

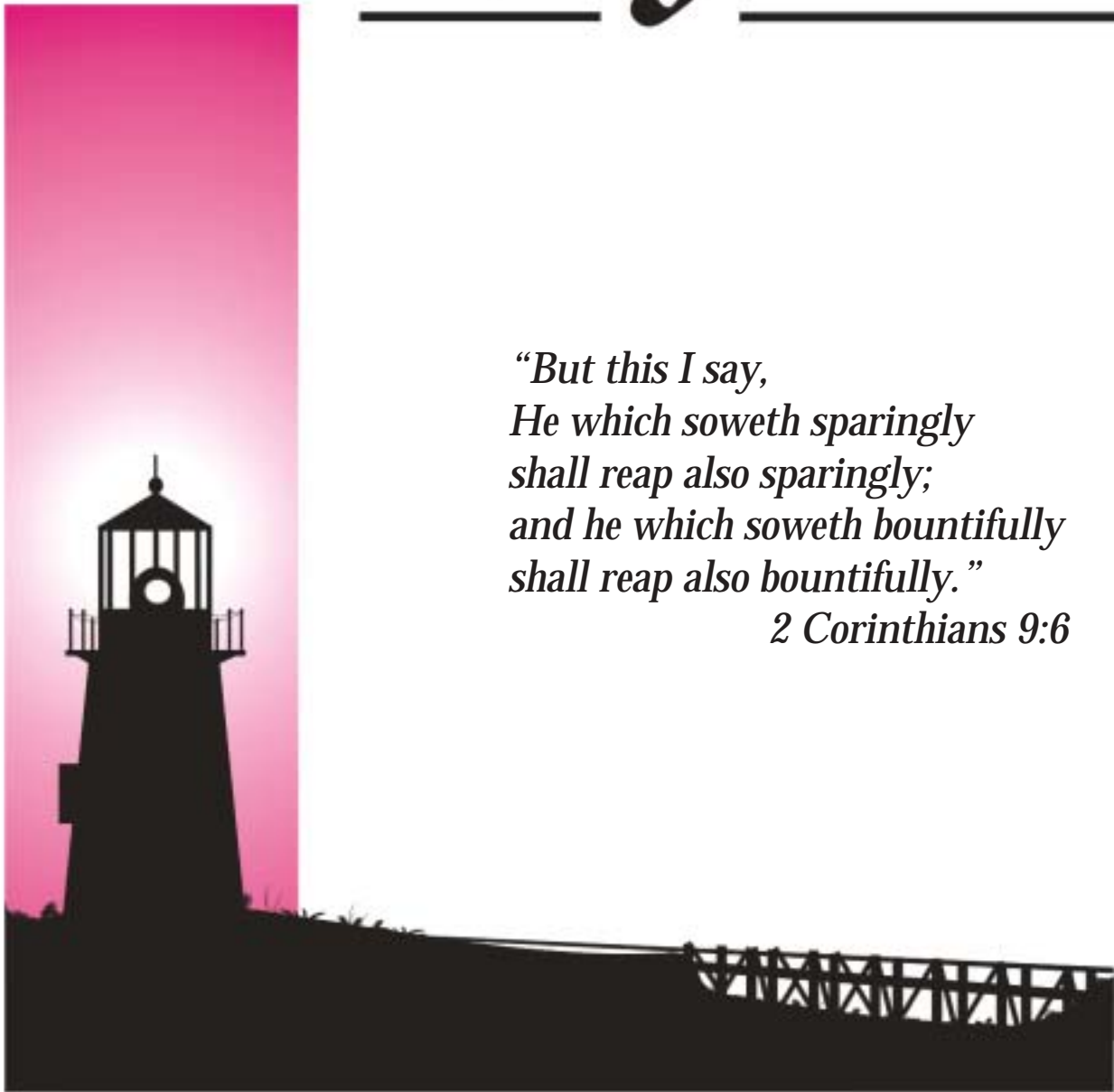
# Beacon Lights

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*“But this I say,  
He which soweth sparingly  
shall reap also sparingly;  
and he which soweth bountifully  
shall reap also bountifully.”*

*2 Corinthians 9:6*



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# Global Warming: What Do We Say?

The atmosphere is warming up, they say. We are in for some dramatic changes in weather in the years ahead. As a result, once fertile growing areas may become deserts. Plant life will shift toward the poles. Food shortages may bring hunger and starvation. Ocean currents will change, bringing disruption in ocean life and further climate change to different areas of the world. The melting ice on the poles will flow into the oceans raising their levels, sending the great cities of the coasts fleeing inland. Disease may thrive in the warmer climate and pandemics may devastate civilization, as we know it. Monster storms will result in billions of dollars in damage. Economic collapse may bring chaos, the collapse of nations, and the rise of new nations.

But, they say, there is hope, because we know why the atmosphere is warming, and we can do something about it. The reason for this warming is directly related to the activity of man and his unprecedented consumption of fossil fuels. Fossil fuels come from oil and coal which at one time were plants. You may remember that plants absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as they grow. This abundance of carbon dioxide has been buried in the ground in the dead plants, and now as we use these fuels for our life, we are releasing the carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere. This carbon dioxide in the atmosphere acts like a blanket which keeps heat from radiating out into space. As a result, the earth is growing warmer. The solution to global warming, then, is quite obvious. Stop burning so much coal and oil.

Global warming could also be slowed down if we could restrain our gluttonous consumption of beef. You see, carbon dioxide is not the only gas that tends to thicken the atmospheric blanket. Methane is another gas that does the same thing, and cows generate a lot of methane gas with their digestive systems. As the demand for beef continues to skyrocket, so does the production of methane from the millions of cows that are raised for this purpose. So in addition to reducing our consumption of fossil fuels, we can slow down global warming, and thus world destruction, by changing our diets to include less meat and more plant based foods.

At this point, many will laugh, snort in disgust, or cry “conspiracy.” First of all, we’ve heard these predictions of gloom and doom before. In the second place, how do “they” know we are not in some sort of natural cycle of warming and cooling? And in the third place, what solid proof do they have that carbon dioxide and cow gas are at fault? It’s just the wild-eyed environmentalists and third-world countries that are jealous of the American way of life and are trying to scare me away from my fat juicy steak and my gas guzzling SUV. Many Christians who hold to one view or another that our world is being Christianized for the establishment of His kingdom on this earth scoff at the predictions as well because it comes into conflict with their theology.

So how should the Christian respond? We cannot deny that our consumption of energy pumps millions of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every day. We cannot deny that this consumption of fossil fuels supports the wonderful economy and high standards of living that we enjoy and have never

before been enjoyed by so many people at one time in the history of the world. We cannot deny that this consumption is more than a mere hiccup in the whole natural workings of forest fires, volcanoes, swamp gas etc. Man is opening a box that has been closed since God changed the world at the Flood. I think it is quite clear that the tremendous vegetation that flourished in the world before the flood, was buried by the flood. All that carbon dioxide that was in circulation before the flood, and that helped make that world what it was, is now being put back into circulation. The point I am trying to make is that it is not so far fetched to think that the release of all this carbon dioxide will have dramatic effects upon our earth.

Does this mean we as Christians ought to be on the front lines of the battle against global warming? Not really, but as Christians who strive to be good stewards of what God has given to us, we do not feel comfortable in the camp of wasteful gluttony and pleasure seeking either. We need to remember that the fossil fuel that propels the economy and civilization we enjoy, is also used by God to propel the gathering of the church. And here again we are certain of one thing: as we near the end of time, we can expect upheavals in the world. Consider the following portions of Scripture from the book of Revelation 8 and 16:

And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. (Rev. 8:5-11)

Hoeksema in “Behold He Cometh” interprets this as representing “some poisonous influence in the atmosphere, affecting the waters from which men and beasts drink.” (527)

And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. (Rev. 16:1-12)

Nobody knows for sure if cows and cars will be used by God to bring about the upheavals that are sure to come. It would seem to be fitting that the very upheavals became a punishment for man's greediness. The greedy demand of Israel for flesh to eat brought death to many of them even as they ate. It is very likely that God will use many things different things. Recently the astronomers also have gotten rather excited about a giant meteor that seems to have earth in its crosshairs. We ought to think carefully about how we respond to the cry of global warming or other perceived threats. Ungodly man shows some

measure of wisdom in being nervous. We may not join the wasteful consumerism in their jeers against those who warn them of the dire effects of their life. Even so, we do not join the battle against global warming in an effort to save the earth. The Christian response will make neither camp happy. To the one we could say, "You may be right about global warming, in fact, God's revelation of the days ahead make your predictions seem minor. But I have work to do as I train up my children and support the causes of the kingdom of heaven, and therefore I don't have much time for your cause." And to the culture in which we live we could say, "You are but the husk of the kernel. You are necessary and I will use whatever I need. You serve the church, but you will soon be destroyed." ❖

Letter to the Editor

## To the Editor

I have been deeply disturbed by a recent article ("Standin' in the Need of Prayer," June 2006) and the series of letters it has generated. Rita De Jong seems to have some highly unbiblical conceptions of prayer, preaching and mission work, and the relationship between our Protestant Reformed Churches and other denominations. In addition, in her response to a very appropriate letter written by Carmen Griess, Miss De Jong demonstrates a continuation of faulty thinking found in the first article as well as a refusal to listen to some of the points which Mrs. Griess made.

My first concern is with the conception of prayer which is manifest in the original article. Miss De Jong calls us to pray together. This is well and good. Christians ought to pray together; there is no doubt about this fact. This is the reason for the custom of opening and closing a meal with prayer. This is why we open and close meetings, Bible studies, and discussion groups with prayer. This is why twice each Lord's Day the minister brings the cares of the congregation, as a whole, to the Lord in prayer. We are also told to pray for one another. This is also a very biblical concern. When we sin against a brother or sister in the Lord we must confess our sin to that brother or sister. When we have cares and sorrows, it is appropriate to talk about them with our fellow saints. It is right that we should bring the concerns of our fellow saints to the Lord in prayer.

However, I am very leery of the ideas for carrying this out which Miss De Jong suggests. Jesus warns us of

temptations which people can fall into in the name of prayer. He describes the prayers of the Pharisees who loved to pray on the street corners that they might be seen of men. We must be careful to avoid praying our private prayers in public. Jesus exhorts us to enter into our closet and shut the door before coming to the Lord in private prayer (Matt. 6:5, 6). Prayers made for any group of believers must bring the cares of that group as a whole to the Lord. Public prayer is not the time to bring one's personal confessions of sin to the Lord. It is the time to bring the confessions of that family, church, or school to the Lord. Prayer requests and prayer groups are artificial attempts to encourage mutual care of the brethren which can easily lead to the hypocritical prayers Jesus warns us against.

Miss De Jong, in both her article and letter, also criticized our ministers for a lack of practical application in sermons. Now in the first place, I have never found the sermons of our ministers to be wanting in practical application. The problem here is Miss De Jong's idea of practical application. Practical application is something that follows naturally from the sound preaching of pure doctrine. When the minister preaches about the holiness of God, Who is too pure of eyes to behold sin, he can almost without saying it make the practical application that we as believers ought to show our thankfulness for the salvation we have received by eschewing evil. Having the minister telling us statistics about the number of people who look at pornography is not practical appli-

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cation. Such man-made stories and statistics have no place in a sermon. In this connection, I would also like to point out, with reference to Jesus' telling of parables as a means of preaching that because Jesus is God, He has the authority to do things in His preaching that we may not necessarily do. Parables are not man-made stories but rather part of scripture. Man-made stories draw away from the content of the text and focus on man. Stories and examples are already available to our ministers in the scriptures. It is not wrong for ministers to give an example to clarify a point, but the practice of the churches around us of making sermons by stringing together stories, "relevant" examples, and even jokes to make a "practical application" is a foolish man-centered approach to preaching. Preaching is to have God and His glory in Christ at its center, not "do this and don't do that." It is to be full of scripture and references to scripture, not man-made stories. It is to be focused on doctrine with practical application, as a result, flowing directly from doctrine, and not practical application with doctrine thrown in to back it up.

In her false and insulting charge that our ministers ignore the evils of today's society in our churches and in her ideas about mission work, Miss De Jong shows a faulty conception of the purpose of the church in the world and the way in which the church must carry out the commission to preach the gospel to all nations. The church is not here in the world to transform society. The church is here to worship God and to preach the gospel to save the elect. In reference to Miss De Jong's statement, "the church must be so compelling by its outreach that it draws outsiders to her," I would remind readers that the key of preaching works two ways. It hardens the reprobate in their unbelief as well as drawing the elect to Christ. We may very well see a complete lack of growth, but this has nothing to do with whether the church is carrying out its commission. The scriptures tell us that there will be a falling away, that men will not always hear, and that the church can expect to be small.

Although Miss De Jong primarily intended to exhort us to "unity within our own churches," she also made some dangerous statements regarding the churches around us. She says, "I do highly recommend fellowship with Christians outside our denomination," and "there is much to be learned from other churches in their practices." I must emphatically disagree and hope that such thoughts are not common in our churches. The Bible explicitly says, "*A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject*" (Titus 3:10) and "*Now*

*we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us*" (II Thess. 3:6). Notice that, in addition to walking disorderly, walking not after the tradition, etc., is mentioned as a reason for withdrawing oneself from someone. Sins of doctrine are just as serious as any sins of outward conduct. False doctrine is idolatry. We may not, we absolutely may not, follow the advice of Miss De Jong and have such fellowship with people from other denominations, especially the so-called evangelical churches around us. We may not look to them as examples of how to conduct mission work. Whether someone in such a church may be saved or not is irrelevant to the issue of how we ought to walk toward them. God can certainly save His elect, though they may walk in dreadful sin, but this does not mean that we may have fellowship with those who are walking in unrepentant sin.

I know that sometimes other churches may seem attractive. They seem to have such a vibrant, caring church life. They sometimes seem to put us to shame by their care for one another. But these impressions are false. I know many of these people. I go to a state university and meet such evangelicals on a daily basis. I hear them talk in the hallways and on the bus. There are undoubtedly children of God mistakenly in these churches, but there are also many hypocrites. I have heard people who speak with what sounds like genuine piety one day and the next are justifying their own divorce and the fact that a friend is walking in fornication. They sound as if they are forever caring for others and at the same time they unashamedly work or do all their own pleasure on the Lord's Day. The denominations around us are full of such man-centered hypocrites, who love to feel good about themselves because they are such good people and yet have no real respect or love for God. I have lived on the mission field for 12 years. I know people who have come out of these churches. They testify that the evangelical churches around us are not what they seem. They are spiritually bankrupt, filled with all manner of superstition and error. Our calling is to call these churches and their members to repentance, that God may pluck some brands from the burning. We cannot do this by freely making friends of them, acting as if they are not sinning by remaining in these churches, and worst of all, openly trying to learn from their practices.

We must beware of these churches. We must beware of their writings, their music, and their fellowship and

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friendship. How can we maintain the truth against the lie if we adopt the evangelism, the writings, and the music of the lie? All that will ever come from such practices is heresy among ourselves, a weakening of the truth for which we stand, and the loss of our young people to these false churches. Did the church in the time of the Reformation advocate fellowship with Papists? Did she suggest that perhaps it would be good if we learned from the Mass? Did Paul advocate fellowship with the Jews who demanded that Gentiles be circumcised when he wrote to the Galatians? Did he tell us to learn from what we could find that was good about them? Did Christ suggest that the churches ought to learn from the Nicolaitanes when he spoke to John in Revelation? Ought we to do these things now? God forbid. I pray that our churches may be preserved from the course Miss De Jong has suggested.

God has given us a rich heritage in the Reformed faith and preserved us in the truth of His Word. Let us never forget that. The truth of God's word is all important. A proper godly life of good works will assuredly flow from a living faith in the truth. Rather than looking

to the false church for guidance, let us take heed that the marks of the true church are plainly manifest in our churches. Read the Bible. Read the confessions. Read the good reformed books we have available. Grow in knowledge of true doctrine. Encourage your minister and consistory in the preaching of those truths. Encourage the elders in their sometimes painful task of church discipline. Remind them of how important it is. Take heed to prepare yourselves for the Lord's Supper that the sacraments may be properly administered. Take heed to bring up your children in the fear of the Lord and have respect to the vows you took at baptism. Young people, prepare yourselves also to walk in these things. Prepare to be elders and deacons. Prepare to teach your own children some day. A walk of godliness will certainly be manifest among us when we do these things. God uses these means to work in us to will and do His good pleasure. Let us pray that God may continue to keep our Protestant Reformed Churches on the straight and narrow path and keep us from all error.

Christopher Miersma  
Spokane, WA ❖

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Church Family

# Receiving Christ

by Tom Cammenga

**Y**oung people, have you received Christ? This is an important question for all to ask themselves. First however we must be clear about the question itself. I do not intend the question as so many in the church world today intend it. I do not ask if you have accepted Christ. I do not even ask whether you have received Christ as your savior. If you are one of his elect then he has chosen you, not you him. My intent in asking the question is found in Matthew 18: 5 where we read, "And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me".

Selfishly the disciples of Christ, having just recently been made acutely aware of their limitations and failings in their inability to cast a demon out of a young man, now come to him with a very simple, yet loaded

question. I dare say they had no idea or inkling of the answer that Christ would give. What was the question? Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? This question they asked, naturally assuming that each of them would surely occupy one if not the greatest position in heaven, beneath Christ that is. How shocked each of them must have been to hear the answer that Christ gave them.

It was actually not simply a verbal answer but Christ also used actions to make his point and to bring that point home to the disciples. Without answering them he called to a little child, quite possibly playing outside the circle they made in their interaction. Christ then took that child and only after placing him in the middle of the circle did he answer the question by informing the disciples that only they that humbled themselves like the child they

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now looked upon could even enter the kingdom much less be great in it. What a shock that must have been to these men, still stuck on themselves and their gain, not yet realizing or comprehending how in many cases they themselves would lose much because of their faith.

And yet Christ doesn't stop here. He brings the point even closer to home by informing those who stood around that anyone who received one of these little children in his name, in all actuality received Christ himself. In other words, whoever treats a little one such as this well, whoever welcomes them into fellowship and cares for them showing them the love of Christ, in doing so shows love and honor to Christ himself.

There are implications to this answer. The first in the negative aims at those who do not receive the little ones. Matthew 18:6 tells us; "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." This is a harsh indictment indeed. And yet, when we understand that in offending these little ones we offend Christ himself it becomes a mere shadow of the real punishment that awaits such.

And so I ask again young people. Have you received Christ? Have you welcomed into your fellowship one of his little ones? More broadly, how do you treat and interact with your peers, be it in school, at home, at work, or wherever you may find yourself? It is often said that children and young people can be utterly cruel. I know from my own sinful experience that this is true. But do we realize that in excluding some because of the way they dress or possibly because of what we would label a lack of social skills that we in reality exclude Christ? When we mock and ridicule others because they don't measure up to our own sinful standard we mock and ridicule Christ. Verbal and even physical abuse of the one who stands firm in his or her convictions and faith is actually abuse of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Yes, the same Jesus who not only gave his life for you but even more, was totally and completely rejected of God for you.

Surely the worst result of this type of behavior is the rejection of Christ. But another result that we must see is the hurt and pain, sometimes lasting a lifetime, to the one that is not received in the love of Christ. You must realize this young people. You must do so because you will be held accountable for your receiving, or lack thereof, in the last day. Your actions, hurtful as they can

be, can and often do scar young and old. Let me illustrate my point with a personal experience.

My wife and I and really our whole family were blessed some sixteen years ago with a special needs child. I remember vividly some time ago one of our other boys telling us that some of his peers had ridiculed him because his big brother wears diapers. That is a scar he will wear for the rest of his life. That is a scar that my wife and I will wear for the rest of our lives. Thankfully, God is gracious. Through His mercy we are able to wear those scars with righteous pride. Yet as scars often do, they still hurt from time to time. Remember that young people.

And yet this goes deeper than just simply refraining from teasing or mocking. It goes deeper than not taking part in the backbiting and gossiping. Receiving God's people in the name of Christ, no matter the color of their skin, how they dress, or how they talk, also means standing beside them, supporting them, and often standing up for them. If you would not stand up for your peers, how in the world can you stand up for Christ? If you are unable to defend the honor of a fellow saint against a verbal attack by another, how will you ever be able to stand up and defend the honor of the Christ that the world criticizes and mocks? If you receive his little ones in his name, then you receive him too.

There is a second implication to this receiving of the little ones. This implication however is in the positive. If, when we reject these little ones we reject Christ, then it follows that when by the grace of God we receive them, we receive the Lord who bought us. By receiving him I mean that we show our love for him. We show to him our thankfulness for his saving sacrifice. We give him the honor that is due to him alone. And when we do that he is glorified. Then by the grace of God we too are blessed. Blessed in a way that brings joy to the soul and a peace that we cannot understand.

May it be the case that we receive the little ones and all of our fellow saints in the name of Christ and in so doing receive him, our savior and redeemer. He who first choose and received us into his covenant and fellowship and ever preserves us and cares for us, giving us the grace to honor and adore him in all of our life. To him be the glory! ❖

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*Tom is a member of First Protestant Reformed Church in Zeeland, Michigan.*



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# Martha: The Harried Hostess

by Carol Brands

**T**he average person is unable to handle wealth. “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Matt. 19:24).

There are, however, by God’s grace, those who have wealth and handle it wisely. There was an Abraham, who used all of his vast wealth to serve God in humble faith. There was the woman in Shunem who housed the prophet Elisha and was rewarded with a son. There have been throughout history various others, also, who used their wealth to support the work of the kingdom of God.

One such woman was Martha. Martha appears to have been the wealthiest woman in the small town of Bethany, not far from the bustling city of Jerusalem. Her home was a prominent one of which she was the owner. Perhaps her husband was dead; we do not know the circumstances in which she received the home. But head of the home she was—head of a large home, head of a family consisting of her younger sister Mary and her younger brother Lazarus. She had wealth and control of her wealth and she used it well.

The Gospel evidence suggests that once Jesus left his own parents’ home at Nazareth, this home in Bethany is one of the few places where he was able to rest in peace. Near Capernaum, he was often found at the home of the apostle Peter, whose wife and mother ministered to his needs. And here near Jerusalem, Martha and her siblings took in Jesus, and, undoubtedly, also his disciples when they were present. Here he was able to rest. Here he was able to teach in the courtyard and at meals. Jesus loved being here with this devout family.

Martha and her sister Mary were the ones who made this possible. There is no doubt that Martha was a paragon of efficiency. She kept a well-ordered home where it was possible to have guests and to serve meals to one or to several. Her sister Mary assisted her in her work. There was love between the sisters and brother, a closely knit family. And there was a desire to be of service wher-

ever service was needed. The family viewed their wealth not as something desirable for personal pride but as a tool for service.

When Jesus loves, He does not love because of wealth. He does not love rich people more and poor people less; all of Scripture refutes this idea. Rather, when He loved this family in Bethany, it was due to the great faith which this family possessed, not due to their wealth. He loved them because they belonged to Him, were among the elect for whom He would die. He loved them because they believed in Him—not fully understanding, but believing as much as they did understand. They responded to His teaching and acknowledged Him as God, as Messiah, as “He who should come.” And, believing, they threw everything they had into supporting and aiding Him and His ministry. They were truly godly leaders, true disciples of Jesus. He was at one in fellowship with them; He loved them!

All of this was made possible by Martha, the godly owner and leader of the home. Her faith and love made the framework in which her sister and brother were able to exercise their faith and love without hindrance. Mary and Lazarus responded without resentment to her authority, working as an harmonious family, serving God in blessed unity.

Is this how I view my possessions? Like this family, do I practice true hospitality? Do I use all that I have to serve God and His kingdom?

In this context, Jesus near the end of His life visited this family again. As was His custom, He sat in the courtyard while supper was being prepared. Doubtless, as a good hostess, Martha had first spent some time also listening to His words, visiting with Him. And most likely she also heard Him speak things she would rather not hear: words of His impending trouble at Jerusalem, His suffering and death. Jesus would have tried to prepare His friends, just as He was trying to prepare His dis-

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ciples, for His death. Mary heard...and couldn't tear herself away. If Jesus' life were soon to end, she wanted to hear every word she could while He was still here! She wanted to be with Him, hearing Him, worshipping Him every minute that breath lasted.

Martha, too, heard...but couldn't stand the dark atmosphere and got up to dispel the atmosphere with her usual hospitality. A good hostess must insure pleasantness, right? So, let's get rid of this negativism by a good meal and some light sociability! Quickly, she began putting together the best meal she could muster, with several delicious food courses and flowers on the table and her best silverware, all the best, the best...for her Master...

Do I really listen when God is speaking? Or do I, like Martha, push away unpleasant topics—such as my sin—by crowding them out with daily trivia?

Do I also make myself too busy to listen??

To accomplish all this, Martha needed help! She whispered to Mary to come and help, but Mary didn't even hear her; she could only hear Jesus. She attempted for a while to do it all alone but it was too much; she wanted to do so much, and everything must be perfect! No, just a simple hot dish wasn't enough, or even one meat and one vegetable; for her Lord, it must be two or three meats, three or four vegetables, a bowl of fruits artfully arranged, and anything else she could think of...yes, surely a few pastries for dessert...and...

The more she attempted, the more she became flustered. The more flustered she became, the more irritated she became at her sister, just sitting there and doing nothing! What was the matter with Mary? Usually Mary also would help, but now she just *sat there!* And Jesus...He must know that she needed Mary's help, didn't He? Why couldn't He tell her to help? Was He blind, not to see how much work she had, that she needed help?

Finally Martha could stand it no longer. Disregarding the usual courtesies of a hostess, she disrupted the instruction Jesus was giving and spoke to Him. Plainly, suggesting that He was an insensitive guest, she cried out, "Lord, dost thou not **care** that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me!"

How frequently I see this happening! When my children are given work to do, how quickly they look at the brother or sister and say, "But him...what about him?"

Notice that her anxiety over much serving had caused Martha to make three errors of judgment:

1. *She failed to love her sister.* Usually she was a compassionate sister and usually Mary was a good helper, but this time Mary's need to hear Jesus was greater than her call to work...and Martha failed to sympathize with that need and to give Mary what she needed.

2. *She failed to honor Jesus as she ought to have.* She dishonored Him as Guest but, above all, she dishonored His motives. She felt He was honoring Mary who was being lazy rather than herself in her work of compassion for Him. He did not care about the work she did for Him!

3. *She failed to meet her own spiritual needs.* She, too, like Mary, needed to sit at Jesus' feet and absorb His words, preparing her soul for His passion and death. But she was too absorbed with the present material needs to accept this need.

It is easy for me, also, to fall into this snare, isn't it? I, too, can begin my work in a right way, wanting to do it for God's sake, but then by and by find the work itself becoming the important thing, rather than God and listening to God. I, too, can begin to feel sorry for myself because my work makes me so busy...instead of seeking ways to cut down on my work and spend more time listening to God.

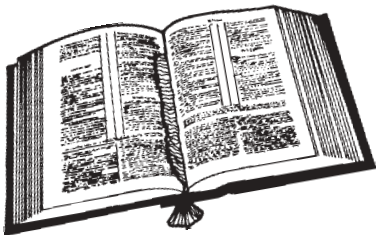
I love the way Jesus responds to Martha. He gives her His undivided attention! He is not just an irritated male, impatient at her interruption. He is not a male chauvinist who considers a woman's work unimportant, belittling her service. Neither does He, however, excuse her error and preoccupation. Her error needs correction! So, gently, gently, He calls her name, twice. The gentle reproach in His voice reaches her: "Martha! Martha! Thou art (full of cares) and troubled about many things"—her spotless house, a huge meal—"but one thing is *needful* and Mary hath chosen that good part!"

Knowing our own pride, our own irritation with having our faults pointed out, especially when we have felt someone else was in the wrong, it is remarkable that we do not find Martha angry with Jesus' rebuke. Jesus had called her name and His calling with her was effective: she heard! She responded! We do not know just how she responded but she definitely was won over to see that He was right, that Mary was right, and that she, too, must pause to listen, putting first things first.

Like Martha, we need our sins pointed out, too. Sometimes God points them out through fellow Christians who speak to us about them...maybe even our spouses or children. Sometimes He points them out through the stress of our lives which overwhelms us until we pray about this. Sometimes He uses our own Bible study in the quiet of the night. Most often He uses the week after week preaching of His Word through His ambassadors in church. Through these means He calls our names, too—just as gently, just as lovingly, and just as forcefully: “My child! My child!” We hear Him speaking to each of us personally about our own sins.

Am I listening? Each Sunday, am I listening? In Bible societies, am I straining to hear Him speak to me? Am I the Martha needing rebuke..., or the Martha who hears the rebuke, learns the lesson and joins Mary at the Savior’s feet? ❖

*Reprinted from December, 1995.*



## John’s Message

**T**he voice cried from the wilderness:  
*Repent, repent, repent!*  
*God’s kingdom comes, the time is near,*

*The Lord will not relent.*

*Prepare the way of God, the Lord,*

*The paths must be made straight.*

*The time is short, O evil men,*

*God’s wrath will not abate.*

**I**’m sent to baptize those who come  
*Repenting of their sin,*  
*In sorrow clad, with contrite heart,*

*A new life to begin.*

*With water I now baptize you,*

*A sign of what’s to be:*

*Messiah comes—He’ll pay the price*

*His people to set free.*

**A**nd still today that message comes;  
*May we have ears to hear*  
*And hearts that by the grace of God*

*To Him draw ever near.*

*With sorrow clothed, may we repent*

*And strive to run our race*

*As children of His covenant*

*Dependent on His grace.*

Thelma Westra

# Medical Ethics Discussion

by Jon Van Overloop

## General Information

Some of you may not be familiar with the term “medical ethics” and as such not really understand what you are going to be discussing. Medical Ethics has to do with evaluating the appropriateness of using controversial medical procedures. These practices may include procedures like cloning, genetic engineering, in-vitro fertilization and other assisted reproductive technologies, and even things like euthanasia or assisted suicide.

Because of the complexity of the issues I will briefly outline the main concept of each process.

**Cloning** is the process of making an identical genetic copy of an organism, tissue, organ, or cell. This may be done to any number of things including bananas, new tulip varieties, champion race horses, human hearts, pig livers, highly productive dairy cattle, human beings, or sheep (Dolly).

**Genetic Engineering** is the procedure by which scientists place genes from one kind (species) into the chromosomes of other kinds so that organisms obtain traits that they were not created with originally. The new organism is called a transgenic organism. Some examples of transgenic organisms are cows that produce human breast milk, goats that produce human blood clotting factor for hemophiliacs, Roundup Ready corn that will not die from Roundup, “golden rice” which produces Vitamin A for people that may not have enough, and perhaps someday spinach that produces vaccines (proteins) so that we no longer will have to get pricked with needles at the doctor’s office but instead just have to eat a salad.

**Reproductive Technologies** include all technologies that help couples have children when they are not able to have them by traditional means. For example a man may produce sperm that do not swim well because they lack tails or because the tails are too short. Doctors could artificially inject the sperm near the egg so that the two fuse to become one cell. In addition if a woman has poor quality eggs doctors can literally “harvest” an

egg, keep it nourished in a petri dish, suck out the bad parts of the egg, fertilize it with the husband’s sperm, and then place the embryo back into the woman. In this way a couple can have biological children of their own.

**Euthanasia** is the process of “mercy killing.” An individual may be in severe pain as a result of a deadly and painful cancer. When the cancer is advanced and the individual is only in agony and not able to function normally, he may opt to kill himself rather than prolonging the agony.

**Assisted Suicide** is really a form of Euthanasia except that a professional doctor helps you with suitable techniques and painless drugs.

## Questions for Discussion

1. General questions you should consider before discussing the specific technologies:
  - a. Is any technology or object wrong in and of itself?
  - b. The Heidelberg Catechism in LD 33 says that good works are those that proceed from a true faith, are performed according to the law of God, and to his glory. This Lord’s Day should guide you as you discuss the questions. Which of the medical technologies can you really justify in this light? Briefly discuss this.
  - c. Discerning God’s will for our lives can be a very difficult process. What principles can we use to know His will with regard to our use of these technologies?
2. Regarding **Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide**, are these ever morally right for humans to engage in? Come up with specific scriptural ideas to support your answer.
3. **Genetic Engineering**

While walking through the modern supermarket one is exposed to a variety of foods that have been artificially bred and selected for by humans. The fruits and vegetables that existed in Noah’s days were

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quite different from what we see today. For example, foot long ears of corn are a recent development that humans bred into them. Green apples, yellow apples, red and yellow apples, red and green apples, sour apples, sweet apples are also recent developments. Did you know that broccoli, cauliflower, kale, brussels sprouts, and cabbages are all the same plant? They are all *Brassica oleracea*. They differ because of breeding for their various characteristics over many years. In addition to fruits and vegetables, the meats also in supermarkets are taken from animals that are more than likely somewhat different from what God originally created. These have also been modified. Many of these are purebreds that humans selected for because of their meat or dairy qualities. As such these specific types have only recently come into existence. Bible storybooks that show the Garden of Eden with long ears of corn, Jersey cows, tall wheat plants, rows of broccoli plants, and perhaps cocker spaniels are giving children (and maybe some of you) false impressions.

- a. In Genesis 1 we repeatedly read that God created things good. What did He mean by that? Can we change that which God created “good?” In other words is it ethically right to breed and as such alter the species of animals in God’s creation? For example, without human intervention poodles would never have existed. Is it ethically right to breed a poodle?
- b. Now, instead of breeding new traits into organisms, is it ethically right to take the faster route and just splice (cut and paste) a new gene into an organism? By the way, traditional breeding is very slow and it would never work to take a gene from one species and give it to a completely different one. So for another example, what do you think about taking a gene for the “natural” production of steroids and splicing it into cows so that they grow large muscles over fewer years and without as much food and shots of steroids?

What is the ethical difference between breeding and genetic engineering or are they ethically equivalent? Proverbs 25:2 says “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.” Does this indicate that it is honorable for men to discover the properties that God gave His creation?

Genesis 1:26 says, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have

dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” Does the concept of having dominion include ideas of wise use rather than just simply control?

Putting the two passages together we come up with a calling to not only discover but also wisely use the properties that God placed in creation. I think man has done this in many ways including the development of complex electrical machines like computers. Humans discovered the phenomena of electricity that God placed in the earth for us and then used it wisely. That is in my opinion in accordance with scriptural mandates. Now, add to your thoughts Belgic Confession, Article 12. Among other things it says that God created the world for man. It goes on to say that He created it for man so that man is better able to serve his God.

Can genetic engineering of plants and animals relieve people of many time-consuming burdens so that they have more time to do other things like organize Bible studies, witness, and fellowship with believers? For example, Golden Rice was developed to have more Vitamin A than normal to feed third-world countries. This has the potential of alleviating the many problems that vitamin A deficiencies can bring. With the rice people can spend more time serving God in various capacities rather than deal with their sicknesses. In addition, scientists hope to make cows that produce human antibodies, human breast milk, human blood-clotting factor, maybe even human blood of all types. What about eating your vaccines as a salad? We can make spinach “naturally” produce the vaccines (antibodies or viral proteins) and just eat them. Think of how easy it would be to vaccinate the old people or even a whole third world country against the major diseases just by giving them a salad! Is all of the above a way of developing the properties of creation so that it can better serve us so that we are better able to serve our God?

- c. Now on to the genetic engineering of humans. Should we ever engineer our offspring for looks, brains, or athleticism?

Parents have a calling to rear their children both physically and spiritually. Does that calling start only after the child is born or did it start at conception?

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Would it be ethical to have surgery to cure spina bifida in the womb? (Infants born with spina bifida sometimes have an open wound on their spine where significant damage to the nerves and spinal cord has occurred. Although the spinal opening can be surgically repaired shortly after birth, the nerve damage is permanent, resulting in varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs.)

Instead of performing a surgery in the womb for spina bifida, what if the doctors could someday correct a genetic problem like Down's Syndrome in the womb. Would that be ethically acceptable and in accordance with the parent's responsibilities to raise that child as best they can?

God uses many means to make His Church a body of Christ. Historically, sicknesses and diseases often make a congregation grow closer together as they experience that oneness in Christ and help and assist one another. Discuss the benefits of disease for your own congregations. Should this be a consideration in our discussion?

#### 4. Cloning

- a. Is it right to clone plants? For example, bananas as we know (eat) them are sterile. They can not reproduce on their own. In order to grow new trees, we have to artificially propagate (clone) them. May we do this?
- b. Ok, by now you know what's coming. Let's move the discussion from plants and on to animals. If a champion racehorse gets injured so that it has to be killed and as such cannot be used for breeding, can the owner keep some cells and clone them? Cloning is complex but I'll try to keep it simple. Typically what would happen here is that the nucleus of a female horse egg cell would be removed. In its place a nucleus from any cell of the champion horse would get inserted. This egg with a new nucleus is then tricked so it thinks that it has been fertilized and then it is placed back into the horse's womb. The resulting colt will be a carbon copy of the original champion because it has exactly the same genes. You can think of it as an identical twin but that it was born 5 years later rather than only 5 minutes later. For a second example, we could image a police dog that was in many ways a perfect dog. It was good tempered, obeyed well, learned quickly, remembered commands, and had a great nose, eyes, and ears. Before its death it could be cloned. The pups could be trained even earlier and at the best

facilities and really be great for a variety of police work. The clones themselves could also be cloned and any training mistakes that happened along the way could be lessened so that after several years you know exactly how to raise the dogs to be nearly perfect for your needs. Is that ethically right?

- c. Now for humans. Is it right to clone any part of a human?

How about if you need a heart transplant? Often times the best heart you could receive would be exactly like your original. That heart would not be rejected by your body. Imagine that scientists could clone your heart cells and grow them in a petri dish for a few weeks. Soon the mass of cells is big enough to place into a young pig. We could give a pig a heart transplant so that its normal heart is removed and your little cloned heart replaces it. After several months the pig (and your heart) will grow to an acceptable size for insertion into you. Now we can simply slaughter the pig with YOUR heart in it and place it into you. Discuss the ethics of this idea.

How about cloning a child that was just lost in a car accident?

#### 5. Finally, **Reproductive Technologies.**

- a. Is it true that God can use childless couples in special ways in the church?
- b. How can a couple know if God intends for them to remain childless and be greatly used by Him in the Church of if they can use technology that assists them in having children.
- c. God primarily gathers His people from lines of continued generations. Can this be an incentive for us to have children and use these technologies?
- d. Many of these procedures are wildly expensive. Is proper stewardship of our money even an issue in these matters?
- e. Some facilities that assist parents in reproduction freeze embryos, throw poor quality ones away, and only implant a few. What are your thoughts on these practices and should these clinics ever be used?
- f. Are reproductive technologies right for you? ❖

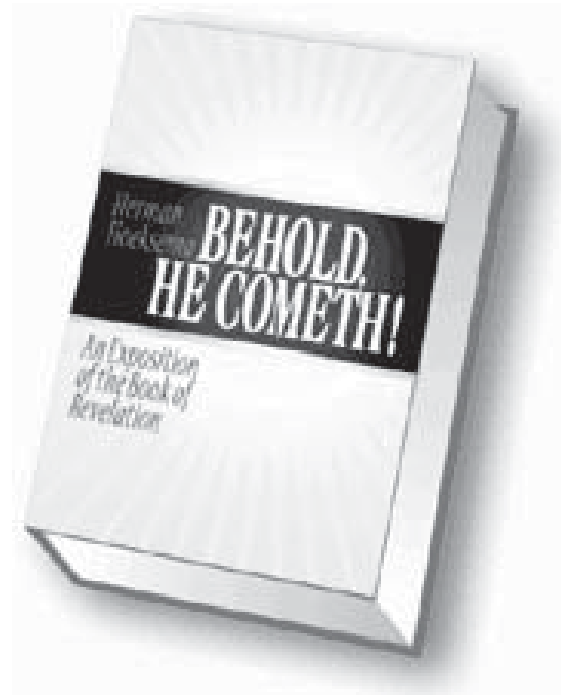
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*Jon is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.*

# Something You Ought to Read

*Behold, He Cometh! An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* by Herman Hoeksema. 772 pp. Hdbk. \$32.

Available at  
Reformed Free Publishing Association  
1894 Georgetown Center Drive  
Jenison, Michigan 49428-7137  
Phone: 616-457-5970  
Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. (EST)  
Fax: 616-457-5980  
E-Mail: mail@rfpa.org



Many of our readers probably have the book *Behold, He Cometh! An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* on a shelf in their homes. If you have not yet read it, you do not realize what a gem has been sitting there collecting dust. We can be very thankful for the work of the Reformed Free Publishing Association who have provided this gem, as well as many others for our homes. These books have been reviewed in our own Protestant Reformed publications, as well as others around the world. Sometimes it is when others desire what we have right under our nose, that we take renewed interest in what we have. Perhaps the following reviews will inspire you to take up *Behold He Cometh* for another read, or for the first time.

Review in *Peace and Truth*: 2001 #4 (magazine of the Sovereign Grace Union)

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5 Rosier Crescent  
Swanwick  
Derbyshire DE55 1RS  
England  
www.sgu.org.uk

This commentary, preached before it was published, is too significant to be skimmed over in review. It is the best work on Revelation known to this reviewer (bear-

ing in mind the excellent works of Hengstenberg, Durham and Hendriksen, to name no others). This is not surprising, as its author spared no pains in prayer and study to ascertain the mind of the Spirit from it without imposing on it such ridiculous and far-fetched schemes of prophecy as some have devised. Its 53 short chapters give it an essay form, rather than a verse-by-verse commentary. Its lucid, simple style is admirably calculated to demonstrate just how perfectly the message of this final book of the canon accords with everything else in Holy Scripture. Its author, a redoubtable theologian in his own right—see his *Triple Knowledge* (already available) and his *Reformed Dogmatics* (to be published, DV, in 2002)—expressly eschews every attempt to satisfy the itching ears of those who make the study of this wonderful book a hobby. Instead, he is determined that his readers grasp the key to it; namely, that Christ as sovereign will irresistibly establish His Father’s kingdom on the ruins of the kingdom of Antichrist and Satan. This will be to the unspeakable comfort of all who suffer for

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Jesus' sake. Accordingly, Hoeksema wastes no time in what the ponderous John Owen calls Prolegomena, discussing such matters as authorship, dating, textual accuracy, etc. Since "the canonicity of the book does not depend on the apostolic authorship," his main concern is to elucidate and apply its message.

In so doing, Hoeksema rejects the view that Revelation's various visions refer to distinct historical persons and/or events. Rather, they apply to the entire history of the present Gospel dispensation. For whatever their symbolism, they all enshrine the principle of world conflict between the forces of Antichrist and those of Christ, both earthly and spiritual. (Accordingly, such notable figures as Napoleon and Hitler are to be seen as examples of the principle of opposition to the kingdom of God, rather than as persons cryptically referred to in the text. Similarly, the Dark Ages and the Reformation are to be viewed as typical periods covered by the symbolism, rather than specific movements darkly alluded to.)

In interpreting the symbolism, the author is refreshingly sane. So much so that after reading his explanations one wonders why they were not obvious before. The lukewarm water, the hidden manna, the white stone, the new name, the four horsemen, the 144,000, are all made as clear as crystal. Everything falls into place, once the ultimate purpose of God in giving the original promise of Christ in Genesis 3:15 is known.

With all glory being given to God alone for both the destruction of His enemies and the salvation of His people, not the slightest doubt remains as to the ultimate outcome: it is Victory for the Lamb that was slain, who is now in the midst of the throne. Hoeksema's treatment of the Final Judgment of the ungodly and the Blessedness of the New Jerusalem is a joy to read. May this superb work goad us to long, pray and work for the Second Coming of our Saviour, when the cosmic conflict shall end, when Christ shall yield up the kingdom to His Father, and God shall be all and in all.

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Reviewed by Rev. Jerome Julien (Stated Clerk for URC) in *The Outlook (devoted to the exposition & defense of the Reformed Faith)* June 2002.

Address of Publication:  
Editor Rev. Wybren Oord  
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Portage, MI 49024  
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When this book first appeared in 1969 Dr. William Hendriksen, renowned amillennial expositor of the Book of Revelation and minister in the Christian Reformed Church wrote in a review that appeared in *The Banner*: "The treatment of the text is definitely Reformed in character in that it always ascribes all the glory to God and traces his way in history... I warmly recommend the book."

With its republication, the text has not changed. It is the same book we have been using through the last thirty-three years. What makes it different—and more usable—is the addition of forty-four pages of indices: Scripture and subjects.

First, for those not acquainted with this fine volume, here is a bit of background. Rev. Hoeksema preached through the Book of Revelation twice in his ministry, once soon after World War I and the second time during World War II, the latter time to very large crowds of hearers. The series of messages in this volume—fifty-three in number—thoroughly expounds the comforting truth in this last book of the Bible. At one time, these appeared as articles in *The Standard Bearer*. The approach to the Bible text is clearly amillennial. A student of the Book of Revelation can hardly do better than this!

The new feature of the book—new in this edition, is the index. This is a very fine and valuable addition, one that will be of great help to anyone who studies this last book of Scripture. Actually, there are two indices, one of Scripture texts referred to in the exposition, and one listing the many subjects discussed. Such a large and complete volume is not useful without this kind of index. Numerology is central in the symbolism found in Revelation. The index shows clearly where there are discussions of the numbers used by inspiration. Other very important imagery used, and the continual references to the Old Testament, are listed in the indices.

If you have an interest in studying this comforting and timely book (and every believer should), by all means get a copy of it. It's more than worth the trip to the bookstore! The words of Hendriksen still ring from this reviewer: "I warmly recommend the book." ❖



# Watching Daily At My Gates

## The Song of Zion

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

by John Huizenga (Reprinted from February 1998)

February 16 Read Psalm 45:4; Psalter 124:4; I Thess. 2:11-20

Only God can ride forth in battle with supreme might destroying in fierce anger the wicked, and at the same time gather the elect in gentle meekness. What a different God we see here from the arminian god who pleads with men to accept salvation! God sends forth the preachers of His word into the world to gather His people. He equips them with the two-edged sword of His word, and by the power of His Spirit, He turns the hearts of His people who hear away from sin and unto Himself. Christ rides forth in royal majesty to gather His people. He is doing so right now. Pray for the ministers of His word and for the raising up of young men called unto that work. Sing the Psalter.

February 17 Read Ps. 45:5; Psltr. 124:5; Acts 7:54-60

A sharp blade is deadly in the hand of the murderer but can preserve life in the hands of the skilled surgeon. So is the sword of Christ which pricks the hearts of men: the reprobate gnash their teeth, but the elect are humbled and ask "how must we be saved?" As Christ rides to the ends of the earth throughout every nation, He destroys the enemy and gathers His church. Every member of His body, every stone of His temple must be gathered. He also defends His church against the constant attack of the wicked who want to destroy it. Let us humbly submit to His holy will as we see the sword destroy those round about us. Sing the Psalter.

February 18 Read Ps. 45:6; Psltr. 124:6; Heb. 1:1-9

Hebrews 1:8 is a quote from Psalm 45:6. This New Testament text makes it plain that the Psalm speaks of Christ and that Christ is truly God. So many today who even call themselves Christians would have us believe that Jesus is really not the God who is the Creator of all things and Savior of the world. For them God is no more than the desire for peace which Jesus has given to men by His example and the supposed power in man to attain peace.

But God makes it clear that Jesus is His only begotten Son. He is God. He reigns supreme and His throne is forever. May the true knowledge of God and His salvation never depart from our midst. Sing the Psalter.

February 19 Read Ps. 45:7; Psltr. 124:7; Heb. 1:8-14

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ reigns in perfect joy. He does not sorrow when so many who hear the gospel of salvation reject it because He has determined all things and all things happen according to His sovereign will. Perfect joy awaits all those who are found sinless. Sorrow is the result of sin. Christ imputes to us His righteousness, and we begin to experience this joy, but so long as we live in this earth our sinful nature clings to us. Do you look forward to the day when we will reign with Christ? Though earthly ties and the awful reality of death make it difficult to leave this life, we must pray for the swift return of Christ. Sing the Psalter.

February 20 Read Psalm 45:8; Psalter 124:8; Song of Solomon 3:4-11

The Psalm has revealed unto us Christ the King who conquers and rules over all and now brings us to the goal of His activity: the day of marriage with His bride. The word of God is not cold and abstract. God gives unto us the gift of marriage and uses this relationship to reveal in earthly language the wonderful relationship which God has in store for His people. Christ comes to His bride with everything to make the union most wonderful and glorious. He comes with the sweet perfumes of His grace and the music of the gospel. God brings us into perfect fellowship and a glorious salvation. How can we begin to give thanks to Him? We are so unworthy in ourselves. Sing the Psalter.

February 21 Read Ps. 45:9; Psltr. 124:9; Rev. 19:6-9

In this verse the attention turns to the bride of the king. She is the church gathered from every nation of the earth and made into a glorious body. She has been raised from her former shame and sin, cleansed, and made glorious,

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perfectly suited for the King. God makes the Church for Himself. He has determined in His eternal council to dwell forever with His people, redeemed from sin and death. Though the church appears to our earthly eyes to be filled with strife and division, the church as cleansed by the blood of Christ is beautiful in the eyes of God. We can only rejoice in the knowledge that God so loved His people that He sent his only begotten Son. Sing the Psalter.

February 22 Read Psalm 45:10; Psalter 125:1; II Cor. 5:14-21

The Royal Bride, the church, is now called to give her full devotion to Christ, her husband. Just as an earthly bride is called to devote herself to her husband and forsake relationships which interfere, so the Church is called to separate herself from the world of sin, death, and slavery out of which she is taken. She belongs to Christ. Every believer is made new in Christ. Together as the church believers serve Christ. Are you ready to give up earthly pleasures and seek first the kingdom of heaven? This is something we can do only by the power of God's grace. Pray to God for a willing heart to serve Him faithfully today. Sing the Psalter.

February 23 Read Ps. 45:11; Psaltr. 125:2; Col. 1:12-20

The Church is the body of Christ. She is loved and cherished by Christ. Christ is her head. He rules over her in love as her Lord. The relationship between Christ and the church is one of perfect love and glory as He rules over all His creation. Husbands and wives, do you seek to be a picture of this relationship in your marriage? Children and young people, do you know what the relationship between Christ and His church is like when you see your parents? We fall far short, but we must continue to strive for a marriage which reflects the perfect marriage. Young people, do you see a partner with whom you desire to reflect the marriage of Christ and His church? Pray that our families may be blessed with godly marriages. Sing the Psalter.

February 24 Read Ps. 45:12; Psaltr. 125:3; Isa. 60:1-12

The gathering of the people of God is a glorious thing indeed. The church is not to be found in the glory of earthly buildings nor in the riches of the Roman Catholic Church. The church is the gathering together of believers as the body of Christ; it is a glorious temple made with living stones. Like precious stones gathered from every region of the earth God's people are added daily to the church. Every believer is given the riches of Christ which he or she brings into the service of Christ. God is well-pleased with Christ and His bride, but to the world, the church is not beautiful at all. May we seek the honor and praise of God and not men. Sing the Psalter.

February 25 Read Psalm 45:13; Psalter 125:4; Isaiah 61

The church is clothed with the garments of righteousness. It is the righteousness imputed unto her by Christ her head. He has borne the burden of her guilt and made her whiter than snow. True righteousness alone is pleasing to our holy God and He loves us in Christ. No matter how lovely you may think you can make yourself in the eyes of God, every work of man is corrupt. The robe of righteousness cleansed in the blood of Christ alone makes us beautiful before God. The truth of sovereign grace alone is woven throughout the whole of Scripture for we must know this truth to be saved. Give thanks to God for the faithful preaching of the whole counsel of God. Sing the Psalter.

February 26 Read Psalm 45:14-15; Psalter 125:5; II Corinthians 11:1-6

In this verse the Church enters into the King's palace. She comes as a pure virgin. Purity before marriage is a picture of the Church prepared for Christ. Paul uses the language of this Psalm to exhort the young church to remain pure in the doctrine of Christ. The church is always susceptible to the lies of Satan as false preachers bring new ideas to fill itching ears. By nature man is not satisfied with the gospel, and the gospel has not changed since its announcement to Adam and Eve. Salvation is by grace alone. Are you content with the Word of God alone? Do not give your ear to the seducing lies of the enemy. Stand up and defend the truth when it is under attack. We are called to remain pure and holy before our God. Sing the Psalter.

February 27 Read Ps. 45:16; Psaltr. 125:6; Gal. 3:21-29

The Scriptures speak of the church, the body of believers, as the bride of Christ, and individual believers as children of Christ and the church. We are the spiritual seed of Abraham, sons of heavenly birth, a chosen generation, princes in all the earth, heirs according to the promise, the elect of God. What beautiful pictures God uses to describe His people! Though we may be poor and lowly from an earthly point of view, we belong to the royal family. We are united to Christ by faith alone. Do you value your royal lineage? May the pleasures and riches of this earth not distract you from your calling as a heavenly prince. Sing the Psalter.

February 28 Read Psalm 45:17; Psalter 125:7; I Cor. 11:23-29

Yesterday's verse and today's verse turn again to Christ. He is the King of a royal race: the elect. He rules over all things and His name shall be remembered throughout all generations. Christ Himself instituted the Lord's Supper

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as a means whereby His name should be remembered. It is very important, therefore, that the Lord's Supper be honored and understood clearly so that Christ be remembered properly. His Name is also proclaimed in the preach-

ing throughout the whole world. When all the elect have been gathered and Christ returns, then the church will give Him praise forever in heaven. Sing the Psalter.

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# Watching Daily At My Gates

## The Song of Zion

"A Psalter-Psalms Devotional of Praise to Our Sovereign Covenant God"

by Skip Hunter (Reprinted from March 1998)

March 1 Read Psalm 46

**Psalm 46:1** People of God, have you been in trouble lately? This trouble may be caused by our sin, it may be caused by a particular circumstance in our lives, or it may be caused by the enemy around us. Are you in trouble? What did you do about it? Did you wring your hands and cry, "Woe is me"? Did you do nothing? If we did either of these things we need to stop and consider this verse. God is a present help in trouble. He is present which means that He is always there in our times of troubles. We do not have to wait for Him to return from a trip, to wake up, or to finish another's troubles. He is there for us all the time. He is like no other friend we can have in this earth. He is also a help. His advice or guidance as given through His word will work. Oh, it may not be the answer we want. It may not be easy. But God's answer is a help and the only help. Remember that and go to your refuge and strength in times of trouble. Sing Psalms 126:1 and 127:1.

March 2 Read Judges 5:1-11

**Psalm 46:2-3** In writing about the first verse of this Psalm, I spoke of personal troubles. I want to examine ecclesiastical or church troubles this time. We often forget about the church of which we are a member. Classis, Synod, Presbytery, or General Assembly meets, and we may mention it once in a while in our prayers but that is about it. We have a corporate responsibility to our churches as the manifestation of the body of Christ. We can learn much about this responsibility by examining the history of Old Testament Israel. In the Scripture reading for today we see that they are returning from battle. They have fought against a formidable foe. They have won because God was with them. He fought for them by

using various parts of His creation. Do we see that He is fighting for us as an earthquake rocks our homes? Do we see His victorious march in the aftermath of a hurricane or tornado? Have this winter's storms shown us His hand on our side in our fight against Satan and his hosts? We should and must see these things. We will not fear if we confess that our God is fighting for us against sin and Satan using His creation. Sing Psalms 127:2 and 128:1.

March 3 Read Genesis 2:8-14

**Psalm 46:4** There is a spring which provided much of the water for Jerusalem during David's time. This water source enabled them to live in this strongly fortified city. This river is used as a picture of the grace which blesses God's city or His church. It blesses them in such a way that they are glad. Do you acknowledge that you drink daily from that river of grace, people of God? Are you glad of that grace and what it means for you? We are the dwelling place of God. This is confessed in the New Testament when our bodies are spoken of as "temples of the Holy Spirit." This gladness that we receive from this river of grace must be evident in our daily lives. We must show our happiness to be a member of the city of God. We must never attend church grudgingly. Our service of thanksgiving must be evident in all we do. Let us be glad, people of God! Sing Psalms 126:2 and 127:3.

March 4 Read Revelation 7:9-17

**Psalm 46:5** The Psalmist continues with his confession that God is in the midst of His church. We can see this by examining and learning about the history of Old Testament Israel. We can see this if we examine the history of the church of all ages including our own churches. And we can see that this is true of the church triumphant in heaven as we read in Revelation. Because God is in the

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midst of her the church will not be moved. Oh, a particular congregation may cease because of the will of God, but the church will not vanish ever. Of that there can be no doubt. In times of trouble God will help His church. He will help them because it is His church. This church is the bride of the second person of the Trinity. This church is the body of Christ. Why would He not help her? Why would He not come to her aid in times of trouble? He helps her and will bring her to glory in heaven. Pray for this help and pray in the confidence that it will come in a timely matter. Christ Himself has said, Behold, I come quickly." Let this be our confidence today and forever. Sing Psalters 127:4 and 128:2.

March 5 Read Judges 5:12-23

**Psalm 46:6-7** We return to the words of Deborah and Barak's song to look at this part of Psalm 46. Israel won a battle by the strength of Jehovah. Wicked armies fought against God's covenant people; He spoke and those wicked were routed. This is true today. Oh, we may not see such dramatic victories with our physical eyes, but if we look with the spiritual eyes given to us by God, we can see just as dramatic victories. Read the history of the church and the reformers. Look at what they have done through God. Once we examine those histories and examine our lives and experiences, we should be quick to confess that Jehovah of hosts is with us and is our refuge. People of God, do not fall into the trap of trying to win these victories by your own power. Do not be deluded that the strength of man is anything. Only by the grace of Jehovah of Hosts will we conquer Satan and the forces of sin. Sing Psalters 126:3 and 127:5.

March 6 Read Judges 5:24-31

**Psalm 46:8-9** How do we know that God will give to us the victory? How do we know that He will be there when we need Him? How can we be certain that placing all of our trust in Him is the right thing to do? David tells us what to do. He commands us to come and see the works of God. Look around you, people of God, what do you see? As I type these words the Northeast part of the United States has utter desolation caused by God's winter voice. Other parts of the world have also seen the works of God whether they acknowledge them or not. As we examine history (Young people, that is why you study history in school.) we cannot help but see God's sovereignty and power. Do you see these things? Are you ready to confess that the Lord, He is God? If not, than go look again. If so, bow your head and pray for the grace to see that "all things work together for good to them that love God." Sing Psalters 126:4 and 127:6-7.

March 7 Read Psalm 46

**Psalm 46:10-11** In the end of this Psalm the Psalmist continues to tell us how to find confidence in God's doings. He tells us to be still and know that He is God. We must put away our busyness and know that God is God. This is particularly applicable to this day of the week. How many of us either work or play till we fall into bed on Saturday night exhausted with no thought for Sunday? We need to put away our weekly activities and be still a while on Saturday evening so that we can be ready for the Lord's Day. By doing this we will truly see that God is our refuge and strength. We will be able to experience the mercies of God which are new every morning. Best of all, we will be able to be glad in the Lord's Day and be able to obtain all the benefits that God has given to us in the Sabbath. Be still and know, people of God. Sing Psalters 126:5, 127:8 and 128:3.

March 8 Read Psalm 47

**Psalm 47:1-2** Psalm 47 is a song of praise. We see that its title states that it was written for the sons of Korah who took part in the temple worship. We, too, can use it for our worship of Jehovah whether privately, at home, or at church. The first verse tells us to be excited in worship. Oh, not the superficial excitement that many in the church world exhibit today. But rather the excitement of those who realize that they are part of a peculiar people. Are we excited as we worship God? Do we show it in church? Or is it easily seen that we are there either grudgingly or out of custom or habit? The second verse tells us to be excited in worship because Jehovah is a great king. We must be excited because of what He has done for us. Be excited people of God in the presence of the terrible and awesome King. Sing Psalters 129:1 and 130:1.

March 9 Read Hebrews 4:1-11

**Psalm 47:3-4** We were introduced to our King in verse 2. In these verses we have some of the things He will do for us. First of all He "subdues the people under us." This refers to the wicked who oppress us daily. This should give to us the comfort needed to live with oppression and persecution now and in the future. As a King, God is also revealed as our Father because He chooses the inheritance that He will give to us. That inheritance is to sit at His feet in heaven. As our King, He loves us and cares for us. He wishes nothing but the best for us. Did we praise Him for that in church yesterday? Are we praising Him for it today? We must praise God from whom all blessings flow because He is our king. Sing Psalters 129:2 and 130:2.

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March 10 Read Joshua 6:1-11

**Psalm 47:5-6** The passage we read for today shows one of the manners in which God fought battles for Israel. Both Israel and Jericho had to be mystified by what happened during that long week. And then when the sounds of the trumpet rang out and the shouts of victory? What a glorious noise to God! This was a signal victory for Israel as they began to claim the land of Caanan for itself. It is also a signal victory for us as we believe the power of God and His ways. What must our response be? We must sing praises to God! We must sing praises to our King. These are not the wishy-washy songs of much of what calls itself church. These are the solidly Reformed God-centered songs. We must sing them and sing them daily. Sing Psalters 129:3 and 130:3.

March 11 Read Isaiah 30:27-33

**Psalm 47:7-8** The Psalmist comes back to the reason for singing songs to God. That main reason is that He is our King. It is not that we make Him King; He is King! We must realize this daily. These praises that we sing must be praises with understanding. They may not be simply platitudes with which the world praises its monarchs. God commands us that we praise Him with understanding. This means as was written yesterday that our songs of praise must have substance to them. Secondly it means that we must sing Jehovah's praises with our hearts. How many choirs have sung the "Hallelujah Chorus?" How many of them sang it with their hearts and with understanding? We must sing our praises in this manner because our God is a Holy God. He tolerates nothing but holiness before Him. Through Christ Jesus our songs can appear holy before Him. Let us sing His praises and let us sing them with understanding. Sing Psalters 129:4 and 130:4.

March 12 Read Psalm 47

**Psalm 47:9** We come to the end of this Psalm of praise. One more truth is explained to us. We see that our King is a covenant King. We see this in the words "people of the God of Abraham." The fact that God is a covenant king has great implications for our lives. Our whole life needs to be shaped by this realization. Our marriages must be founded on this fact. We teach our children using the best possible covenant schools based on this fact. We worship based on this fact. That our God is a covenant God means that He is friends within Himself and with us. If this concept is hard, study it. Immerse yourself in it and find out its meaning for your lives. Its truths are our salvation. For by the covenant of grace, God sent His only begotten son to this earth for us. God is King; God is a covenant King, and He deserves our praise. Sing Psalters 129:5 and 130:5.

March 13 Read Psalm 48

**Psalm 48:1** This is a favorite Psalm of many of God's people. From the opening verse of praise until the closing verse of trust, God's people can gain much from this Psalm. In the first verse we are reminded of the greatness of our covenant God. Secondly we are reminded that He is to be greatly praise by us. We are told where to praise Him. We are to praise Him in the church. The idea of church is further given as the "mountain of His holiness. Is God great? Do you confess this daily? Do you confess it in church weekly? We must do this because of who God is. This is not a choice but a command by our sovereign creator. Sing Psalter 131:1.

March 14 Read II Samuel 5:1-10

**Psalm 48:2-3** Verses two and three continue to describe the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We found first of all that the church is a holy church. Now we find that it is beautiful. Jerusalem was known not only for its physical beauty but also for its strategic location on Mount Zion. God uses that for a picture of the church throughout Scripture. We find that the church is the place of dwelling for the great king of Psalm 47. It is the place where God is pleased to dwell among His chosen people. We also find that He is the refuge for His church. Here the figure changes. The refuge of the city is the King. When she falls into troubles, she is to look to Him for help. She can run to Him in times of trouble and find a place of refuge. This is another reason why Jehovah is greatly to be praised by the church. Sing Psalter 131:2.

March 15 Read II Chronicles 17:1-10

**Psalm 48:4-7** In verse three we read that "God is known in her palaces for a refuge." We find in today's verses that He is known by nations other than the church. How is He known? He is known by His doings. Kings had often gone against Jerusalem; most of the time without much success. That God was the God of Israel caused some to leave Israel alone. Others became afraid and quickly went away. Others tried to fight and were painfully destroyed. Even ships on the sea would feel the power of Israel's God. This is a comfort to the people of God. When it looks like the wicked are gaining an upper hand, God will protect His people. But it must be because the wicked know that God is our God. We cannot live like the world and expect the world to fear us. When Israel's people forsook Jehovah, they were conquered by the wicked. When we forsake our covenant God, our sins will rise up against us. It is only by God's mercy that we are not consumed. Sing Psalter 131:3.

# Rev. C. Hanko

## Chapter 20

### Farmers and Friends

edited by Karen Van Baren

*Editor's Note: During the years of his ministry, Rev. Hanko frequently preached from the book of Ephesians. Perhaps some of those sermons were addressed also to the congregation in Manhattan, which was so very dear to him. When one reads Rev. Hanko's reflections on his time in Manhattan, one cannot help but think of Ephesians 4:16, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*

**W**e spent three pleasant years in the Manhattan congregation. The entire congregation did everything in their power to make life pleasant for us. Many stopped in as they passed to have a cup of coffee with us. Our holidays were all carefully planned so that we never sat home alone. We made trips in the mountains, to Yellowstone Park, a trip to Glacier National Park, and in the meantime also had many visitors.

We had 100% attendance in the services and in the catechism classes and practically 100% attendance in all the societies. If one did not attend, he or she heard about it. All, even the young people, were very cooperative. The church was the center of activity for them. In fact, the young folks liked nothing better than to come to the church and have a sort of program. Those who could sing made up a quartet or trio. One who could play the piano would play a piece. Someone else would give a speech on an assigned subject. This went off smoothly; no one refused. Then we all would have a bit of lunch before going home. A visitor would think that this had been arranged in advance. I challenge any minister to try this in his congregation. The right community is needed for something like that.

In the summers, both Herm and Fred got a good taste of farming in the west. Herm worked for at least two

farmers, the one still quite old fashioned, the other adopting the new machinery.

Herm worked for Menko Flikkema when he was with us during the summers.<sup>1</sup> He once got a baling hook in his thigh so deep that he had to go to the doctor, who plugged the hole up with seemingly endless strips of cloth to prevent any infection. Herm also worked for Dave Schipper, who had a barn full of cats.

Fred had his first experience with Heno, who lived on Churchill. Later he worked for Pete Flikkema.<sup>2</sup> During the harvest time he was the tractor man, fully responsible for the tractor during that season.

A few summers I also helped Pete Flikkema with the harvesting. I prepared the necessary sermons in advance, and then, when the harvest time came, I went to spend the week from Monday morning to Saturday evening with the harvesters. We always had a very pleasant time because all the workers were from the church. Menko and Pete Flikkema would harvest together. There were three combines and two trucks, with Gerrit Flikkema in charge of the entire crew.

One person who could hardly be forgotten is Henry Ungersma. He lived on Church Hill, a close neighbor. He might well be referred to as a gentleman farmer. He was a dry land farmer, which means that he had his farm in the hills where irrigation was impossible. As a result he left half the land fallow each year, giving the soil time to collect moisture from the rains. He worked the land only 12 weeks of the year. He was, in the real sense of the word, an outdoor man, who enjoyed nothing more than hunting and fishing. He lived close by, so that he often stopped in to take me on one of his activities, either to fish, or to practice shooting, or to sow grain by airplane in the hills, or just to enjoy the scenery. From a distance he could spot a stag, an elk, an antelope, a moose, or a mountain goat. While I sat looking without seeing anything, he would point out to me the animals, nicely protected in their natural habitat. When we went fish-

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ing, my fishing line and bait dangled in the water, while he drew out one fish after another.

It would hardly do not to mention that there was also in Manhattan a man who tried to make life a bit unpleasant in the congregation. As I have mentioned before, Rev. Danhof had warned us as students that in each congregation we could expect at least one troublemaker. As was mentioned before, there was such a character in Hull, there was also one in Oak Lawn, and this one filled the bill in Manhattan.

The first time I was to visit this man for family visitation, the elder asked me whether I had ever become furiously angry on a call. I assured him that this had never happened. His response was, "This time it will happen. It has always happened in the past." Thinking I was well prepared for the worst, we entered the home and proceeded with the visit. It was not long and I lost my temper as a result of his constant needling. Afterward, the elder said, "I told you so." From that time on, I learned to ignore this man whenever he tried to rouse my temper.

Whenever I preached a sermon on Christian instruction, he would stay away from church for a while, because he felt the school was duty bound to bring a bus to his house to fetch his children. When I went to Bozeman to have catechism with the young people there, he refused to send his children, since I could also come to his house. When the entire congregation came to celebrate communion in the morning, this man refused to come in the morning, but came as a lone partaker in the afternoon. We soon discovered that the best way to treat his antics was to ignore him. If he stayed away from church for a while, the consistory did not bother to visit him. Soon he was back in church, and I would receive a few chickens as a peace offering.

One more character who should not be forgotten. Herm worked for him a while in his machine shop, where he made wagon boxes. He had married a woman who was a member of the "black stocking" group, a branch of the Mennonites. They believed in successors of the apostle Peter, who still received a special gift of the Holy Spirit and could speak in languages they never learned. They also thought that their children could be baptized only when both parents were members of their group.

At the time of their marriage, this man was unconverted, so it made no difference to him that his wife belonged to this sect. Later, he was converted under the preaching of Rev. Kok, and joined our congregation at the time of organization. When their first baby was born,

the problem of baptism came up. This man insisted on baptizing the baby, while his wife insisted that he should join her group and baptize the baby with her. He had to take the baby from her forcibly for baptism.

When I came to Manhattan they had had their second baby. No one dared to broach the subject of baptism. So I talked with him, and he suggested that I talk with his wife. This I did, but it proved to be a one-sided conversation. She did not say a word, but when I insisted that the baby had to be baptized, that she could not do it, and that therefore she should leave this to her husband, she left the room and went into their bedroom. This became a question of endurance, who would hold out the longest. After some time she came to look around the corner of the door to see whether I had left. I took this opportunity to tell her that on the next Sunday the baby would be baptized, and she should not interfere, for that would bring trouble.

There was quite the suspense that next Sunday. Would he come? Would he come without a struggle? What a relief to see him come into the church with the baby, even nicely dressed. It was much more of a relief to hear that his wife had offered no resistance. What is interesting to note is that Mom became quite friendly with her, since Mom took sewing lessons from her. That did much to clear the atmosphere and give her a better impression of our churches.

I must tell of a little incident that happened in our home. In that part of the country it was customary that a salesman who happened to stop in around noon would be invited for dinner. One noon we invited a salesman to stay with us. Mother had placed a pan of buttermilk broth (soepen brei) on the table for dessert. The salesman took some potatoes and, thinking the pap was gravy, poured a good dose of it on his spuds. Mother told him that this was dessert, and that she would get him another plate, but he assured her that he liked his potatoes this way. The kids kept stealing glances at him as he ate that sour pap, barely holding back a snicker or two.

In 1947, Prof. Schilder made his second visit to America.<sup>3</sup> He had stayed with us a little while in Oak Lawn in 1939, and now he stayed a whole week. Almost from the time he arrived we discussed and disagreed on the covenant and baptism of infants. Later, Mr. and Mrs. Van Spronsen spent a month with us.<sup>4</sup> She was much more ready to adjust to our way of living than he was. Again the different views of the covenant were discussed.

Rev. and Mrs. Hoeksema with Lois, Homer and Trude, paid us a visit for a few days.<sup>5</sup> A group from the



*Yellowstone Park. From left to right: Rev. Hoeksema, Homer Hoeksema, Elaine Hanko, Fred Hanko, Mrs. Hanko, Trude Jonker, Lois Hoeksema.*

church decided to take them and us to Yellowstone Park. They took along roasted chicken, a carton of boiled eggs, and many other delicacies. Lois, Homer and Trude wanted to see snow. Little did they realize that farther into the park they would see more snow than they cared to see. So, when they saw the first small heap of muddy snow, they had a snowball fight, getting themselves pretty well messed up.

We had gone through the entire park without seeing a single bear, even though at that time the bears lumbered along the road side, looking for handouts. People did feed the bears even in spite of the many signs along the way, "Do not feed the bears." Just as we were to leave the park we did see a bear. Rev. Hoeksema stopped his car and fed the bear a cookie. It so happened that a ranger saw this, came to his car and reprimanded him. This might have passed unnoticed, but the previous Sunday Rev. Hoeksema had preached in our congregation about keeping God's law and how readily we transgress it. He had used the example of the farm laborers in the Netherlands, who stood along the wall in the church under the sign, "Do not spit tobacco juice on the floor." Reverend remarked that they stood under the sign and still spat on the floor. When we stopped for lunch no one said anything about the experience with the bear until suddenly one of the men spoke up, "Yes, under the sign and spitting on the floor." Even Rev. Hoeksema, though a bit embarrassed, joined in the laughter.

In 1947, Rev. Hoeksema was on his way to Montana to preach for me when he had a stroke in Sioux Falls. When he began to recover, his left side was lame and his speech was slurred. To all appearances his preaching and teaching had come to a sudden stop. Yet the Lord

gave a slow but remarkable recovery, so that he could be active in the churches yet for a number of years. Some of the resonance of his voiced was lost, but his voice was almost as powerful as before. He walked with a cane and had limited use of his right arm and hand.

Elaine finished the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the Manhattan Christian School and received a diploma. Fred

also stood ready to enter the 11<sup>th</sup> grade and would have to go to Michigan to continue his Christian education. In May of 1948, after taking state exams, he had graduated from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade in the high school. He and the CRC minister's son were the highest in the class.

But the people in Michigan had no desire to continue bearing the responsibility for our sons. It was at that crucial time that a call came from First Church in Grand Rapids. I dreaded the thought of leaving Manhattan, but also of assuming all the work involved in a congregation of five hundred families, even though they would have three ministers. Nor did it appeal to me to work along with two other ministers in the same congregation.

Two letters reached me. The one was from Rev. De Wolf who informed me that if I decided to come, he would give me his cooperation. Nevertheless he left the impression that he did not want a third minister in First Church. The other was from Rev. Hoeksema. He did not want to influence me, but did want me to realize that another man was needed there, and he would like to see me come. This was almost a challenge.<sup>6</sup>

So reluctantly, but nevertheless convinced that this was a call of the Lord, I accepted the call to First Church, informing them that I would come at the end of the catechism season in May. This gave them an opportunity to find a house and to prepare it for our coming.

The congregation in Manhattan was very sad, if not a bit angry. De Wolf had left for First Church after a brief stay, and now we were leaving after being there only slightly more than three years. But they bid us farewell with God's blessing.



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When the time came for us to leave, we auctioned off some of the furniture. The consistory of First Church had sent \$2000 for moving expenses and left it up to us how we wanted to transport our belongings. So I shipped the books by mail, and some of the furniture by rail. The rest we sold.

Reluctantly we left behind the congregation and environment that we had so greatly enjoyed. Elaine was one girl who was very reluctant to leave and promised her girl friends, "I'll be back."

When we left I was deeply concerned about Mom. Even on the trip to Michigan I feared that she would have a heart attack. Each night I checked for an emergency doctor. But she made the trip well, and seemed to be happy to be with her family, whom she had not seen, except for an occasional visit, for nineteen years. ❖

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Menko Flikkema was the father of the late John Flikkema of South Holland PRC and Gerrit Flikkema of Peace PRC.

<sup>2</sup> Pete Flikkema was a brother of Menko Flikkema.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Schilder was a member of the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands. He opposed Abraham Kuyper's view of the covenant, and was deposed in 1944 by the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht while in hiding from the Nazis. He had been in a concentration camp because he was one of the few who dared to criticize Hitler and the Nazis publicly. The synod deposed him without ever giving him a hearing. He then established the Liberated Churches, called De Gereformeerde Kerken onderhouding Artikel 31 (The Reformed Churches maintaining Art. 31). He led the Liberated Churches until his

death. These churches are and were sister churches of the Canadian and American Reformed. Schilder gave us endless grief in introducing into our churches the idea of a conditional covenant, which was the major factor in the Split of 1953.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Van Spronsen were a couple from the Netherlands who toured our churches in the late Forties. They were members of the Liberated Churches.

<sup>5</sup> Lois Kregel is a daughter of Rev. Herman Hoeksema, though she was unmarried at the time referred to here. Homer, a son of Rev. Hoeksema, is the late Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema. Trude, or Gertrude Jonker, was Homer's girlfriend at this time and later became his wife.

<sup>6</sup> The letter was written from Bellflower, CA on January 28, 1947. It reads as follows: "Dear brother, I just learned that you received the call from Fuller Ave. Congratulations. I am glad of it. And I sincerely hope that the Lord's way may be for you to accept it. You know that I am not in the habit to advise anyone in matters of this nature. But I want to express my opinion in this particular case, which is that you are just the man for this call, both from the viewpoint of preaching and of cooperation with Rev. De Wolf, which is, of course, rather important. Of course, with me you will find it easy to cooperate. The work is manifold, but now there are two of you, and I can help a little, too, once in a while. And so, brother, you have my opinion. Perhaps it can help you to reach a decision. Regards to your wife and family also from the Mrs. With love in the Lord, H. Hoeksema."

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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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From the Pastor's Study

# The Calling of a Young Wife

by Rev. Steven Key

*This is the first of a series of articles, the substance of which was a sermon from Titus 2:4, 5 preached in Randolph Protestant Reformed Church on February 5, 1995. It is published by request. Although applicable especially to wives and young women who desire to pre-*

*pare themselves for holy marriage, it is also applicable to older women—whose calling it is to instruct their daughters and younger women in these crucial truths, and to young men, who ought to seek these virtues in a wife.*

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**T**oday I call your attention to the Bible's instruction concerning an aspect of Christian family life. As we have seen often before, God has given marriage for our spiritual good and the good of his church. We are blessed who receive marriage and family life as God's good gift. But we must also recognize that in order for it to serve for our spiritual good, our family life must conform to the will of God and the precepts of his word.

As we turn to Paul's epistle to Titus, his fellow minister in the gospel, we find him giving Titus instruction concerning the ministry. Titus must emphasize in his ministry the calling of God's people to put sound doctrine to practice. That is emphatically true when it comes to family life. Satan recognizes the importance of the institution of marriage and the family. For that reason, he levels numerous assaults upon the family, placing many temptations before the children of God.

This second chapter of Titus begins with the connecting word "But."

The Apostle had just referred to the influence of the ungodly world upon the church. The world lives in open defiance of God, shamelessly trumpeting its sin as a great fun.

And because of the sinful natures even of God's people, and also because of the reprobate that are found even in the development of the lines of the covenant, within the walls of the church, such wickedness in the world has an influence in the church.

In the very last part of chapter 1, Paul had warned of those who are defiled and unbelieving. He was speaking of those in the church. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16).

"But..." In opposition to such and in defense against that influence of evil, "speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." That is, speak concerning that godly life which is fitting with the confession of a Christian, which is consistent with the great truths of God's word.

And part of that sound doctrine which Titus must preach and teach is the application of God's truth to holy marriage and to family life.

### **Teaching Young Women**

As we consider the instruction of verses 4 and 5 of Titus, chapter 2, it is striking that the instruction actually belongs to the calling of the older women in the church. It is not the calling of Titus and other ministers

to teach the young women of the church, first of all, with respect to their calling in family life. But the older women have that responsibility.

Titus must preach sound doctrine and apply that truth to the life of God's people.

But the members of the church must enter into the application of that truth.

That is an urgent responsibility! The opening words of verse 4 really do not convey the emphasis. But the text says literally, that the older women are earnestly to teach the young women. The word used actually means "to discipline, to hold one to her duty," and therefore to exhort earnestly. That calling belongs to you older women.

When we use the terms "older" and "young," we realize that age is a relative thing. But the text somewhat defines the terms here.

The young women are those who are married or of age to be married, and include mothers whose children are yet at home and whose life, therefore, is characterized by the tremendous daily responsibility of child-rearing. In that case, we might regard young women as those in their late teenage years and perhaps well up into their 40s.

The older women, on the other hand, although not exclusive of unmarried women, are generally those who are married and have already borne the responsibility of raising children. That may include those as young as in their mid to late 30s, as well as those who are older. Their children, if not already out of the house, are older.

These women, who have grown by experience and also have some spiritual maturity, are to show concern for the younger women of the church by teaching them the ways of God-fearing marriage and motherhood. You are to set before them, not only the pattern of your own life, but you are earnestly to speak to them the Word of God concerning the calling of a young wife.

### **Called to Love**

The fundamental element of your calling, Christian wives, is that of love.

We speak now of that spiritual virtue which recognizes marriage and the family as God's wonderful gift to his church.

That young women have husbands and children is only by God's appointment.

That God has given to his church marriage is by his sovereign appointment. He has done so, according to Ephesians 5, in reflection of that amazing relationship between Christ and his church which he has established

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by his sovereign and eternal decree of election. The inspired Apostle speaks of the institution of marriage and that holy relationship, when he says in Ephesians 5:32: "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

For a young woman to love her husband, she must recognize her God-given place.

In Genesis, chapter 2, we learn that man alone was not able to perform the calling that God had for him. God created the woman as the help fit for him. What a tremendously important calling you God-fearing wives have! Without godly wives and mothers in the home, the family and the church could not exist! The church, after all, is founded upon the life of the family.

What a glorious place God has given you women! You are indispensable to the welfare of us all. The home, the church and the cause of the kingdom depends directly upon your work as godly wives and mothers. Knowing that indispensable place given you by God, you are called to love your husband.

### **True Love**

The love, therefore, which unites the Christian husband and wife together is much deeper than mere physical and romantic attraction. You will not find this love in the world's books or the world's movies.

This is a love which bears all things, which forgives many faults, which seeks the welfare of its object. It is the love of God in Christ which he works in their hearts through the Holy Spirit. And that love, as a matter of the soul, comes to expression.

Such love is the giving of one's self to another.

This is the love of self-denial, the love which seeks the other and gives to the other.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme example. We read in Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." He gave Himself to the death of the cross for the welfare of his bride, for her salvation.

Here in Titus 2:4 the same calling of love is set before the young wives in the church.

Husbands must indeed love their wives. That is their chief calling in marriage.

But the text before us today sets the same calling before you wives.

To love your husband is to live for him, recognizing his headship as the picture of Christ's headship over the church. It is to pray for him and to support him in all his endeavors. It is to be a spiritual help to him. It is to apply yourself in your daily life to preparing for him the most comfortable home possible. It is to be there for him, to fellowship with him.

To love your husband is to live with I Corinthians 13 written upon your heart. Such love also comes to expression in many other virtues, as we shall see presently.

Besides the love for her husband, the young mother is to love her children.

This, again, is not a natural love. Else it would not have to be taught you.

Your calling here is a calling to that deeply spiritual virtue of love. You are called to reflect the love of God in your relationship with your children.

That is often difficult. Because our children are sinners. Not only so, but they are sinners in such a way that they reflect the sins of our own natures. That makes it very painful to experience. But you are called to love your children.

Such love is a love that provides for the children. A God-fearing mother is there for her children. She is not selfishly pursuing other interests to the neglect of her children. She is there, recognizing that her children require full-time labors of love. They must be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

During those several hours of the day when her husband is at work, the full responsibility for that calling rests upon mother's shoulders. She must love her children, providing discipline for them, teaching them, having devotions with them, praying with them.

This love, love for her husband and love for her children, is the foundation of the Christian home where the young wife has her calling. Such love comes to manifestation. *(To be continued.)* ❖

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*Reprinted from September, 1998.*

# Jacobus Pieter de Klerk

*Very few issues of Beacon Lights since I have been editor, if any, have reached you without something from J.P. de Klerk. As indicated in the November issue, he passed away September 20, 2006 at the age of 81. Who was he? His wife, Tini, sent me the speeches given by his two sons at the funeral. The speeches reveal a very interesting man, and a glimpse into the diverse work of God as he gathers his church from every nation of the earth. Rik is the son from Tini's first marriage. Her first husband died when Rik was only 16 days old. I met Theo at a young people's convention some years ago. Since then he married his wife Lucy in New Zealand, and God has given him six children.*

## **Theo's speech at Dad's funeral**

Typewriters and Christmas cards!

I cannot image him without his typewriter close at hand (not these modern computer things that flicker before your eyes) but a good sturdy workhorse to pump out his correspondence and Christmas cards.

Woe betide if the workhorse broke down or the ribbon ran out—where's the phone—Theoooooooooooo!

I know of my Dad wearing out at least 6 typewriters beyond repair within my lifetime of a mere 38 years! But it leaves me wondering how many others bit the dust in the other 43 years!

Although I've started with the anecdotal, there has been a much more serious side to my father's life. To a large extent he quietly went about this without fuss or fanfare.

Who was Jacobus Pieter de Klerk? Keith to some, Koos to the Dutch. He was my father, an author, an artist, a patriot—the man who showed me what a Christian worldview looks like and that there is a cost to defending it. It was not a cost he counted beforehand. He simply believed this Christian worldview in faith, defended it stoically and trusted in God to equip and provide for him along the journey. Flying by the seat of your pants or living by faith? I believe that it was the latter.

My father believed in a sovereign, almighty God who reigns over heaven and earth—there was no doubt about this. And Koos confessed his Lord and Savior till the

end. Although my father was afflicted with various and serious physical infirmities during his life, God also granted him an enduring patience and contentment to bear his lot. God used those infirmities to heighten my father's awareness of the spiritual side of life—that's where the typewriter surfaces again. He didn't play sports; he didn't go camping; but those fingers flew across the keyboard—every day. He could see the spiritual battle between good and evil in this earthly life vividly and he was driven from deep within his soul to expose it despite the cost. He had things to say and the typewriter let him do it.

My father's life was a testament to God's preservation of his own. He escaped the German groene polizi in 1945 by being let out the back door, survived meningitis in 1947, survived septicaemia in 1976. All of these incidents were miracles in his life and he knew it. They simply reinforced the conviction that God still had a use for his typewriter.

He was born in Den Haag to Andries and Grietje de Klerk in 1925—the son of a policeman from Zeeland and a mother from Groningen. He experienced the Second World War in occupied Netherlands as an older teenager, which is when he acquired the first typewriter. Well there's the first hint of trouble—he let the typewriter help people in need but the Germans weren't all that fussed about this young would-be journalist and very rudely opened mail not addressed to them. That very nearly was the end of the story. Humanly speaking that was as close as it gets.

Then it was the reds under the bed that got more than a paper cut from the valued added letters and books that rolled off his typewriter in the 1960s and 70s. That cost Dad dearly in all sorts of other ways!

Socialists and Communists were fair game in my father's typewriter's sights and were always given a liberal dosing of opposing worldview from a conservative Christian perspective. The readers of the letters to the editor to the *Manawatu Standard* were left in no doubt of this in the 1980s and 90s.

So why mention all of this? There are some much better yarns to spin around a lot of other of his life's

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experiences. Simply this; I thank God for giving me the father he did. Although, God used my father to give me a powerful example of values, which will anchor my soul for as long as I live, more importantly God gave this man a straightforward faith to know his spiritual destiny.

Was all the pain and illness in his life an accident or just bad luck? No. These were the stepping-stones that God used to lead one of his children home. Why am I so sure that my father is in glory? Koos believed in the saving power of Jesus Christ risen from the dead as the only atonement for sin. I close with the question: Do you know Jesus? Don't delay, answer the question and act so you can say along with the Apostle Paul in II Tim, 1:12: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

### **Rik's speech at Dad's funeral**

Thank you Theo!

It's good to see so many of you here, I am Rik, the other son.

My Dad wrote books, most of those were in Dutch, so you may not have read them.

After writing three colorful novels, he wrote a book with more personal thoughts, entitled *Just Like You*.

A copy made its way to New Zealand, and after receiving letters back from New Zealand, he realized there were many people there who shared his views.

The political and social climate in Holland had been upsetting him for some time, and New Zealand became the right place to move his family to.

So it was because of Dad's fourth book really, that we actually made it to this part of the world in 1973/74.

Dad loved travel anyway, he'd done quite a lot of it, he loved languages; as well as Dutch and English, he also spoke French and German.

Sometimes, when he spoke with someone who had an accent, he would subconsciously mimic that accent, which was quite funny to hear when he was on the phone.

This wasn't making fun of the other person, I think it was a kind of empathy.

There's a picture on the back of your program, thoughtfully put together by Theo, which shows my dad in 1948, barely 23 years old, walking down the streets of, of all places, Stockholm.

Of course he was from The Hague himself, which is in Holland, and here he was in Sweden.

It shows how, as a young man, he traveled a lot while running his own advertising agency, employing other people, Dad made contacts all over the world.

In the famous family photo albums (which he kept up all his life—and we now know a lot of his history from), you can see he went to Norway just after that, and to England, where he almost didn't make it back after a bout of meningitis.

Dad was a fiercely loyal person, who stayed in touch with a great many international friends for all of their lives, and all of his life, right up to the end.

A man of very strong convictions, Dad knew what he was about; he had faith, and he had strong political views.

Of course he worked in advertising, which almost sounds a bit frivolous really, for the man we got to know later. For when I got to know him, I was 8 years old, and just like Theo, who was born a few years later, we were only there for the second half of his life. The same for Mum, she met him when he was already 38, and he did make it to 81 this year!

So there was a whole life before us; moving on from advertising to become a fashion journalist, can you imagine that, he actually wrote about dresses and hats... He did love his hats....

Anyway, eventually he specialized in his favorite subjects, religion and politics.

Just before we left Holland, Dad was doing a lot of public speaking, politically tinged speeches for young people in churches, about what was happening in the world.

He became more and more convinced that New Zealand would be a safer place to live.

Dad had many artistic qualities, the reason he had an advertising agency is that he had an imaginative mind, he could write and draw really well. In your program, underlying the text is a drawing Dad did of the Palace his Father kept a watch over during World War 2.

One of most powerful stories Dad told me was how his father kept 300 people at a time hidden from the Germans in the basement of the Palace (Noordeinde) in The Hague.

Theo's grandfather was a policeman who worked double shifts for most of the war, guarding the Dutch Royal Palace (supposedly sealed by the Germans), making sure no one found out this was in fact a major hiding place for countless lost airmen, persecuted Jews, and Dutch resistance fighters.

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There were meetings with British submarines on the beach in the middle of the night, and all sorts of stuff! To me as a kid, these seemed like wild and exciting times, but all too real for the ones involved. The incredible stress of this situation on Dad's father probably helped to shorten his life considerably—he never made it to his fifties.

Dad himself was also involved in resistance work. He hid secret information in his artwork he sent to England via neutral countries like Portugal. At the end of World War II, he was awarded medals by three different countries for saving peoples' lives that way, something not many of you would probably know, since he never wanted to talk about it, feeling others were more worthy of recognition.

My dad opened up a whole new world to me, a whole world of many things not yet imagined.

In another life he could have been a scriptwriter, because when he did tell a story, he made you feel as if you were there.

Of course with a policeman for a father and an uncle who was an explosives expert, he had learned at the feet of the masters.

Most importantly, Dad took responsibility for me when I was just a little kid, he made sure I went to a Christian school, and he made sure I went to the right Christian school; it was through him that I got to know the Lord.

He deepened religious understanding in my Mum and me; we believed in God, but we didn't quite know him the way we know him now....

As I became a teenager, there were the usual puberty problems with my parents, but by questioning me and asking me to justify myself, I learned who I was. He helped me grow up!

Dad loved his family. He was very proud of Theo, loved Lucy like a daughter and took great delight in all their beautiful kids.

What I appreciated him for most was that he, very much, loved my Mum.

Thank you! ❖

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## A New World

by J. P. de Klerk

**F**or several centuries there have been people in high places who speak about "making a new world." All of them abandoned God's Word first of all. They joined a conspiracy, or they started one.

A well-known example in history occurred in 44 B.C.—the plot of 60 senators to murder the head of state, Julius Caesar. The leaders were Caius Cassius and Marcus Brutus. Caesar was a genius and they hated him. They killed him in the Roman Senate. Caesar did not expect the plot; Marcus Brutus was one of his best friends.

There will always be conspiracies, palace plots, betrayals and assassinations. Certain people always want more power, land, wealth, influence, and praise. They want to make a whole new world for themselves. Nowadays again there are conspiracies working in that direction. One world, one government, one kind of money, one religion, one policy—one who will grab the power and oppress all others in the same way.



Over the years there has been a steady stream of defectors from Communist parties and, through their testimony, we now know how international conspiracies are organized and operate. Some of the richest people in

the world have aligned themselves with leftist policies as well as main-line religions.

During the past 200 years, while the peoples of the world gradually were winning their political freedom, the major banking families were nullifying the trend toward representative government by setting up new dynasties of political control from behind the scenes. (This says Prof. Carroll Quigley in *Tragedy and Hope*.)

All governments must borrow money in times of emergency. The international banking dynasties (like Rothschild and Morgan) discovered that by providing funds from their own private resources with strings attached, gradually they could bring governments under their control. It is a passion for control over other human beings that drives them.



William Paterson

Already in 1694 there was, for example, William Paterson, who became the head of the “Bank of England,” and the power over England’s money system fell into private hands. He let it *appear* to be controlled by the government. He said: “The Bank creates money out of nothing.” In the USA, J. P. Morgan and the Rockefeller family could also almost control the political life of the country on the federal level. On December 22, 1913, the Federal Reserve System made it a fact. The New Age idea existed already. The world would be better for those in *power*. In the days of President Woodrow Wilson (during World War I), it was obvious that his government was totally dependent on Edward Mandell House (Federal Reserve System) for *all* political decisions. His

guidelines will be suitable for the “New Age,” to strengthen government control over the masses. Currently all governments pay enormous amounts of interest to the banks. They get it back from the taxpayers and weaken them. They advance ruling class ideas.

In 1870, a wealthy British socialist by the name of John Ruskin was appointed as Professor of Fine Arts at Oxford University. He advocated the necessity of a ruling class, but it should be extended to the lower classes throughout the world. He said, “My aim is to show the eternal superiority of some men to others, sometimes of one to all others” (from *Ruskin Today* by Kenneth Clark).

Thirty years later this idea was used by Cecil Rhodes, who had a virtual monopoly over all the diamonds that came from South Africa (and most of the gold). This man spent his vast income to advance Ruskin’s dream. In 1891 he established a secret society, together with people like Lord Balfour, Lord Rothschild, Lord Milner, etc. He organized an “Association of Helpers” later named the Round Table organization (in the USA) who founded the Council on Foreign Relations.

They started to prepare the road to the “New World” for the future. In time, groups of other idealistic souls have been brought together who think that they can improve the world. They don’t know that there exists an inner control for sinister purposes.

The headquarters of the CFR (Council on Foreign Relations) is located on the west side of Park Avenue in New York. It is through this organizational ring and then outward through tax-exempt foundations, universities, and government agencies that an international conspiracy has now dominated the domestic and foreign policies of the United States for over ninety years. In December 1939, the CFR, with aid from the Rockefeller Foundation, established four planning groups; in 1941 a fifth was added. In 1942 it became part of the State Depart-

ment. So they penetrated the government and went to solve postwar planning problems.

The Communist Alger Hiss was a CFR member, who became Director of the Office of Special Political Affairs of the State Department, directly involved in the birth of the United Nations Organization. He helped to write the UN Charter.

The Russian revolution was also made possible by people like Lord Milner (Round Table and CFR). The Communist movement around the world always has been financed by the international banking establishment. The international conspirators who work towards a “New World” are rich socialists (or Communists) who want a world super-state with themselves in *control* from behind the scenes (from *The Capitalist Conspiracy* by C. Edward Griffin). No peace-loving humans; they only keep up appearances (from *Conspiracy To Rule The World* by Gary Allen). A “New Order” is equal to “A New Age,” a world government. In fact, there is not much difference between Lenin, Hitler, Mao and the Rockefellers (from *More Deadly Than War* by G. Edward Griffin).



And Communism is not dead. That started among Spiritists and Free Masons where in 1776 Adam Weishaupt founded the Illuminati (secret organization) in Ingelstadt, in the kingdom of Bavaria (Germany). The most prominent member of this extensive conspiracy for making a new world-order was the attorney von Zwack. He was supported by Baron

Adolf von Knigge. King Karl Theodor arrested von Zwack, and he sent Weishaupt out of the country. The word “Illuminati” means “the enlightened ones” and is of an occult nature, with the worship of reason or humanism. In 1798 George Washington warned about the Illuminati in the United States in a letter to Rev. G. W. Snyder.

Some years later the obscure intellectual Karl Marx was hired by a conspiratorial circle called the League of the Just, to write for them the *Communist Manifesto*. It was a call to the workers of the world to arise against their employers. The project went in the footsteps of Adam Weishaupt, supervised by the wealthy capitalist

Frederick Engels. The name of Karl Marx appeared on it only twenty years later.

But in 1920, three years after the Communist revolution in Russia, the late Sir Winston Churchill wrote, “From the days of Weishaupt to those of Karl Marx, to those of Trotsky, Bela-Kuhn, Rosa Luxembourg and Emma Goldman, this worldwide conspiracy has been steadily growing.

This played a definitely recognizable role in the tragedy of the French Revolution. It has been the mainspring of every subversive movement during the nineteenth century; and now at last this band of extraordinary personalities from the underworld of the great cities of Europe and America have gripped the Russian people by the hair of their heads and have become practically the undisputed masters of that enormous empire (from *It Comes Up Murder* by John Steinbacher).

In 1953, the Report of the California Senate Investigating Committee on Education contained a revealing conclusion. It said, “So-called modern Communism is apparently the same hypocritical and deadly world conspiracy to destroy civilization that was founded by the secret order of the Illuminati in Bavaria on May 1, 1776, and that raised its hoary head in our colonies here at the critical period before the adoption of our Federal Constitution.” Let us also not forget

the symbol of the all-seeing eye which is closely associated with the Illuminati. Like many other features of this conspiracy, apparently it was taken by Adam Weishaupt from the occult symbolism of ancient history. It appears among the symbols of the secret



Order of the Rosicrucians, the Freemasons, and many others, including the Communists in Vietnam. It appears on the alternate side of the Great Seal of the Federal Government and on the American one dollar note of the Federal Reserve System. At the bottom of the seal, in Roman numerals, there is the date 1776. This, of course, is the year of American independence, but it is also the year of the founding of the Illuminati.

There is much evidence that the Communist (Marxist) and Capitalist conspiracies both are two out of many branches of a master conspiracy which may have historical continuity with the Order of the Illuminati. There



is no way to deliver the proof because they have the shelter of secrecy.

It has two foundations: big government and manipulation of money. Without them the shelter would wither and die. But who is able to reduce the size of government, and return the money to a standard that cannot be manipulated (gold and silver)? Only with divine guidance it could be done. The shadow of the United Nations falls over us. There are plenty of Communists involved, but there are also non-Communist conspirators. They work together in close harmony because their ultimate goal is the same—a one world government.

Lenin wrote already (in many books) about “Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Revolution” and said that mass action “from below” should be pitched against political demands and slogans “from above” in such a way that the inevitable movement of power becomes total and the Communist state is complete. That is what you find back in the Organization of the United Nations that will one day absorb the whole world.

Recently Samuel Huntington published a book about the future, with the title: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. It was discussed in the Dutch magazine *Stavast* by P. Kremer. Huntington shows that countries with about the same cultural or religious background are in a process of uniting. The situation quickly becomes totally different from the years during the Second World War.

He warns that if you see people of countries in Asia or Africa in Western clothing, it also means that they think and reason like us. They modernize on the outside, but in general most of them remain the same. Christianity of the conservative kind is losing its influence in many places where it was already taken for granted.

The Moslems are ready to increase their power, but they do not yet have a leader. There is a competition behind closed doors between several countries, armed to the teeth.



Communist China will become the strongest and most aggressive force within twenty years. Singapore could be an economic role model.

In the place of an Iron Curtain, a curtain against the Moslems and the Asians could become necessary, humanly speaking. It means that we will be forced into a defense position, that we can no longer teach other nations anything; they are no longer interested in Western values, democracy, freedom, rights, individualism or whatever. It could very well be, that Red China and the Moslem countries will come to an agreement, against the rest of the world. John Naisbitt says in his book *Megatrends Asia* that already a network has begun to grow.



Karl Marx

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Huntington advises that we must not give up our own culture, religion, etc. He says it would be wise, if the USA and Europe unite to be able to defend the West against the rest. The future will not be rosy, but “Hang together or hang separately.” Army, Navy and Air Force must modernize and enlarged as quickly as possible,

whether we like that or not. However, we know that our strength comes from the Lord. He will guide and protect us. He knows His children by name, anywhere in the world. ❖

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*J.P. de Klerk was a writer and journalist in Ashhurst, New Zealand.*

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## Church News

# 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:**  
Ethan Brent, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brent Klamer—Byron Center, MI

Gerrit Peter, son of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Brummel—Faith, MI

Josiah James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dykstra—First, MI

Ryan Charlie, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Doezema—First, MI

Avery Rose, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Rick DeVries—Grace, MI

David James, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Langerak—Hope, MI

Cory Nathan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Carl Maassen—Hull, IA

Kylie Renae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Schiermeyer—Hull, IA

Alicia Danae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Andy Moss—Hull, IA

Nicholas Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Philip Lenting—South Holland, IL

Bryce Jordan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Allan Kikkert—Wingham, Ont, Canada

Adult baptism was administered to Greg Duerr—Loveland, CO/Spokane, WA

### 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:**

Stephan Murray—Ballymena, N Ireland

Eunice Murray—Ballymena, N Ireland

James Kooienga—Faith, MI

Drew Looyenga—Faith, MI

Joseph Richards—Faith, MI

Jordan VanOverloop—Faith, MI

Jonathon VanDyke—Faith, MI

Jordan Whiteley—First, MI

Brianna Zandstra—Hull, IA

Candace Duerr—Loveland, CO/Spokane, WA

Clint Meelker—Redlands, CA

Michael Jabaay—Redlands, CA

Nick Meelker—Redlands, CA

### 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. Jonathan Mahtani and Miss Keri Haak—Georgetown, MI

Mr. Lee Kooienga and Miss Laura Cammenga—Loveland, CO

Martin Luther (5):  
A Despairing Monk

# "LITTLE LIGHTS"

... *let it shine!*

by Connie Meyer

Martin Luther was on the verge of despair. The Catholic Church said, "Do this, do that, and that, and then you will be saved." Luther did it all, and more, but still he was not sure he was saved. He was a sinner and God was holy. Despite the teachings of the church, he knew in his heart there was nothing that he, a sinner, could do to be saved.

He began his quest for salvation as a strict Augustinian monk in Erfurt, Germany, tried to find peace on a trip to Rome, and now was transferred to the small German town of Wittenberg.

Staupitz, an older and wiser priest who was stationed in Wittenberg, tried to help the young, intelligent but struggling monk. Luther was trying so hard to be saved. Perhaps too hard. Staupitz told him to quit trying and just rest in God. This was closer to the truth, yet Staupitz's advice was mystical and still left Luther with questions. How could he rest if God had no reason to save him? God might save him, and God might not. What comfort was that? Luther despaired even more.

Finally Staupitz told Luther he ought to be a preacher and become the professor of Bible at the university in Wittenberg. This was in fact Staupitz's own position he was offering to Luther.

A despairing monk become a professor of Bible? Luther thought not. The work would kill him! If it kills you, replied Staupitz— "Quite all right. God has plenty of work for clever men to do in heaven."

Luther took the position.

Did Staupitz know the Bible contained the answers to Luther's problems? Did Luther know? Maybe not. In those days men thought the popes and the Catholic Church had all the answers. Scripture was only secondary. Luther likely never saw a complete Bible until he

was twenty years old. But God knew where the answers were. God was leading Luther to the only place they could be found.

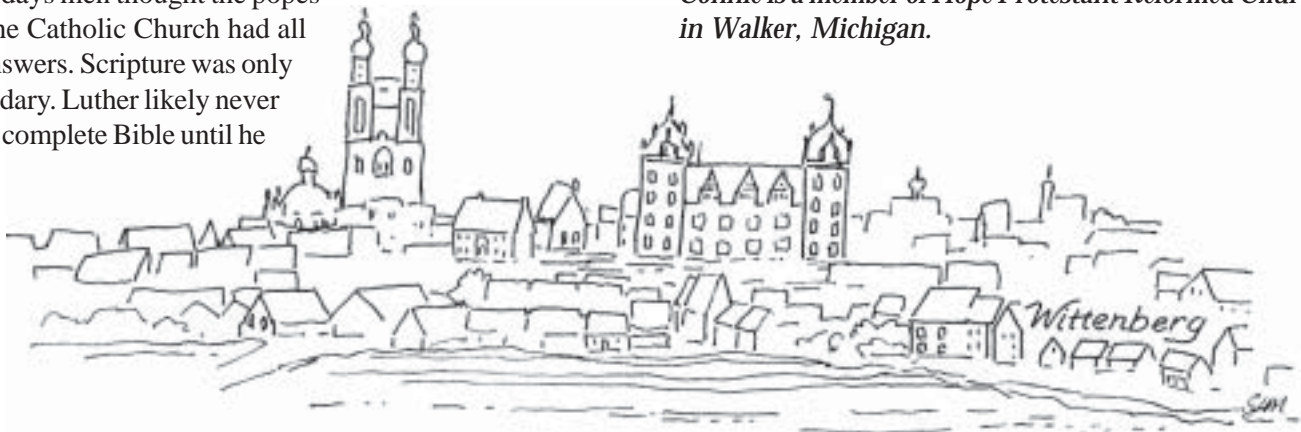
Luther worked hard at his studies. He presented his first lectures in 1513 from the book of Psalms. The Psalms—with all their passion that matched the longing and suffering of his own soul. The Psalms—with all their depths into doctrines he so desperately needed. His eyes were being opened. And soon—very soon—God would show him the answer that he sought.

**Find the following underlined words of Luke 11:9 in the puzzle below:**

"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

A	S	T	S	N	D	Y
O	Y	D	K	E	D	A
K	N	P	N	V	E	S
A	S	E	O	I	V	K
Y	P	T	C	G	F	G
O	N	U	K	L	N	S
U	I	S	H	A	L	L

*Connie is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.*



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*August 13 - 17, 2007*

### *With the Voice of Singing*

O God, preserve me, for in Thee alone my trust has stood;  
My soul has said, Thou art my Lord, my chief and only good.



The Lord is my inheritance,  
The Lord alone remains the fullness of my cup of bliss;  
The Lord my lot maintains.

The lines are fallen unto me in places large and fair;  
A goodly heritage is mine, marked out with gracious care.

*Psalter #27*

*Theme song for Convention 2007*



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