiring, I had Shirley Vander Kolk, a daughter of Egbert, in my congregation. I baptized her baby boy, named Brian. I pastored six generations of this family. What evidence of God's covenant faithfulness!

But there were also other chores in Hull. There were fairly good-sized catechism classes and societies; there were consistory meetings and last, but not least, two sermons every Sunday. These kept coming around every week. Making sermons seemed like such a tremendous task, that often after the Sunday afternoon service, I found myself in the study preparing for the next Sabbath that always followed the previous one so rapidly.

Although the congregation tended to remain aloof and was reluctant to show any great warmth, there was a bond of love that developed among us. Especially the young people were very happy to have a young minister who came down to their level, so that they enjoyed nothing better than being invited to the parsonage for an evening of fellowship or going out on a picnic.

One exciting event, which took place after a picnic comes to mind. We made it a practice to stay together on the way back from the picnic, taking each one home as

we returned to Hull. So it happened that when we drove up into the Blankespoor yard, we found the kitchen light was lit. This was especially strange because the parents had gone away and the children had left in daylight. So rather than having the three young folk who lived there venture into the house, we decided to ride into town, pick up the policeman and take him back with us. When he approached the house, he too was afraid to enter. So taking his big rifle in hand he shot into the ground and waited for something to happen. When no one came out of the house, he ventured in, only to find that someone had been there, had raided the refrigerator and then had left without taking anything else with him.

The congregation grew steadily. Every summer we would have our services in the auditorium, and then in the fall, to save fuel, we would return to our basement quarters. But before long the basement was packed to capacity. The last person drew his chair in with him. Then we decided to meet upstairs and remained there.

The early members took new courage as the congregation grew. They saw that there was hope for the future and the financial burden was lessening. Yet the wolf was still at the door. The banker threatened time and again to foreclose if we did not pay the interest on the mortgage. There were eight note-signers in the congregation who feared that one or more of them might lose his property through a church foreclosure.

There were a few voices that desired an English service. Only one elder, Mr. Vander Werff, had ears for this request.<sup>3</sup> He began to work for an English service, to the point that the consistory agreed that, if he would attend, he and a few others could have an English service on Sunday evening. This would be a third service. The other elders assured us that they would not be there, and that this service would not last.

As it happened, we did start an evening service. The young people came wondering whether they could understand an English service, since they had never heard one. But this service was cake and ice cream for them. They relished a service in their own language. Slowly the parents came, and soon an English service was held once a month in the morning.

Sioux Center was very upset. They had organized for the very purpose of maintaining Dutch preaching. They even insisted, quite wisely, that since the preaching was in Dutch, the catechism classes had to be taught in Dutch also, even though the children all talked English. There was talk of a protest from them against Hull at the classis, but the consistory must have realized how

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futile that would be, since all the churches in the East had English services.

During those first five years three children came to brighten the parsonage. A little more than a year after we were married, October 10, 1930, Herman was born. What an excitement that created! The other two minister's wives were also pregnant at the same time. Mrs. John De Jong was determined to keep it secret. She thought that she had kept her secret so well that nobody knew that she was expecting. But the Friday evening after Herman was born I had to go to Sioux Center. When I could not restrain myself from telling the people there the good news, they remarked that they thought it was Mrs. De Jong who had given birth.

We had not tried to keep it a secret. That was because Mom was not well during the pregnancy due to her bad heart. The congregation lived in expectation as much as we did. Therefore when I called Mrs. Ed Vander Werff, who had already heard the news on the party line, she was kind enough to ask, "And how is the new father?" There was at least one person who understood the trauma of a father, especially when the baby is born at home.

A new baby not only tells you when you may eat and sleep and controls whatever you do, but it is also the center of attention. Life at home revolved around the little one. Our neighbor, Mrs. Wintermantel, was a great help. She would get up early and finish her own work, in order to come over by us to help. She had given birth to a baby boy named Myron with an open back and a water head, which she nurtured along until he became a normal, healthy child with only a slight stagger. It time, Herman and Myron were good friends.

Going for the mail was a daily ritual in our small town. I often enjoyed taking Herm along in a cart or a sled. One day in the winter I started out and soon realized that the temperature was around zero. I ran as fast as I could but the poor kid was really chilled by the time we came back home. We had to learn to look at the thermometer before venturing out, especially on a cold day.

During our stay in Hull, my parents came to see us. This was when Herm was almost a year old. They came with another couple. All four of our guests saw that Herm was beginning to stand by the furniture and move about from one place to another. They wanted to see him walk alone before they left. This he failed to do, but they were only a few miles down the road when he started walking from one place to another entirely on his own.

The Griffioens also paid us a visit. Pa and Ma with Alex, Nell, Marie and Martha came.<sup>4</sup> Since this was a new experience for them, the kids had a good time there. Later brother John Griffioen came to say with us for awhile. And sister Ada was at our home for quite a length of time.

Sixteen months after Herm was born, Fred joined our family. It was in the latter part of January, just at the time when the January thaw had brought mild weather. Every night of that week the doctor had been warned that he might have to come over in the dead of the night. Yet each night went by and nothing happened. There was special concern at this time because Mother had spent the last six weeks in bed with a urinary problem. On Saturday evening the doctor was once more alerted. Shortly afterwards he was told to come. Evidently he was not in a great hurry, since he had been alerted so often. When he did decide to come, his car had a flat tire. In the meantime, the baby, who weighed less than five pounds, decided to wait no longer, but made his appearance unassisted. Since this was a new experience for me, I dashed over to the neighbor, Mrs. Wintermantel, who was always more than willing to help. She came about the same time that the doctor arrived. So the matter was placed in capable hands. I still wonder whether I had stopped shaking by the time that I climbed to the pulpit that Sunday morning.

The next week the winter once more settled upon us with all its force. The temperature dropped to 30 degrees below zero, and remained there for some time. With a new tiny baby in the house the coal furnace had to be stoked even during the night. But even so, the cold penetrated ever deeper into the walls of the house, until we finally had all the rooms shut off, except the kitchen and the bedroom. But the poor child was still cold, especially at night. So during the day we placed warm water bottles around him and during the night we took him with us into our bed.

Fred grew rapidly. In fact, he had a voracious appetite. This resulted in an attack of colic. The poor little fellow would pull up his legs with cramps so that we walked the floor day and night. We felt as if we had completely worn out the carpets in the living room and dining room. The doctor assured us that at six months this problem would be over. He was right. It was quite a relief to see Fred a much happier baby.

The two boys got along well, as little brothers do. Herm had his fuzzy bunny that kept him content day and night. Fred had his thumb. Wherever Herm went, the

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bunny went. He would go to play with Myron Wintermantel, the neighbor boy, but his companion went along. After a while the bunny was getting pretty shaggy, but that seemed to make no difference. One fateful day he dragged his treasure through the mud. It came home a soggy, hopeless mess and so we had to throw it away. We wondered what would happen when darkness settled upon the manse. But he seemed to realize that he had better not complain because bygones were bygones.

Often during the meals Herm and Fred would be fighting together in their own unique way. So mother decided to sit between them. That did help but they still could not resist leaning forward and growling at each other. When Herm was away, Fred was lost. We had a picture of Fred lying sound asleep on the dining room floor in the middle of the day. What else was there to do when his brother was not around?

In August of 1934, Elaine joined us. Although Mom had problems with the first two pregnancies because of her heart condition, this pregnancy went along very smoothly.

In fact, we were able to travel to Grand Rapids for a vacation that summer. When we arrived back home another experience awaited us. A seminary student had been preaching in Orange City and staying with one of the families of the congregation. This family had a blind daughter, and the student told the parents, very naively, that he thought he was in love with their daughter. The result was that he was sent to our home to be placed under our care. We told him that this was a temporary arrangement, but he took no heed. In fact, the time for the congregational picnic came around and mother decided that it was a matter of expediency that she stay home, for she was nearing the end of this third pregnancy. He felt it his duty to admonish her, since he thought a minister's wife should participate in the congregational activities. At the picnic, I arranged with a family that I would disappear soon after lunch, and that they should take the student home with them. This arrangement was made none too soon, for the next day Elaine came as an addition to the family.

The doctor jokingly said to me, "You want a girl, don't you?" I assured him that it made absolutely no difference to me. Upon Elaine's arrival the doctor said, "Another boy." And then immediately after, "Oh no, it's a girl." When I smiled he said, "See, I knew you wanted a girl." It was true enough that a girl was most welcome after two boys. So our family had grown to five members.

An elderly couple lived in a small house in Sioux Center. Their home was very small, consisting of but two rooms, a living room and a small bedroom. A lean-to with a sloped roof served for the kitchen. They had no central heating, no gas, no running water or other modern conveniences. They had no automobile, but they needed none. The church was only a block or two from their home, and they were but a short distance from the stores on the main street of the town. They knew no luxuries, but felt no need for them. They had lived together for many years, so that they thought alike, and almost looked alike; at least they both wore a look of perfect contentment.

He had been a carpet weaver by trade, and he still did a bit of weaving in a small shop behind the house. It was interesting to watch him as he sat at his loom sending the shuttle back and forth between the warp and the woof. First one shuttle, and then another, and still a third went back and forth as he moved the threads up and down with a foot treadle. To me it appeared as if he would end up with a conglomerate of color without any pattern. When I voiced my fears, he only smiled. Soon the finished product came forth with a beautiful design. One could not help but think that God, according to his perfect plan, weaves his pattern in our lives from day to day. "My life in all its perfect plan was ordered ere my days began" (Psalter 383:2).

This same man was an elder in the church and was very serious about his office. As the oldest elder at the public worship service, he led the consistory into the auditorium, and sat with the other members alongside the pulpit where they could not only plainly see and hear the minister, but also oversee the flock. As an elder's mate, his wife knew how to be "grave, no slanderer, sober, faithful in all things."

I entered their cozy home one evening as they were sitting at opposite ends of the kitchen, where he was reading to her from the Scriptures and she was listening as her knitting needles clicked rapidly in her hands.

As I took a chair the Bible was laid aside. After a bit of pleasant conversation he gave his wife a knowing look and she responded with a smile. A few moments later he again looked at her and again she responded with a smile. Finally he asked, "Wife, aren't you going to make a pot of coffee?" As if taken by surprise, even though she had known all the while, she said, "Oh, is that what you wanted?"

The time came when her husband left her to enter his eternal home in the heavens. His wife stood at his

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bedside well aware that half of her life was snatched from her. With tears running down her face she said, “God knows best, but it is hard to see it.”

And so with God’s grace in giving us people such as these, our churches prospered and grew. ❖

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> In distinction from a cut away coat, a prince albert was a coat with square cut tails.

<sup>2</sup> Grandpa Brunsting was the grandfather of Ray Brunsting of our Hull Church and the great grandfather of Rod Brunsting of Hope Church in Walker, MI.

<sup>3</sup> The Vander Werffs were the parents of Marian Karsemeyer, a member of Faith Church, and also of the late Mrs. George Hoekstra.

<sup>4</sup> The children were the siblings of Mrs. Hanko. Nell Reitsma and Martha De Zeuw are still living and are members of Faith and First Churches, respectively.

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

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## Church History

# At The Lake Of Gennesareth

by J. P. de Klerk

**T**he Lake of Gennesareth is also known as the Sea of Tiberias, or Kinnerèth, and the Arabs gave it the name Bahr Tabarija. The Lord Jesus had been here at the beach as well as on the water with the fishermen. The lake is 21 kilometers long, 12 kilometers wide; the water is 48 meters deep—abounding in fish.

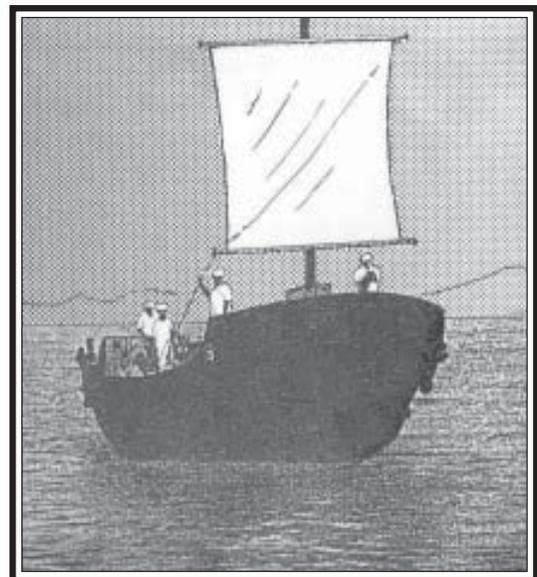
Have you wondered what the fishing boats looked like? That question has been answered by two men in 1980, when they found a ship from the time when Jesus was present. It had laid deeply sunken in the bottom of the lake. Reuven Ben-Dori and Yehuda Smadar carefully restored the ship, which gave them the idea of building a ship of the same shape, but twice as big, with the purpose of giving tourists the opportunity to sail in it.

They could not find a company in Israel who could help them with this but they discovered shipbuilders in Dumiad, 300 kilometers from Cairo, Egypt. They specialized in making original sailing ships for transportation on the Nile River, using traditional wood. They went with them to a village at Kinnerèth and all the inhabitants helped them. The supervisor was an engineer from Haifa named Ya’acov Schlechterman who had worked at the carpenter’s yards in Dumiad. The ship built is 16.5 meters long and 5.2 meters wide and it can hold 55 people. The wood came from the mulberry tree and the

eucalyptus tree. Yehuda Smadar shows his passengers how the disciples once fished. Meanwhile a second ship has been built and the ships have been named after Peter and John. Reuven Ben-Dori have built a special landing area. The picture comes from the “Jerusalem Post.” ❖

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*J. P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from Ashhurst, New Zealand.*



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# The State Reformed Church of Maasdijk

by J. P. de Klerk

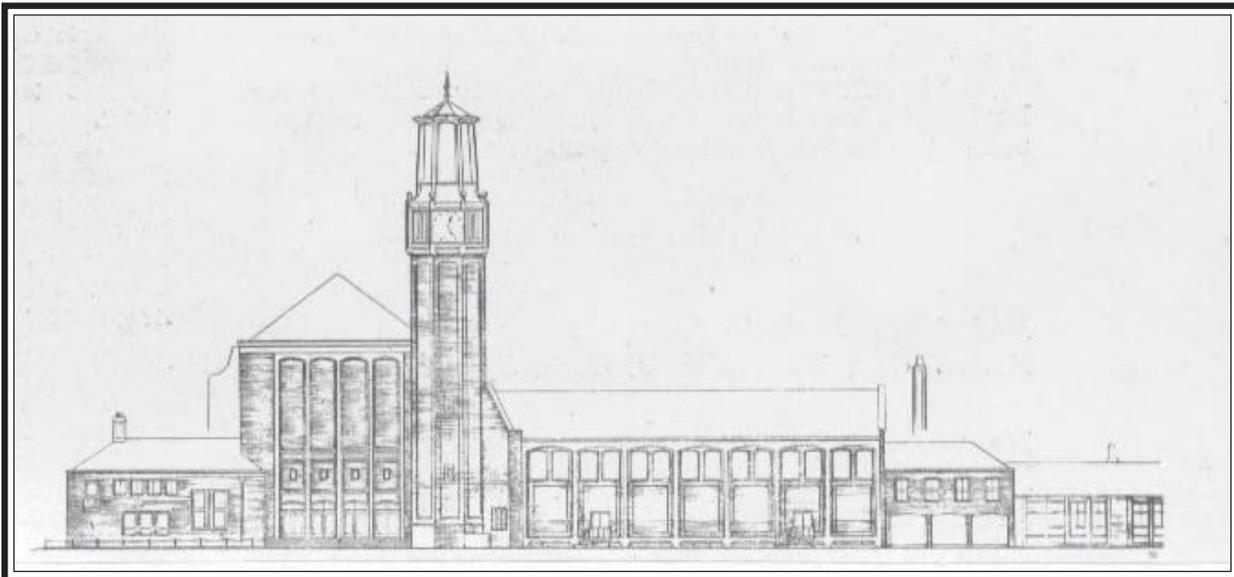
**D**uring WWII (1940–1945), the State Reformed Church of Maasdijk was severely damaged. Maasdijk is part of the town of Naaldwijk, not far from the city of The Hague, in the Dutch province of Zuid-Holland, famous for its market garden produce.

After the war, the church was restored and enlarged by Architect A. Komter. A Christian school has been attached and houses for the minister, the sexton and the head teacher. Halls for manual labor, gymnastics, societies, clubs and rallies have also been built. This was made possible by splitting up the building with a downstairs and an upstairs. (The church itself seats 710.)

It is an impressive building all together. In the drawings you see a view from the street and a more technical view of the southeast facade. ❖

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*J. P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from Ashhurst, New Zealand.*



# 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:  
Nicholas Peter, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jon VanOverloop—  
Faith, MI

Caleb Luke, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brian Decker—Faith, MI  
Elisabeth Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Glenn  
Busscher—Georgetown, MI

Gabriel Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Busscher—  
Georgetown, MI

Colton Pierce, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Boer—  
Georgetown, MI

Sophia Renae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mark  
Meulenberg—Grace, MI

Amber Dawn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Daryl Koole—  
Grace, MI

Trista Anne, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dan Drnek—  
Holland, MI

Makayla Ruth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Scott Hoekstra—  
Hull, IA

Abby Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Barry Pollema—Hull,  
IA

Cheyenne Rae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Grant DeJong—  
Hull, IA

Max Christian, son of Mr. & Mrs. Victor Kuiper—  
Southeast, MI

Deana Kate, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tim Bleyenbergh—  
Trinity, MI

Melvin Robert, son of Mr. & Mrs. Henry Westhuis—  
Trinity, MI

Sean Aiden, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dan McHugh—Wyckoff,  
NJ

## 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:

Jeremiah Busscher—Hudsonville, MI

Cortney Brummel—Hudsonville, MI

Judah Finney—Lynden, WA

## 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. David Zandstra and Miss Jennie Griffioen—Faith, MI

Mr. Brian Baldwin and Miss Debra Slopsema—First, MI

Mr. Mitch Stuive and Miss Kendra Kamminga—  
Hudsonville, MI

Mr. Tom Wigger and Miss Christy VanBaren—  
Hudsonville, MI

Mr. Jason Schipper and Miss Kimberly Doezema—  
Southeast, MI

Mr. Chad Kooienga and Miss Sarah DeJonge—South-  
east, MI

Mr. Michael VanderKolk and Miss Monica Bodbyl—  
Southwest, MI

**Find the following underlined words in the puzzle below:**

Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty.

Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.

Psalm 104:1-3

M	A	W	C	H	A	R	I	O	T	H
Y	S	O	U	L	B	L	E	S	S	M
T	C	C	L	O	T	H	E	D	E	P
S	R	E	B	M	A	H	C	U	R	H
E	S	J	Y	H	C	P	L	O	E	T
J	I	N	O	T	U	S	W	L	V	E
A	T	N	E	M	R	A	G	C	O	K
M	O	R	W	V	T	L	R	N	C	L
R	T	A	B	E	A	M	S	E	I	A
S	L	O	R	W	I	E	V	G	B	W
M	A	S	W	I	N	D	H	C	T	S
H	T	E	Y	A	L	T	A	E	R	G

## A Turn of Events: from Chaos to Comfort (Part 4)

Peter Martyr, Beza, Farel, and John Calvin—all reformers of renown, and all men under whom Caspar Olevianus studied. During an experience that shook the young Olevianus to his inmost being (trying to save a close school friend from drowning and nearly drowning himself), he had vowed to be a preacher of the gospel of the Reformed faith. When his studies in law were finished, he wasted no time in turning his attention to learning the doctrines of the Reformation in preparation to preach. And Caspar learned those doctrines well.

Olevianus was in his early twenties when he was ready to proclaim the gospel, but where should he go? Farel persuaded him to return to his hometown of Treves, a stronghold of Rome. This was indeed Olevianus' desire as well, but there were problems connected with the move. Treves had no Protestant church in which to preach, and besides that, a Protestant preacher would likely not be welcomed. All he could do was teach Latin in the university there. Yet, true to his vow, he moved to Treves and waited for an opportunity to preach.

August 10, 1560 was Olevianus' twenty-fourth birthday. It was also a special holy day for Catholics and he knew the people of Treves would be attending an early mass. He invited them to the university afterwards to



# "LITTLE LIGHTS"

*... let it shine!*

by Connie Meyer

hear him speak. It was a daring thing for this young Latin teacher to do.

A great assembly came to listen, young and old and rich and poor. In fearless and eloquent oration Olevianus told them why the mass and other Catholic practices were wrong. He pointed them to the truth of Scripture. Some of the people were convinced, including the mayor, but others were not. Olevianus was promptly forbidden to use the school again for such assemblies, though he was allowed to begin preaching elsewhere for a time. It would be for a very short time.

Hundreds came to hear the refreshing words of the truth and the light of the Reformation began to shine on Treves. But word also got back to Rome. Archbishop John came with a company of cavalymen to put out that light. He began by persecuting the city from outside its walls and finally stormed the gates. Olevianus, the mayor, and others were thrown into prison.

What would become of Olevianus now? Would anyone hear such eloquent preaching again? What would come of such chaos in Treves?

Frederick III, ruler in Heidelberg, Germany, heard of Olevianus' plight—the same Frederick whose son Olevianus had tried to save from drowning. Frederick sent for him.

But just as Treves was no longer willing to hear Olevianus preach, neither was it willing to let him go. A ransom must be paid.

Negotiations were made. Treves received a huge trunk full of florins, and Frederick received Olevianus—a treasure to far outweigh any gold. Yes, the city of Treves might not hear such preaching again, but the hills of Heidelberg would ring with the beautiful sound of the truth. Such would be the turn of events... ❖

**Read Psalm 27 to find words of great comfort—words that Olevianus would have found especially comforting while he was in prison.**

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

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