

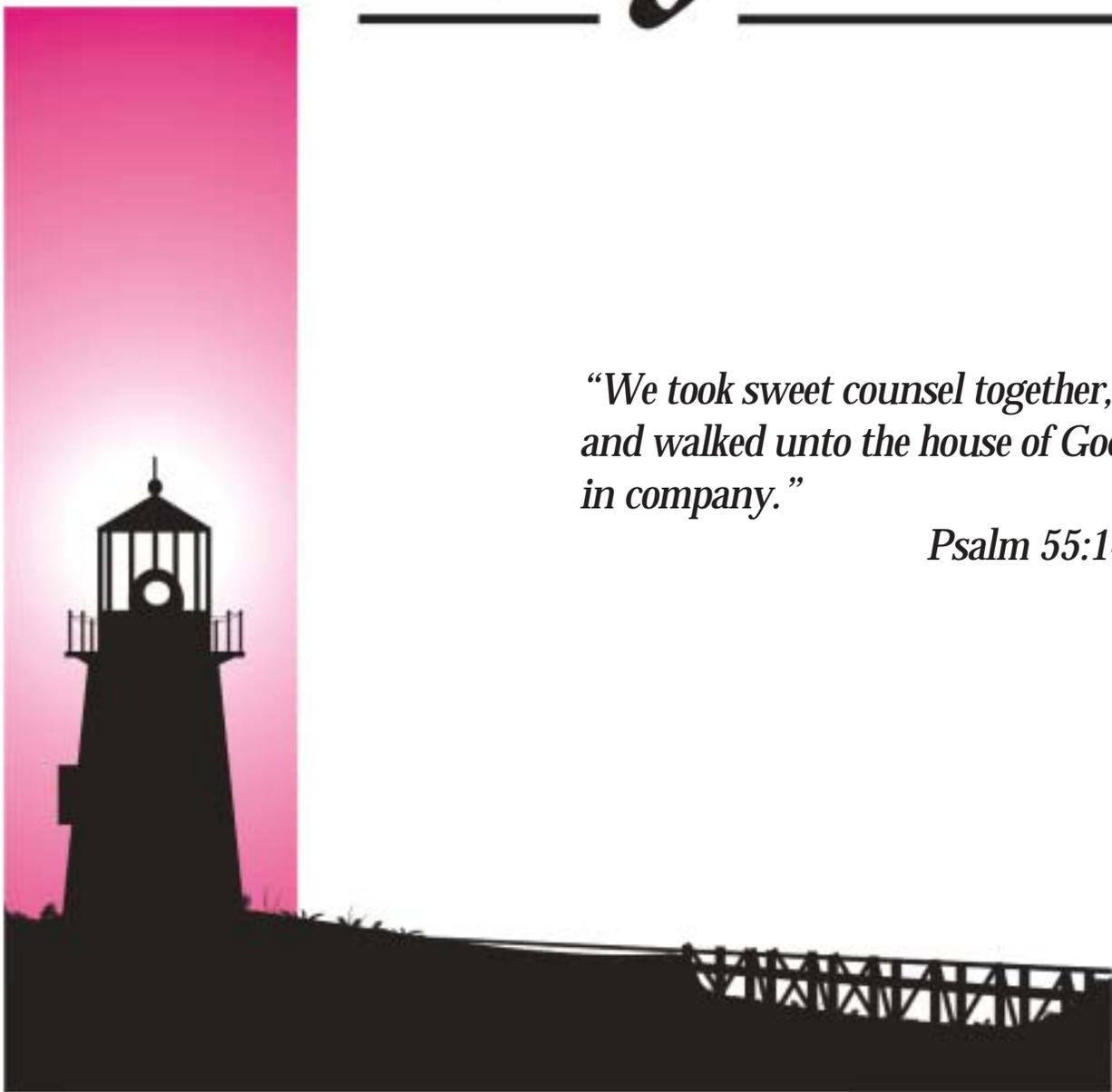
# *Beacon Lights*

June  
2007

Volume LXVI  
Number 6

*“We took sweet counsel together,  
and walked unto the house of God  
in company.”*

*Psalm 55:14*



## Table of Contents

	EDITORIAL
3	<b>Fellowship in the Word</b>
	CHURCH FAMILY
4	<b>True Riches</b>
5	<b>Contending for the Life of Faith</b>
	GEM OF THE MONTH
9	<b>Fishers of Men</b>
	OUR YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEDERATION
10	<b>Federation Board Nominations</b>
11	<b>PRYP Convention: 1939 and 2007</b>
	DEVOTIONAL
13	<b>Watching Daily At My Gates—June</b>
15	<b>Watching Daily At My Gates—July</b>
	MEMOIR OF REV. C. HANKO
18	<b>Chapter 24: First Church — 1953-1964</b>
	CHURCH HISTORY
24	<b>The Church of Oudemirdum</b>
25	<b>Synodale Church of Oudehorne</b>
	CHURCH NEWS
26	<b>Church News</b>
	LITTLE LIGHTS
27	<b>A Wedding</b>

## BEACON LIGHTS

### EDITOR

John Huizenga  
Email: [editor@beaconlights.org](mailto:editor@beaconlights.org)

### CONTENTS COMMITTEE

John Huizenga  
Tom Cammenga  
Christiana DeJong  
Trisha Haak  
Kris Moelker

### EXECUTIVE FEDERATION BOARD

Kyle Thompson (President)  
Karl Dykstra (Vice-President)  
Emily Hoekstra (Secretary)  
Eric Pols (Treasurer)  
Denise Kooienga (Librarian)  
Leah Koole (Vice-Secretary)  
Eric Pastoor (Vice-Treasurer)  
Justin Koole (Youth Coordinator)  
Rev. Garry Eriks (Spiritual Advisor)  
Prof. David Engelsma (Spiritual Advisor)

### BUSINESS OFFICE

Beacon Lights  
621 Williams Street  
Randolph, WI 53956  
Phone: (920) 326-6186  
Email: [subscriptions@beaconlights.org](mailto:subscriptions@beaconlights.org)

### BEACON LIGHTS ON THE INTERNET

[www.beaconlights.org](http://www.beaconlights.org)

### BEACON LIGHTS ON TAPE

A free service to the legally blind. Contact  
Brad Vander Veen  
11395 Hunters Meadow  
Allendale, MI 49401  
Phone (616) 895-1904

### CHURCH NEWS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Melinda Bleyenbergh  
Email: [darylme1@attelco.net](mailto:darylme1@attelco.net)

### BOOK SALES

Becky Kalsbeek

### TYPESETTER

Robert Vermeer

### PRINTER

James Huizinga

### MAILERS

Bill & Fran Leep

*Beacon Lights* is published monthly by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies. Subscription price is \$10.00. Please send all correspondence, address changes, subscriptions, and article submissions to the business office.

### EDITORIAL POLICY

The articles of *Beacon Lights* do not necessarily indicate the viewpoint of the Editorial Staff. Every author is solely responsible for the contents of his own article.

The *Beacon Lights* encourages its readers to contact the business office with any questions or comments. Letters may be edited for printing. We will not publish anonymous letters, but will withhold names upon request.

If any material of *Beacon Lights* is reprinted by another periodical, we will appreciate your giving the source and forwarding the printed periodical to the business office.



# Fellowship in the Word

by John Huizenga

**F**ellow believers, walking the way through life with its trials and joys to our final resting place with God; when was the last time you enjoyed a heart to heart conversation with someone who “strengthened [your] hand in God” (1 Sam. 23:16)? Do you, like the apostle Paul, bring your friends before God in every prayer of yours, thanking Him for their “fellowship in the gospel” (Phil. 1:4)? God, through the Psalmist describes with great eloquence this treasure that we are able to enjoy during our time on this earth in Psalm 133:1: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

It is my experience, and I have observed in the conversation of others, that the “good” and “pleasant” state arising from fellowship in the gospel is quite rare. Looking back at a typical day, I often find that such fellowship is minute in comparison to conversation about worldly things. And when the topic of discussion finally does turn to the gospel, there may first be a layer of superficial talk; and if the heart is stirred, there may be a tough layer of disagreement, criticism of others, or sarcasm. Rare indeed are those nuggets of refreshing, heart lifting fellowship in the gospel.

Is such experience a good, but unnecessary, treat rarely enjoyed by Christians? Not at all. God makes known to us that we as Christians who know the love of God in Christ ought to enjoy such fellowship as a daily part of our life. In fact, such unity that brings this good and pleasant state is commanded in 1 Corinthians 1:10. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

In order to heed this command, and enjoy Christian fellowship, we must be living in close covenant fellowship with God. Head-knowledge alone will not bring us into the pleasant fellowship we seek. Head-knowledge may carry you through an endless thrill ride of learned discussion, but it never brings that good and pleasant dwelling in unity. You will need that covenant fellowship with God according to knowledge. Such knowledge of God, rooted in God’s word alone, brings true joy that makes you bubble over and desire to talk to other believers.

Such fellowship requires that your deepest being be open and exposed to others. This openness is difficult because we spend so much time trying to defend ourselves from hurt by others around us, that it is difficult to really open our spiritual hearts and expose them to possible assault. Our hearts are sensitive to even a faint whiff of the poisons of sin. A simple “look”, an attitude of indifference, or an indication of disapproval can bring the doors shut with a slam. But in this exposure, we can find confidence in our personal fellowship with God to expose and reveal your heart to others. Our strength is in God. It is only our pride that fears a personal attack.

It is easy and a sign of spiritual cowardice to barge into a spiritual discussion between brothers and sisters in the Lord with sarcasm and proud criticism. Don’t do it yourself, and when others do it to you, pray for grace to be silent or the wisdom to give a God glorifying response.

Not only must the love of God be woven into our soul, we must love our fellow believers. Remember, he too is opening his heart. He has the joy of salvation to express. He has knowledge of God that he

desires to make known. Listen to her words for expressions of the peace and joy of salvation, and rejoice with her. Belittling, sarcastic, or critical remarks are sure to wound the heart that has been opened to you.

Disagreement can be a very rewarding exercise when the love of God and the brother in the Lord are recognized and clearly seen as the foundation. We can feel quite confident that we are right, but what a blessing we can receive when we humbly listen and come to see more clearly a truth of God set forth from His word.

Yes, God's word alone must be the basis for any good and pleasant fellowship. A religious discussion based solely on your ideas or feelings will gradually spiral away from God, strip every ounce of blessedness from the fellowship, and leave you in bitterness. If personal ideas or feelings are introduced, seek God's word together to find a common ground there, before exploring further the riches of God's grace.

The efforts put forth in Christian fellowship will bring blessing to you, as well as the whole body of Christ. Pray for grace to obey this command of God. ❖

Church Family

## True Riches

by Kris Moelker

June has arrived, and for most of our readers, so has the beginning of the summer season. Many of us are looking forward to vacations and having more time to relax. Those of us who are students are looking forward to having more opportunities to earn money. While we enjoy the opportunities to labor and also rest, may we not lose sight of the true riches of the kingdom of heaven during the summer months.

Especially during the summer months, when many of us may be more tempted to obtain the riches of this world, may we remember the words of Jesus in his well-known Sermon on the Mount (or Sermon on the Kingdom). Matthew 6:19-21 records Jesus' teaching concerning the contrast between the earthly treasures and the heavenly treasures. In this passage, he teaches the multitude gathered around him, his disciples, and all his people the proper attitude concerning earthly and heavenly treasures. In these verses, he states: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is,

there will your heart be also." We must pray for the grace and strength to do this because our sinful human nature can be so easily tempted to focus more on the corruptible earthly riches and less on the incorruptible heavenly riches.

As we fight this temptation, we have an entirely different attitude from most people in this world who are never satisfied with the earthly riches they have but are always coveting more riches. When we think about our Savior obtaining the true heavenly riches for us, then we are humbled. He is the Son of God and king of all creation who left the glorious riches of heaven, became a man and was born into poverty. When he was born, his mother Mary "wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). Our God and Savior lived a life of poverty the entire 33½ years he walked upon this earth. Jesus implied this when a scribe came to him and told him that he was going to follow him whithersoever Jesus went. Jesus responded to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20). The apostle Paul reminds us of our Savior's poverty in II

---

Corinthians 8:9, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” Our Lord Jesus loves us so much. He became a man and lived in poverty. Not only did he become a poor man, but he also took upon himself our sins and paid for all of them. Having paid for our sins through his suffering and death, he arose from the grave and ascended in heaven where “God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Phil. 2:9). Because Jesus is exalted in heaven, we have eternal life and can enjoy the true riches of his heavenly kingdom forever.

With our eyes fixed on these true heavenly riches, we must labor when we are given opportunities to provide for our earthly material needs or help our parents provide for these needs. As we cheerfully labor, we should know the primary reason for doing this. We are not laboring just to obtain earthly goods. We are not earning an allowance or paycheck to update our wardrobes with the newest fall fashions. We are not laboring primarily for the means to have fun. We are laboring with our eyes set on the kingdom of heaven.

Thinking on the kingdom of heaven, we are willing to use the blessings of our labors to cheerfully assist our parents and all our fellow saints as the Lord provides. In II Corinthians 9:7, we are exhorted to cheerfully give because God loves a cheerful giver. Young people, pay

attention when your parents remind you of the financial sacrifices they are making to provide you with a Christian education, and be willing to discuss with them your ability to assist them with their financial obligations. As young adults who have full-time jobs, may we use this time of our lives to give of our abundance to the causes of the kingdom.

We also can take time during the summer months to fellowship with our families and other fellow saints and enjoy the creation. Many of our young people will gather together as the summer months draw to a close at the Protestant Reformed Young People’s Convention for a week of spiritual fellowship. If we use these special opportunities properly, we will be refreshed physically and spiritually. We should not forget about our spiritual lives while we are enjoying our summer activities. We should be willing also during these times of fellowship to talk about the true riches of the kingdom.

With our minds set on the true riches, we will have a profitable summer. We will use all the opportunities we have to praise our Lord for the riches of salvation. Our goal this summer and always will be a life of serving him because we are thankful for the eternal life he has given us. ❖

---

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

---

---

# Contending for the Life of Faith

by Prof. Ron Cammenga

**W**hat kind of life are you living? Are you living the Christian life? Can you say that? Can you say that before the face of God? Can you say that in all honesty before your own conscience?

Do you *want* to live the Christian life? Is that really the desire of your heart? Do you pray to God daily for the grace to live the Christian life?

And *why* are you living the Christian life? Is it because you were born into and raised up in a Christian family? Is it because you want to please your parents and your grandparents? Is it because your friends are Christian friends, and if you are going to keep these Christian friends you need to live like a Christian yourself? Or is it the case that you personally are committed to live the Christian life?

---

We are called to contend for the faith (Jude 3). But we are also called to contend for the *life* of faith. Contending for the life of faith is not something that we are called to do in addition to contending for the faith. These are not two separate callings that every Christian has, two different activities that stand alongside each other, but quite distinct the one from the other. On the contrary, there is the closest possible connection between contending for the faith and contending for the life of faith. In the end, to contend for the faith *is also* to contend for the life of faith. That is due to the close relationship between the faith and the life of faith. On the one hand, the faith is the basis, the ground, the source for the life of faith. On the other hand, the life of faith arises out of the faith, adorns the faith, and is the evidence of faith. In the final analysis, the proof that one is contending for the faith is that he or she is living the life of faith.

### **The Life of Faith for Which We Are to Contend**

The life of faith for which we are to contend is a life of *holiness*. Jude makes that plain. In the first verse of his epistle, he addresses himself “to them that are sanctified by God the Father,” (Jude 1). The faith itself for which he calls believers to contend is the faith “which was once delivered unto the *saints*” (Jude 3). He refers to this same faith in verse 20 as the “most *holy* faith.”

The Christian life is a life of holiness. But a life of holiness is a life lived *according to the law and Word of God*. That is simply what holiness is. What is holiness? Who decides what is holy and what is unholy? God does, and God does so in his Word. Crucial both to the faith and the life of faith is the Word of God. What we must believe, but also how we ought to live is regulated by God’s Word.

God *alone* decides how we are to live. This was the sin of the unbelieving Israelites (vs. 5), the wicked angels (vs. 6), and Sodom and Gomorrah (vs. 7). They had no regard for the Word and will of God. They would not submit to the regulation of their lives and behavior by God through his revealed will. They were self-willed and determined to live as they pleased, fulfilling their own lusts. One lives the life of faith by living according to God’s commandments. He submits himself to God. Living in this way, he hates “even the garment spotted by the flesh” (vs. 23). Are you living such a life of holiness?

The life of faith is also a life lived to God and to the glory of God. In the end, that is what holiness is: devotion to God. Holiness is not merely living by a set of rules, a list of dos and don’ts. That is not the essence of

the Christian life. But the essence of the Christian life is that it is a life that is consecrated to God.

---

**But the essence of the  
Christian life is that it is a  
life that is consecrated to  
God.**

---

There is a very significant description of the kind of life that is the opposite of the life of faith in Jude’s epistle. That description is “ungodly.” In verse four, Jude speaks of “ungodly men” who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. In verse 18, he speaks of people who “walk after their own ungodly lusts.” But especially is this his description of the wicked as far as their life in this world is concerned in verse 15: “To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are *ungodly* among them of all their *ungodly* deeds with they have *ungodly* committed, and of all their hard speeches which *ungodly* sinners have spoken against him.” Ungodly—that more than anything else describes the nature of the life of the unbeliever. He is ungodly, thoroughly ungodly. God is not in all this thoughts. He has no interest in God or in pleasing God. God’s name and God’s glory simply are not a concern of his.

But for the believer, it is different. He lives his life consciously before the face of God. He lives his life for the glory of God. He lives to be approved by God. He lives the closing doxology of Jude’s epistle: “To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen” (vs. 25).

Third, the life of faith is also a life lived out of love for God and gratitude to God. Love and gratitude—they fuel the Christian life, the life of faith. Love and gratitude to God for his gracious salvation of us. Love and gratitude for electing grace. (Verses 4 and 6 describe what we sinners deserve!) Love and gratitude for the cross and death of our Savior, Jesus Christ (vs. 4b). Love and gratitude for the indwelling Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit. That was the problem with the false teachers whose error Jude was especially concerned to combat, as verse 4 makes plain. They did not live out of gratitude for gracious salvation. Instead they turned God’s grace into lasciviousness—an excuse to live wickedly and worldly. Their sin, at bottom, was not their lasciviousness. It was their contempt for grace; it was their ingratitude.

---

**Their sin, at bottom, was  
not their lasciviousness. It  
was their contempt for  
grace; it was their  
ingratitude.**

---

That love and gratitude are at the heart of the Christian life, Jude makes plain in his brief epistle. He makes that plain when he calls us in verse 21 to “keep ourselves in the *love of God*.” That is also indicated by the fact that not once, not twice, but three times, Jude addresses the saints to whom he is writing as “beloved,” (vss. 3, 17, and 20). We are the beloved of God. As God’s beloved, we are called to and by his grace to love him. That love is the fountain out of which flows the Christian life.

“Are you living the Christian life?” is really the question, “Are you living your life consciously out of love for God?” Is love for God the motive for your life? It is, if the life you are living is the Christian life.

The Christian life is a life of holiness. It is a life lived to the glory of God. It is a life lived out of love and gratitude to God. But, fourth, the Christian life is also an antithetical life. It is not only a life of holiness, but the rejection of that which is unholy and vile. It is not only consecration to God, but repudiation of all that is not devoted to God. It is not only living to the glory of God, but opposing all that robs God of his glory and tramples upon the glory of God. It is not only living out of love and gratitude to God, but standing over against that which hates God, God’s Word, God’s truth, and God’s commandments.

The Christian life is not just “Yes;” but it is also “No!” A resounding “No!” An unequivocal “No!” This is why many reject the Christian life today. This is what many find offensive about the Christian life. But let there be no mistake—this is the nature of the Christian life. Jude makes this plain. He does not only set forth positively the Christian life in this epistle. But he identifies, repudiates, and condemns those who are promoting unholy living. They and their lifestyle must be rejected. “Are you living the Christian life?” is really the question, then, “Are you living an antithetical life?” Not only a life for God, but a life over against sin and evildoers. That is the question.

## **The Possibility That We Contend for the Life of Faith**

Having considered the nature of the Christian life for which we are to contend, the question arises, “What is the possibility of our contending for it? What is the possibility of our contending, not only for the faith, but for the life of faith?”

The possibility is, first of all, the Word of God. Included in the Word of God is our own reading and study of the Word of God. Included is our study and discussion of the Word of God with fellow Christians. Included especially is the official and public preaching and teaching of God’s Word by the church. Apart from the Word of God, and God’s grace through his Word, there is not possibility of our contending either for the faith or the life of faith.

Jude makes that plain. In verse 3 he speaks of our contending earnestly for the faith “once delivered unto the saints.” The faith has been once delivered unto the saints in the Word of God, the Bible. In verse 5, Jude speaks of the unbelieving Israelites who perished in the wilderness because they believed not the Word of God. The example of Sodom and Gomorrah of which we are to be mindful and take to heart is an example that is attested in Holy Scripture. And in verse 17, Jude exhorts, “But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

This is absolutely critical to the Christian life, the life of faith—the Word of God. This is why membership in the church, living church membership is of such great importance. This is why it is altogether fatal to cut yourself off from the church. This is why it is so important to be a member not just of any church, but of a true church of Jesus Christ, such as our Protestant Reformed Churches are.

---

**Are you concerned to live  
the life of faith? Give  
yourself to the Word of  
God.**

---

Are you concerned to live the life of faith? Give yourself to the Word of God. Put yourself under the faithful preaching of that Word. Your Christian life depends on it. Your Christian life will flourish under it.

The possibility of the life of faith and our contending for the life of faith is, secondly, prayer. Prayer is

---

critical. Think once of where prayer is treated in the Heidelberg Catechism. Prayer is treated in the last section of the Heidelberg Catechism. It is treated in the section on thankfulness because of the distinct viewpoint of the Catechism, the viewpoint that prayer is the chief part of thankfulness. But beyond this, in the last section the Catechism treats the Christian life. Prayer is treated in this last section because prayer is vital to the Christian life. Prayer is the power of the Christian life. That prayer is vital to the Christian life every child of God knows from his own experience. Invariably the result of the neglect of prayer is that our Christian life suffers. Practically that is always the fruit of our neglect of prayer. That is so because of the vital connection between prayer and the Christian life.

Why is prayer so vital to the Christian life? Why cannot we live the Christian life apart from prayer? There are a number of answers that can be given to those questions. But certainly one answer is that we cannot live the Christian life apart from prayer because God would always have us conscious that the possibility, the only possibility, of our living the Christian life is *in him*. The Christian on his knees before the throne of grace is deeply aware that for the strength to live the Christian life, he is dependent on God. And of that important truth we need constantly to be reminded.

Jude makes very plain the importance of prayer for the Christian life. He exhorts in verse 20, “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.” From a certain point of view, the question is not, “How is your Christian life?” But the question is, “How is your prayer life?” The answer to that question is determinative for everything else.

Third, the possibility of living the life of faith is the fellowship of the people of God, the communion of the saints. There is a fundamental truth about the Christian faith that comes out here. We are not alone in living the Christian life. We are in this together. God’s will is that we be a help and an encouragement to one another in living the Christian life. Jude points this out in his epistle. He puts it negatively in verse 19 when he speaks of those “who separate themselves.” He is talking about those who separate themselves from God’s people, separate themselves from the gatherings of the congregation; people who go their own way. He puts it positively in verse 20: “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith.”

---

**God’s will is that we be a  
help and an  
encouragement to one  
another in living the  
Christian life.**

---

This includes many things. It includes the church and membership in the church. It includes good, Christian friends. Are these the kinds of friends that you have? It includes Conventions and Young Adults Retreats. It includes, very significantly, marriage. Are you seeking a spouse? Are you seeking a godly spouse? Are you seeking a spouse who is one with you in the faith and the life of faith? Are you seeking a spouse with whom you can live the Christian life? Marry in the Lord!

### **The Motivation for Contending for the Life of Faith**

But, finally, why ought we to contend, not only for the faith, but for the life of faith?

We ought, first of all, for our own joy. In the end, there is only joy, real joy, satisfying joy for those who live the Christian life. It is a lie of the Devil that there is joy, real joy in a life of unholiness. That is always how the Devil presents temptation and a life of sin. But that is a lie, a damnable lie. There is no joy in a life of sin, as every impenitent sinner finds out already in this life. There is only joy in the life of faith.

That does not mean that there are no sorrows attached to the life of faith and contending for the life of faith. The Christian life is not only joy, unmitigated joy. That is not Scripture, and that is not the Christian experience. There are sorrows aplenty attached to the Christian life. That is why Scripture describes this life as walking through a valley of tears.

Still, that does not take away from the fact that the Christian life is a life of joy. That is Jude 24: “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory *with exceeding joy*.”

Second, we ought to be motivated to contend for and live the life of faith out of the hope of heaven. That is the hope of the saints—the life of heaven, eternal life, life with God in Christ Jesus. But the way to that hope, the God-ordained way, is holiness of life. Without holiness, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, no

man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). Only those who live the life of faith shall enter into glory (Jude 24).

Reject the Christian life,  
live wickedly and worldly,  
and the end of that life is  
hell.

The opposite is also true. Reject the Christian life, live wickedly and worldly, and the end of that life is hell. The end of that life is God's judgment visited on you now already. And finally the end is the anguish of everlasting hell. That Jude points out also. He speaks in verse 6 of the wicked angels who are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." In verse 7 he speaks of those who like Sodom and Gomorrah will "suffer the vengeance of eternal fire." In verse 13 he speaks of those "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." And in verses 14 and 15 he speaks of the coming of God with his holy angels in order to execute judgment upon all the ungodly.

Do you want to go to heaven? Do you have that fervent desire in your heart? That is a good desire. With a view to going to heaven, now, contend earnestly for the life of faith. For in the way of holiness, genuine holiness, we *shall* see the Lord.

But, third, we ought to be motivated to live the Christian life out of a desire for God's glory. We have already noted that the very nature of the Christian life is that it is a life lived to the glory of God. At the same time, this ought to be the motivation for every child of God to live the Christian life. For the child of God, God's glory is everything. But God is not glorified merely by a people who know the faith, confess the faith, or even defend the faith. God is glorified by a people who live out their faith. That pleases him! That honors his name and the name of his Son, Jesus Christ. And that is the last verse of Jude's epistle: "To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 25).

I end as I began. What kind of life are you living? ❖

*Prof. Cammenga is Professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament Studies in the Seminary of the Protestant Reformed Churches. This article was given as a speech at the Loveland Young Adults Retreat in 2006. The theme of the retreat was taken from Jude 3: "Contending for the Faith."*

## Fishers of Men

**S**imon Peter, James and John  
Were fishermen by trade.  
Jesus called them: Follow Me,  
And promptly they obeyed.  
Jesus taught them many things:  
About His Father's will,  
About the heav'nly kingdom,  
And what He must fulfill.

**F**or three years their instruction  
Was given by the Lord  
And they were thus preparing  
To speak their Master's word.  
Their calling was a great one –  
Instead of catching fish  
They now would preach the gospel;  
It was their Master's wish.

**G**od poured His Holy Spirit  
On them on Pentecost.  
They were empowered to labor  
That Christ would save the lost.  
They called men to repentance;  
Those who believed were saved  
And they received the Spirit –  
No more to sin enslaved.

**J**esus calls men still today  
To preach His holy word;  
Instructing in His statutes  
As men of old had heard.  
And so throughout the ages  
He gathers all His own  
Who'll reign with Him in heaven:  
Christ sitting on the throne.

Thelma Westra

# Federation Board Nominations

by Leah Koole

At the Young People's convention every summer, two delegates from each Young People's Society meet to elect new officers to serve on the Fed Board. These officers are elected from those who have been nominated by the current Fed Board. At the end of each summer, newly elected members take the place of those members who have fulfilled their two years of service. Those elected to the Fed Board at this upcoming convention will serve two consecutive years, beginning at the end of this summer. Thus, as a Federation Board of the Young People's Societies, we want to inform our young people about the delegates from whom they will vote at the upcoming convention.



*Matt DeBoer*

The first office to be filled is Vice-President. The nominees for this office are Matt DeBoer and Joel Bodbyl. Matt DeBoer is 21 years old and attends Grandville Protestant Reformed Church. He is a full-time student at Grand Valley State University, but will graduate, the Lord willing, at the end of April. Matt would like to explore the possibilities of involv-

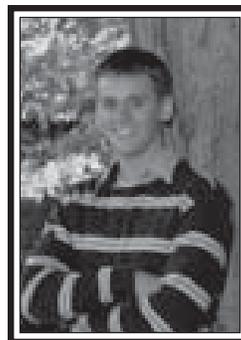
ing more young people outside of the West Michigan area with the Fed Board.

The second nominee, Joel Bodbyl, also attends Grandville Protestant Reformed Church. At age 21, he is a full-time student at Grand Valley State University and is self-employed. Joel's goals for the Fed Board include: helping to make the *Beacon Lights* more popular among young



*Joel Bodbyl*

people, learning more about what it is that the Fed Board does, being an asset to the board, and helping both the *Beacon Lights* committee as well as the Fed Board through his service.



*Matt DeBoer*

The next office is that of Vice-Treasurer. The two nominees for this office of Vice-Treasurer are Derek Van Overloop and Jon Pastoor. Derek Van Overloop is 18 years old and attends Trinity Protestant Reformed Church. He is currently fulfilling an internship at Innotec. Derek seeks to maintain godly leadership among the Young People.

The second Vice-Treasurer nominee, Jon Pastoor, is 17 years old and attends First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. Jon is a senior at Covenant Christian High School. He also works as a maintenance laborer at the Twin Lakes Nursery. Through his work on the Fed Board, Jon would like to encourage other young people to grow in their faith, witness to others, and become more involved with helping others in the churches.



*Anna Gustafson*

Anna Gustafson and Emily Dykstra are the two nominees for the office of Vice-Secretary. Anna Gustafson is 18 years old and attends First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan. She is currently in her freshman year at Calvin College. Anna seeks to encourage the young people to continue in their walk of faith.

Emily Dykstra, the second nominee for Vice-Secretary attends Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Walker, Michigan. Emily, age 18, currently works as a receptionist at a doctor's office. She would like to see the societies of the Western churches more involved in the federation's activities.



*Emily Dykstra*

---

The next office to be filled is the office of Librarian. The two nominees for this office are Laura Huizinga and Lauren Kraker. Laura Huizinga is 20 years old and works full time as a secretary for Bosveld Builders. Laura's goal for the Fed Board is to more actively involve the young people in the work of the Fed Board by informing the young people of the duties and the responsibilities of the Fed Board.

Lauren Kraker at age 19 years old is the other nominee for the office of Librarian. Lauren attends Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. She currently is a freshman at Davenport University. Her goals for the Fed Board are to strengthen the young people in the churches and to encourage them to become more involved with activities.

Reverend Haak and Reverend William Langerak are the two nominees for the last office, the office of Spiritual Advisor. Reverend Haak at age 52 is the minister at Georgetown Protestant Reformed Church. His goals for the Fed Board are to help keep the Young People's Societies well informed of denominational events, to encourage the societies to participate in these events, to work on the unity of the Young People's Societies, and to share ideas from society to society on what each Young People's Society has done and has profited from.

The second nominee for Spiritual Advisor is Reverend William Langerak. At age 41, he currently labors as the minister at Southeast PRC. His goal for the Fed Board is to give biblical advice regarding the various decisions the Fed Board must make in order to promote energetic and measurable spiritual growth in Protestant Reformed young people, to the glory of God's name in Jesus Christ.

As the young people look forward to the upcoming convention and the delegate meeting at which the young people will vote for new members to serve on the Fed Board, we ask that our young people prayerfully consider each nominee and the gifts with which God has blessed them. We ask that our young people pray for guidance for the delegates as they vote for new members to serve on the Fed Board. May our young people also pray for God to give both the current as well as the new members the strength to carry out the work that God has for us as we serve Him through our work on the Fed Board. ❖

---

*Leah Koole is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan and is Vice-Secretary of the Federation Board.*

---

---

## PRYP Convention: 1939 and 2007

by Rev. Andy Lanning

**T**he 2007 Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention will be the 67<sup>th</sup> such convention in the history of our Protestant Reformed Churches. With God's blessing, this convention will be for the great spiritual benefit of the young people who attend, just as the past 66 conventions have been.

The 67<sup>th</sup> Young People's Convention! Could anyone at the first convention have imagined that the Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies would still be having conventions in the year of our Lord 2007? Could anyone then have dreamed of a 67<sup>th</sup> convention?

But that gets us thinking: how will our 67<sup>th</sup> Young People's Convention compare to our first? What was that first convention like? Where was it held? Who went? What did they do? And more importantly, what was the

goal of that convention, and what was the value of that convention for those who attended?

This question is not one of idle curiosity. Instead, the question comes out of a desire that the conventions of this generation be for the spiritual good of our young people, just as the conventions of that generation years ago were for their spiritual good. And especially, the question comes out of a desire that our 67<sup>th</sup> Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention be for the glory of God, just as the first Young People's Convention was. After the first convention, they could confess, "The Lord was surely with us." After the 67<sup>th</sup> convention, we want to be able to say the same.

So...what *was* that first convention like?

---

The first convention was held in 1939 in South Holland, Illinois.<sup>1</sup> That was a fitting setting, since it had been the Young People's Society of South Holland that had come up with the idea of doing something to unite all of the young people's societies in the Protestant Reformed Churches. The fruit of that idea was the National Convention of Young People's Societies - the first convention.

There are certain ways that the convention this year will be different than it was in 1939. Probably the most noticeable difference is that our gathering *this* August will last much longer than our gathering did *that* August. Then, the conventioners arrived one day and went home the next. Now, the convention lasts from Monday through Friday.

Another difference is the number of young people attending this year compared to that first year. In 1939, 114 young people registered. In 2007, hundreds more have registered. Similarly, the number of Young People's Societies participating is far greater now than it was then. In 1939, the Young People's Societies of Pella, Oak Lawn, First, Hudsonville, Holland, Hope, and South Holland were officially represented, with unofficial representatives from Oskaloosa, Creston, and Kalamazoo. In 2007, there will be members from the Young People's Societies of all our churches, Lord willing.

Yet another difference is the assessment of dues then and now. In 1939, each society member was assessed eighty cents to help pay for the convention. In 2007, each society member was assessed ten dollars. A good bargain then, and still a good bargain today!

In spite of these relatively minor differences, the convention of 1939 and the convention of 2007 are identical in the most important areas. The goal is still the same now as it was then, and therefore the value of the convention remains the same.

The goal of the convention in 1939 was that the Young People's Societies be united in their mutual spiritual edification. They expressed this goal in one of the resolutions they adopted at the convention: "The purpose of this convention is to unite all Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies to work in close unity and in this manner secure a sense of solidarity in order to seek the mutual edification and development of talents as becomes Christian young people." In other words, the Young People's Societies wanted to come together for spiritual growth. This goal was met by the activities of that convention. The first evening, they sang Psalter numbers, prayed, read Scripture, and heard an hour-long ad-

dress from Rev. G. Lubbers out of Ecclesiastes entitled "The Days of Our Youth." The second day was taken up with meetings from morning until evening. Most of their time was taken up with organization and laying the foundations for future work together as Young People's Societies. The evening of the second day was spent in fellowship and Zion's songs.

Spiritual growth together as young people is still the goal of this 67<sup>th</sup> convention. The evidence that this is the goal can be seen in the fine way the convention is presented and advertised by the host, Grandville PRC. Although we look forward to these things, the focus is not the trip to Cedar Point, not the beach or facilities, not the banquet, but the speeches. The first thing one sees on the convention home page ([www.prcconvention.com](http://www.prcconvention.com)) is the theme of the convention, "Living Sacrifices of Thankfulness," and the text, Romans 12:1, 2. The spiritually edifying speech was the focus in 1939, and the spiritually edifying speeches are still the focus in 2007.

Because the goal of the Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention remains the same now as then, the value is the same today as then. The value is that like-minded young people of the Protestant Reformed Churches may come together for fellowship and encouragement. More importantly, the value is that the young people may come together to grow spiritually through the speeches and discussions. And most importantly, the value is that the young people may come together to the glory of their covenant God.

The secretary of that first convention in 1939 offered the following prayer at the conclusion of her report to the *Standard Bearer*. God answered that prayer, and we pray that He continues to do so not only in 2007, but for generations to come.

May this convention be the forerunner of many more and may the Lord our God continue to bless our Young People's Societies, so that we may be a rich blessing for our Protestant Reformed Churches, both now and in the future. God be with us till we meet again.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>The information in this article having to do with the 1939 convention comes from the *Standard Bearer*, volume 15, issue 22, pages 528, 529. The convention was not held for a couple years during World War II, which is why the convention of 2007 is the 67<sup>th</sup> and not the 69<sup>th</sup> convention. ❖

---

*Rev. Lanning is pastor of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.*

# 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 June 1998)

### June 18 Read Psalm 61

Have you ever been far away from home where everything and everyone around you is strange and unfamiliar? The loneliness quickly turns to panic when trouble arises and there is no one around to help. It is at a time like this when the truth of God’s omnipresence brings comfort to the believer. Communion with God is never cut off by distance nor height nor depth. God is present in every part of the creation so one who is united to God by faith in Christ is always very near unto his covenant Friend. This confidence in God to be near does not belong to all who call themselves Christian. If you walk in unrepentant sin and put your trust in earthly help, then you may find yourself very much alone in time of need. Turning unto God is an act of faith, it does not proceed out of the heart of man by nature. May God so work faith in your heart that he is there with you in time of need to lead you unto Christ our Rock. Sing Psalter 159:1 and 160:1.

### June 19 Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-10; Psalm 61: 2-4

We are born sinful, our souls sold into the cruel bondage of sin. Many churches today would have us believe that multitudes of unbelievers are by their own free will groping blindly to seek shelter for their souls, but that is not true. The sinner seeks shelter for his naked guilty soul under the filth of more sin. God sovereignly chooses to be a shelter for the souls of his people. Having been taken into that shelter we realize and rejoice in the fact that our souls find rest. It is the believer, who knows and has tasted of the rest found within God, that cries out to God for help when in time of need. He knows God as a refuge, a strong tower, and a God of sheltering wings. With the apostle we also put our trust “in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.” Sing Psalter 159:2, 160:2, 3.

### June 20 Read Luke 1:26-33; Psalm 61:4, 5

Why does the child of God have such confidence and trust in God? The reason is found in the verses upon which we meditate today. David and we also confess that God has heard our vows and confers to us our heritage. Our vow is to walk

in newness of life by the power of God’s grace. Our heritage given us now is that new life in Christ as the tokens of eternal life in heaven. In this connection, David speaks of his being anointed unto an everlasting kingdom which comes to fulfillment in Christ. Christ rules by the power of his grace and Spirit in the hearts of every believer. He gives us the will and strength to serve our creator and redeemer in this life. In him we are able to fulfil our purpose in life. In him we continue through this life on our way to perfect covenant life with God in heaven. There is no greater joy or peace. Let us rejoice and give thanks to God. Sing Psalter 159:3.

### June 21 Read Hebrews 9:22-28; Psalm 61:6, 7

David speaks on the basis of God’s promise of a Redeemer of that Redeemer himself. He shall abide before God forever. You will notice that the Psalter puts the believer who sings this Psalm in the place of him who abides before God forever. The believer can be included understanding that we are in Christ also made kings and priests, but it is Christ first of all Who lives in perfect covenant friendship before God. The eternal love and righteousness of God has placed Christ in this position as head of the redeemed. All who abide before God are sustained by the mercy and truth of God. For this reason the believer is assured that his prayer is heard and answered. In this knowledge the believer sounds forth praises and lives a life of thankful obedience. Let us live by faith in this day and make our vows to walk in thankful obedience. Sing Psalter 159:4.

### June 22 Read Luke 2:25-32; Psalm 62:1, 2

Does your soul wait in awed silence upon God? The world surrounds us with noise and sights to arouse our attention and response. Our souls are continually aroused by this or that problem, hurt, or distress to cry out for justice and attention. God alone is able to bring a hush to the soul. In terror wicked men are put to silence when God reveals himself in powerful earthquakes or storms. In peaceful assurance, the believer stands in quiet patience before his sovereign God. Putting all our trust in God, we know that all things are in his hands. The aged Simeon waited quietly and patiently upon God though nations raged and it seemed im-

---

possible for Christ to come. Let us pray for this soul quieting dependence upon God. Be diligent in your study of God's word to know him and the greatness of his salvation. Sing Psalter 161:1.

June 23 Read Isaiah 30:8-17; Psalm 62:3, 4

Sometimes when we think about our enemies, those who come to mind are the neighbors who rarely go to church or criminals. The most dangerous and cruel enemies, however are people right in the church: ministers who preach lies, people who come to church but lead wicked lives and want others to go with them, and people who condemn pure preaching. Isaiah came straight to the congregation of Israel which was full of such hypocrites with his word of God's judgment. These rebel against God and seek to destroy the soul of the child of God as well. Be assured that such are as a wall that is bending and ready to burst and as a fence ready to tip. God will destroy them in fierce judgment except they repent and submit to him in humble obedience. May we never join in the sins and ever see their plots to destroy the godly. Sing Psalter 161:2.

June 24 Read John 6:37-69; Psalm 62:5, 6

How do you react to the doctrines of sovereign election and reprobation, total depravity and salvation by grace alone? Are these words of God to us too hard, as were the words that Jesus spoke to the people? Are you inclined to speak out against the preaching of these truths and demand softer preaching? These doctrines have been since the fall of man a source of bitter rebellion against God. The Psalmist lives in close fellowship with God and knows it is foolish to react so against the plain word of God. Though he may not fully comprehend the depths of such doctrine, he does know that God is his rock and tower. He waits in quiet trust. May we also wait in quiet trust and confess with Peter "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Sing Psalter 161:3.

June 25 Read Philippians 1:12-30; Psalm 62:5-7

The Christian life demands that we put our trust in God alone. Many in the world, who do not believe in God as he reveals himself in Scripture will, in a time of great fear, pray to God just in case he really is the true God. Some try to believe in many religions at one time so that they have the best chance of believing in the right one. Others confess that God is God alone, but frantically save money and buy huge insurance policies just in case God does not take care of him as he promises. But the child of God must live in the absolute assurance that God will care for his every need. Like Job, the child of God must be able to lose everything, and yet trust that God will uphold him. We must speak with the assurance of Paul that all that we believe is true and we will never be ashamed. This may seem impossible, and indeed it is apart from the power of God's grace, but this

blessed gift of full assurance is ours in Christ. Sing Psalter 161:4 and 162:1.

June 26 Read Philippians 4:1-7; Psalm 62:8

How often do we pour out our hearts before God? How often do we bring before him all our fears and cares and ask for the grace that draws us into close fellowship with God? It is a beautiful act of faith to pour out your heart unto God. We must put our trust in him at all times. When we are happy, we must sing thankful praise to God with all our heart. When sad, we must desire to come first of all to our God and bring all our sorrows to him. When we search our souls and find there the iniquity of our sinful natures, then we bow before him in humble repentance. All the varied aspects of our life are things to bring before our God. We do not try to hide anything. Such is the life of covenant friendship of God with his people. It is the life given to us through the death of Christ our Savior. Do not disparage the life of covenant friendship with God. Pour out your heart to God each day. Sing Psalter 161:5.

June 27 Read Isaiah 40:1-18; Psalm 62:9

So quickly we put our trust in banks, insurance, jobs, doctors, our own wisdom, the government, and material wealth. For many people, these things are all that there is. When any of these things in which they trust fail, then they are thrown into deepest despair. If we could, however, put these things on a scale that measures value and worth in life, they would not even register. All things created are created for a purpose, and are of no value apart from God who is glorified in them. Even the mighty nations of the world that boast of their culture and great achievements do not tip the scale in the least. The worthlessness of the greatest achievements of man is compared in Isaiah to the infinite value of God, his word, and the church that he gathers by the power of his word. When we meditate upon these things we are amazed. We are humbled to think we are a part of this wondrous work of God. We find comfort when it appears to us that the world is ready to swallow up the church. Sing Psalter 161:6.

June 28 Read Luke 12:13-21; Psalm 62:10

When we lose sight of the insignificance of earthly wealth and power and the great value of God's word and covenant life with him, then we will most certainly begin to put our trust in earthly riches. That is what we do by nature. When we begin to trust in earthly riches, then we also begin to use oppression and means not ordained by God to gain those riches. Wealth may be attained righteously, but then the temptation is to set our heart on it. But let us remember the value of those riches in the eyes of God as we saw yesterday. They are as nothing in the balance of God. Let us rather be rich toward God. Study his word. Listen carefully to the word preached in church. Listen carefully in catechism. The knowledge of God is everlasting life. Knowing God brings peace which passeth all understanding in this life also. Sing Psalter 161:7.

---

June 29 Read Isaiah 26:1-11; Psalm 62:11

“Power belongeth unto God.” The power of God is that virtue of God “according to which he is able to accomplish whatsoever he pleases” (*Reformed Dogmatics*, Hoeksema). God alone has this kind of power. All other power is given by God to others to serve his purposes. The Psalter directs our attention to the saving power of God. We who are dead in sin find great comfort knowing that God certainly accomplishes his purpose to deliver us from death and bring us into eternal life. We read in Isaiah 62 that “Jehovah is everlasting strength.” Knowing this, the believer puts his trust in him and has perfect peace. Our little children sing “they are weak but he is strong.” May we also come to God in childlike faith confessing that we are weak and helpless. God reveals to us throughout his word that he is strong to save. Sing Psalter 161:8.

June 30 Read Micah 7; Psalm 62:12

Mercy is also an attribute which finds its only source in God. Mercy is “the virtue of God according to which he wills [his people] to be perfectly blessed in him, to taste his own blessedness, and according to which he leads them

through death to the highest possible life of his covenant friendship” (*Reformed Dogmatics*, Hoeksema). In his tender love and mercy, God sent his Son to bear the just judgment upon sin. In this wonderful act of salvation God reveals to us his mercy. The way of sin and death is a way that brings this attribute into the heart and soul of the believer. We will continue to grow in our knowledge of this attribute forever in heavenly glory. May we who have tasted of God’s mercy also show mercy to one another. Sing Psalter 161:9.  
June 31 Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-9; Psalm 62.

In this life we continually fight the temptation to put our confidence in earthly things, and then when that fails, to cry unto God. This Psalm teaches us that we must look to God alone. He is our rock, our salvation, our defense, our glory, and our refuge. He is everything to us. In his mercy and power he reaches out to us and sovereignly accomplishes his purpose with us. Never once in this Psalm does the Psalmist express fear and despair. May God write this Psalm upon our hearts. May we sing this Psalm with all our heart. Sing Psalter 162.

---

---

# 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 July 1998)

July 1 Psalm 63

**Psalm 63:1** This Psalm was written while David was evading Saul near the town of Keilah. After protecting the town from the Philistines, David was betrayed by the town to Saul. He had to escape into the wilderness of Judah for safety. David truly found what needing God meant during this incident. He found that man’s fickle feelings could not be counted on. David turned to God in prayer for help and safety from his enemies. This must be our response when we feel that there is not help for us. We must remember that our help comes from our covenant God who made the heavens and the earth. We may and will go through trying times in this life. We must remember to go to God through his Word and by prayer. Only then will we find the refuge we

need in this dry and thirsty land. Sing first stanza of Psalters 153 and 164.

July 2 Read I Chronicles 16:7-14

**Psalm 63:2-3** Our Scripture reading for the next several days is taken from a Psalm of David composed as the ark was returned to Jerusalem. David as he was running from Saul knew what it meant to be away from God’s house. He longed to be in it. He hoped for the day that God would return him to Jerusalem so that he could praise his heavenly Father. Is this our desire? As we spend the summer enjoying God’s creation do we sometimes “vacation” from God’s house and his worship? We may not, you know. Each week we must long to be in the places where the Word is purely preached. To see God’s power and glory must be done on the

---

Lord's Day in the house of God. It is only there that we will find that his "lovingkindness is better than life." Let us resolve to seek God in his house every Lord's Day so that we can experience his goodness. Sing Psalms 163:2 and 164:2, 3.

July 3 Read I Chronicles 16: 15-19

**Psalm 63:4-5** This is a continuation of yesterday's thought namely attendance in the house of God. First of all, we must bless God through prayer. To bless means to speak well of. People of God, is this your goal as you pray? If we do speak well of God, he will bless our souls with the spiritual good as found in the first part of verse 5. David's desire to bring the ark back to Jerusalem was founded in the knowledge that the ark was the symbol of God's presence. He knew that God's presence brought spiritual good to Israel. God's presence in our lives will also bring spiritual good to us. Another activity to be found in church is singing. Singing is one of the chief means that we have to glorify God. Sing God's praises, people of God. We must attend the divine worship services so that we can sing his praises with the congregation of saints in the presence of God. We must also make sure that we sing songs that glorify God and his attributes not man and his failures. Sing Psalter 164:4, 5.

July 4 Read Ephesians 1, Chronicles 16:20-29

**Psalm 63:6-8** People of God, as you lay down to sleep at night, do you meditate upon the goodness of God in your lives? Do we remember what he has done for us in that day and in the days gone past? Tonight is Saturday. We go unto the house of God tomorrow. We need to stop tonight and meditate upon the bountiful mercies that God has showered down upon us in the past week. "Oh," you say, "I had a bad week with no good in it." Then you must turn to Romans 8:28 and read that "all things work for good to them that love God." Then reevaluate your week and prepare to enter the house of God with praise on your lips. God is our help. Through all troubles he lead us by his almighty hand through all dangers. We will be safe under the wings of our heavenly Father. Meditate tonight, people of God, and ready yourself to enter his presence on his day. Sing Psalter 164:6-8.

July 5 Read I Chronicles 16:30-36

**Psalm 63:9-11** As we enter the house of God today we will notice many who desecrate the Sabbath. Some may even tempt us to desecrate it ourselves. Others may mock us or even cause us to lose our job because we keep the Sabbath holy. David felt these sorrows as he hid in the wilderness from Saul. Maybe this was one of the reasons he worked hard to reinstate the worship of God at the ark and wished to build a temple for God. We must have the same zeal for Jehovah. We must know that God will reward the evil doer according to his works. This is a comfort because we also know that he rewards us according to our works. This is the testimony of Scripture in Ecclesiastes 12. David could rejoice in God in his troubles; can we? Sing Psalter 163:3.

July 6 Read Psalm 64

**Psalm 64:1-4** In these four verses we run head long into the truth that there are people who hate us. You do not feel it? Do they know that you are a child of God? Do they know how you spent yesterday? Or was it not any different than many of your neighbors' lifestyle? Is your television viewing governed by the eighth commandment? Or do you partake in the most heinous sins by watching the movies of the world in your home or at the theater? If you live an antithetical life, the world will hate you. Should that cause us to fear? Absolutely not! We must bring our cares to God in prayer. He will hear our prayers and deliver us from the wicked and the wicked one. God will protect us and lead us in safety to our heavenly home. Sing Psalter 165:1.

July 7 Read I Samuel 23:7-15

**Psalm 64:5-7** We saw in the last Psalm that the men of Keilah schemed to deliver David to Saul. Wicked men are scheming again today, as well. Oh, it might not be so evident in the world today, but Satan is not idle. The time will come, and it is coming soon, that he will work to make life difficult for the child of God. As the child of God lives an antithetical life, hatred will grow against him by those with whom he works or plays. We had better be ready for it. David went to God in prayer. We, too, must go boldly to the throne of grace knowing that our God will hear us and answer us. God will shoot at the wicked and they will fall. That is his promise to us. Believe it child of God and go to him in prayer for help in all difficulties. Sing Psalter 165:2.

July 8 Read Philippians 4:1-9

**Psalm 64:8-10** The answer to the prayer of the righteous is that God will protect him. The day is coming in which all men will bow before the glory of God. The wicked will call for the mountains to protect them, but no protection will be found there. We must consider that which is godly and remember those things. We must seek that which is honest and of good report and know that it is from God alone. When we do this we will be glad in the Lord. Then we will trust him to deliver us from all evil. This cannot be done if we enjoy the things of this life. This can only be done by thinking on those things which are from above. Consider the Lord's doing. See how good it is. Go to him in prayer. Be thankful for the victory Christ has wrought for us. Then we can glory in the Lord and in all his works. Sing Psalter 165:3.

July 9 Read Psalm 65

**Psalm 65:1-2** The Psalmist begins by addressing God as he dwells in the church. He is acknowledged as the only one to whom prayers are to be addressed and as the only one by whom prayers are answered. Is this our attitude as we come unto God in prayer? Do we pray with utmost confidence in the one to whom we pray? Are our prayers expressions of that confidence that he will hear us and answer our prayers. Do we acknowledge him as the only one who hears our

---

prayers? If we do not pray with such confidence, we will not have the assurance for which we crave. We need to pray daily. We need to do this so that through the work of the Holy Spirit God will answer our prayers. Let us pray often, let us pray sincerely, and let us pray confidently to the one who hears and answers prayers. Sing stanza 1 of Psalters 166, 168, 170, and 172.

July 10 Read Hebrews 9:11-15

**Psalm 65:3** After acknowledging God as the one who hears and answers prayer, David realizes that because of his sins it is hard for him to pray. Is this our realization? How many times do we pray and then wonder if the prayer rose higher than the ceiling? Our sins cause us much doubt. Our sins leave us with a lack of confidence in our prayers. We wonder how we dare pray to such a holy God in the conditions we find ourselves. David had the same feelings, but David had the confidence that God would purge his sins from him so that he could pray in confidence. We have the same blessed assurance. God can and will forgive our sins so that we can boldly come to the throne and seek the grace that we need. Pray, people of God. Pray often. Pray for repentance and then for help knowing assuredly that our God will forgive our sins and hear our prayers. Sing Psalters 166:2, 168:2-3, and 172:2

July 11 Read John 15:1-11

**Psalm 65:4** There are at least two major truths described in the verse. First of all we find the truth of election's blessedness. Being chosen to dwell in God's presence is not the work of any man no matter how noble he may be. Being elected by God brings happiness. This is the happiness that can not be found anywhere on this earth. This is the happiness that belongs to those who have been chosen by God and redeemed by the land. The second truth is the truth of the goodness of the house of God. On this earth we will participate in a picture of this goodness tomorrow as we attend church. People of God, are you anxious for tomorrow? Young people, do you look forward to the Sabbath so that you can be helped to prepare for the eternal rest. The house of God is a phrase signifying heaven. We see this in the last verse of Psalm 23. For this we should long. For this we should earnestly seek after. Let us enjoy the blessedness of our election tomorrow and in the days and years to come in heaven. Sing Psalters 166:3, 170:2, and 173:2-3.

July 12 Read Exodus 19:16-25

**Psalm 65:5** When we read the word "terrible" in this verse we must not get the wrong idea. The words "terrible" or "awful" show the power of God over against the wickedness of man. Israel saw the terrible things of God as they came to Mount Sinai. The elect were comforted that their God was almighty. The reprobate were truly terrified of God's might against their sin. We can see God's terrible acts when we see a summer thunderstorm. The crash of thunder which accompanies the flash of lightning gives to us a good

picture of his power and might. We need never fear because our God is able to deliver us from the storm. Today as we attend church let us bow before our terrible God who is our confidence and salvation during any troubling storm on this earth. He will deliver us and lead us to heaven. Sing Psalters 166:4 and 170:3.

July 13 Read Mark 4:35-41

**Psalm 65:6-7** We find more evidence of God's power in these two verses. Yesterday we meditated on God's help through storms. We see this expressed in our reading for today as the disciples were delivered from a powerful storm by Jesus who is Lord of all. Yesterday we attended church. There we were safe from the world. God has given to us that refuge from the storms of evil which rage about us. He can keep us safe because he is our creator. Those who have replaced a creator God with one who works through some system of evolution can have no confidence in God. Those who say that changing Genesis 1-6 has no effect on the salvation of God's people are wrong. Through creation God provided the way of salvation. Let's not lose our comfort by believing any other doctrine than that of a comforting Creator. Sing Psalters 166:5 and 168:4.

July 14 Read Job 35:1-16

**Psalm 65:8** God is omnipresent. There are times when we forget about this attribute of God. We sometimes think that God does not see us and our sins. This is not true. God is everywhere and knows what happens everywhere. This is an awesome idea. But it is also very comforting. This God who is omnipresent sees what happens to his people where ever they are. He not only sees them; but he also sends help in accordance to the measure his people needs. Ponder this attribute of God and rejoice in it. Sing Psalters 167:6, 168:5, and 171:1.

July 15 Read Leviticus 26:1-13

**Psalm 65:9-10** God is our Lord is the truth spoken of in these two verses. Those of us who live in areas where agriculture is an important part of our daily life can understand these two verses well. Farmers understand very well their dependence upon God for the proper growing conditions needed to produce a crop. They are given the grace to understand that God controls all weather conditions. There is a spiritual parallel found here. In order for the people of God to prosper spiritually, there are growing conditions which must be satisfied. The child of God will only prosper when God sends showers of blessings from on high. Sometimes we do not understand how a spiritual condition will help us prosper. But as we read in the Psalms affliction is for our profit. We also can confess with Paul that *all* things work together for our good. Sing Psalters 167:1-2, 169:1, and 171:2.

# Rev. C. Hanko

## Chapter 24

### First Church — 1953–1964

edited by Karen Van Baren

*Editor's Notes—As the story continues in this chapter, the reader will get a sense that as the pastor's family had come to maturity, so had the churches. The churches started their first foreign mission field on the island of Jamaica. And while the churches mourned the deaths of their two leaders, Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Ophoff, as related in this chapter, they were able to continue their work of being salt and light.*

Throughout the entire conflict of the last few years our family stood firm and united as one man. For that I could be very thankful. The struggle was very painful, since my closest friends had now turned against us. Thus it was comforting and encouraging that at home we had peace and harmony. In the Adams School Mothers' Club, Mother left the meeting when the opposition tried to take over, followed by a number of women who immediately reorganized as the true continuation of the Mothers' Club. Later, the opposition pulled out of the school as one man, hoping thereby to make it impossible for the school to continue. But in spite of them the work carried on. There were fewer students but better harmony.

Now the question came up concerning the *Beacon Lights*, which had not been published since the Split. Two committee members came to me and asked my opinion about starting *Beacon Lights* again. I asked them "Do you have any money?" They admitted they had none. But they were determined to go out and seek donations. So, as soon as there was enough money for publishing an issue, they went to print. Soon *Beacon Lights* was coming to our homes right on schedule.

In May of 1953, Herm married Wilma Knoper. Theirs was the last wedding ceremony in First Church before we temporarily lost the property.

In August of 1953, we held the young people's convention in First Church. On Tuesday afternoon, Elaine and Jean Faber sat all afternoon on the church lawn, waiting for delegates to register. No one came. It appeared as if there would be no convention. Yet the evening meeting was well attended. The delegates had waited until the evening to find out about their lodging. All went well until the banquet night. The committee figured the meal for the delegates and a few others. But many of the De Wolf group stormed in and acted as if they belonged there. The committee went out scouting for food, and all ended quite well.

Herm entered the seminary in the fall of 1953 under Revs. Herman Hoeksema and George Ophoff. Little did he realize that, because of the shortage of ministers after 1953, he would soon be out in the churches. The next year he was sent to Edgerton, Minnesota to work there. Herm and Wilma were blessed with their first child, Ronald Herman, on August 30, 1954.

Fred had been going to Calvin College for the past three years, but was weary of their erroneous teachings. In the fall of 1953, he had an opportunity to start teaching in a Christian School in Kalamazoo. This kept him occupied for the next two years.

In May of 1955, Elaine went with the Pastors to Europe for six weeks. They took an ocean liner across the Atlantic. She and Thelma Pastoor enjoyed the leisurely trip both ways. They spent about three weeks in the Netherlands and then traveled south into France, Switzerland and Germany.

On August 11, 1955 Fred and Ruth Miersma were joined in the bond of holy matrimony and took up residence in an upstairs apartment on Franklin Street. Fred took up teaching in Adams School. A few years later, in 1957, Fred and Ruth purchased a house on Adams Street, not far from the school.

At the June Synod 1955, Herm was made candidate for the ministry. I remember the occasion very vividly, because I was so deeply impressed, even a bit shaken, by the fact that he also would spend his life in the ministry in our churches. I felt somewhat as David did when he heard that Solomon would succeed him on the throne; he said, “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that Thou hast brought me hitherto?”

Herm received and accepted a call to our Hope Church in Walker, Michigan, and soon he and his family were settled there.

Nineteen fifty-six was the year of the tornado that swept through Hudsonville and Standale. Herm and Wilma came to our house on Bates Street. I was in the church. Although I knew that a storm had passed through between 7 and 8 o'clock, I was not aware of the severity of the storm, nor of the damage that it had done, until I came home at 10 o'clock. Herm and Wilma had tried to get back to their home, but were barred by the National Guard. Especially in Hudsonville and in Standale, there was considerable damage and there were also a number of deaths. The day after the tornado, April 4, 1956, Wilma gave birth to her second son, Cornelius.

In August Mother, Allie and I accompanied Herm, Wilma and Ron to the Upper Peninsula. Since Neal was a small baby, he was left behind with relatives. Herm preached in Grand Haven on Sunday. On Monday we started out with a rented trailer to Northern Michigan. It was a relaxing, pleasant week of sight seeing, but there was one big drawback—it rained every day that we were up there. This was not so bad for us, but it was far worse for families in tents with little kids. Can you imagine keeping kids in a small tent rainy day after rainy day? The novelty of such an experience soon wears thin. Little Ron kept us entertained on that trip. At Tahquamenon Falls his little feet moved in the direction of every puddle of water along the way.

In August of 1957, we went with the Pastors to a couple of secluded cabins on Traverse Bay. This was an ideal place to relax. Actually we were not far from the main road, but a very narrow, winding trail through a dense woods led down to the cabins at the water's edge.

We continued to go up there for a few years. Most of the time, Don and Jess Rietema also accompanied the Pastors and stayed with them in their cabin. We had some very pleasant times together there. The first week the men would do a lot of fishing, as if our life depended on it. The next week I began to relax. Getting up in the morning, we would have breakfast and I would sit down



*Rev. and Mrs. Hanko on their 25th wedding anniversary.*

to read. Soon I was sleeping. At noon we had lunch and again I took a long nap. In the late afternoon and evening we visited, but we went early to bed.

One year Herm and Wilma, Fred and Ruth, and their kids stayed in tents near Lake Michigan. But this was a rainy week, so they packed up their wet belongings and came to our cabin. The Pastors were going home on Saturday, so we rented their cabin for a week, and all of us stayed there. As I recall, it was a chilly week. It was cold on the lake fishing, and fishing was not too good. We felt comfortable near the heater.

One year while we were at the cabin, Mother had a problem with her heart. She was filling with fluid and was very uncomfortable. On Thursday we decided to go home. I called Dr. Avery, our doctor, and he came at once. On Friday he came again. I asked him whether I should get help in the house for the meals. He answered, “Today we do nothing. Tomorrow we will see again.” He had tried to relieve her of the fluid, but had failed. On Saturday he came back and was much relieved. She had

---

gotten rid of a lot of fluid and felt much more comfortable.

My stomach ulcer was still plaguing me, so my doctor planned stomach surgery for the summer of 1958. Dr. Carpenter was recommended, and he took away about seventy percent of my stomach. Before the surgery he reminded me that we were in the hands of the Almighty, and afterward, when I wanted to thank him, he said, "Don't thank me, thank our God." He was a Lutheran, but seemed to be very sincere about his religion.

I had expected that after the surgery, from which it took about six weeks to recover, I would henceforth be a semi-invalid. The opposite was true. I never felt better. Now I could eat food that I could not touch before.

On January 10, 1959, Elaine married Richard Bos. Fred and Ruth had moved to Adams Street, so Rich and Elaine moved into their house on Franklin. Elaine had a small home wedding, including only the family and a few of our closest friends. She did not want an ostentatious display in public. We were confronted with the problem of where we should draw the line if we began inviting the congregation. To this day I am still sorry that she did not have a bigger wedding. She is our only daughter who married, and we should have given her a better send off. But it was a nice wedding. Ed Kooienga had arranged to furnish the music. They came down the stairs and spoke their vows in front of the fireplace in the living room. Grandpa Griffioen wore a tie that had been in style many years ago.

Our summer vacations shifted from Grand Traverse Bay to Clyde and Reka in Wisconsin. Reka always welcomed our coming, and Clyde was a pleasant fishing companion. Although we explored other fishing lakes, we were always directed back to that little lake where Clyde had his cottage. It was for us an annual event to float down one of the rivers in the area. About 7 o'clock in the morning the women would take us to a place where we launched the boat. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon they picked us up some miles down the river. We did very little fishing, but we had a good time just drifting along as the river twisted and turned through fields and hills.

We also stayed at Fox Lake, near Randolph. There we were entertained at night by the crickets.

In the summer of 1962, we went to Loveland for a few weeks. Don and Jess Rietema went along. They had hardly ever, if ever, been out of Michigan. Therefore they enjoyed seeing the open prairie and the herds of cattle.

On the way home we returned by way of the Black Hills. Both Don and Jess enjoyed the high rocky cliffs, the faces of Mt. Rushmore, and the scenery in general. We sat by the lake to eat our lunch. The time had come for us to set the car in the direction of Michigan.

In 1963 Herm accepted a call to Doon, Iowa. Here is where Herm and Wilma's boys had a good taste of farm life in the Midwest. They enjoyed the open country and the trips to the Rock River. Whatever else they experienced, they will not forget the years spent in the little town of Doon. Two years later, in 1965, Herm accepted the call to the seminary and took up residence first in our old house on Bates Street, and later in Walker, Michigan.

In 1963, Mom and I went to Jamaica. The previous year, Mr. Harry Zwak and Mr. Henry Meulenberg, both of whom still have descendants in the churches, had gone and had come back with a favorable report. Now the Meulengbergs and we were sent to investigate the field.

This work in Jamaica had a rather interesting beginning. In the late 50s and early 60s, our churches had a broadcast to England over Transworld Radio from Monaco. This program came on at 10:30 on a Sunday morning, following the Billy Graham program. It was directed toward England, but could be picked up in Germany, and even beyond, to Curocao and Tasmania down under. This broadcast brought a response of about 75 pieces of mail per year.

Among these letters was one from a Jamaican, who for some reason was in England, and had picked up our message. He wanted to know more about our Confessions, so I sent him a Psalter. He responded that he wanted me to come to England. Since this was impossible, the mission committee offered to him that we would pay his trip to Michigan when he made a return to Jamaica. As a result of this contact, we received a list of the membership of twenty-one congregations in Jamaica, with the request that we assume responsibility for them.

We wrote Rev. Frame, who was mentioned as minister of First Hill Church. He responded that if we believed in holiness we should come. If not, we could forget it. Little did we realize that by holiness he meant Pentacostalism.

It was a rare experience for us to visit this island. I had felt for some time that our churches should reach out in a mission project, yet little did I think that a door would be opened for us in such a strange way in Jamaica. A small house had been rented for us in the town of Luca. Mrs. Frame and another woman were our cooks

---

and housekeepers. They arrived at 5 o'clock in the morning and often stayed until 11 o'clock at night. We practically pushed them to their homes, because we wanted a few moments alone to discuss the experiences of the day. Our beds were old and narrow, but serviceable. The bugs came through the open windows, the watchdog barked most of the night, a donkey brayed just outside our room, and a rooster crowed at dawn. Our meals were skimpy, but they did serve their purpose.

The Sunday services lasted a long time. With Rev. Frame taking the lead and Mrs. Frame in charge of the singing, we could have gone on indefinitely. The enthusiasm was most encouraging.

Although we made the town of Luca our headquarters, we rented a car and tried, as much as possible, to visit the 21 "churches" that had so unceremoniously been made our responsibility. Our first visit was to "Rev." Thompson, who was also at the airport to meet us. We soon discovered that he had a small group of women in his "church," that practiced voodoo. But what turned us off completely was his suggestion that, if we would give him \$25,000, he would bring us most of the people in town. I told him he was too mercenary for us to deal with him. The sad part was that he also had rented an apartment for us, and we had to tell the landlady that he had not been authorized to do that.

We thought we could make a schedule and by strictly following that we could visit four or five churches in one day. So our first appointment was with a Rev. Davis at 9 o'clock in the morning. We arrived a bit early, but he already had his congregation assembled and the children enthusiastically singing. Their shoes were nicely lined up under their chairs. This singing went on and on. Finally, about 10 o'clock, he reached into his briefcase, pulled out an alarm clock, and studying it carefully decided that it was 9 o'clock. Then, evidently to show his great talent, he stood ranting and raving for awhile. After that, I spoke, explaining to them the purpose of our mission. Since our schedule was ruined already, we allowed two young men to give us a duet on their instruments. This I recorded, and to their utter amazement, if not fear, I played it back for them. From that time on I had repeated requests for that box that spoke.

We decided that the best way to work was to plan nothing but Sunday services. We would arrive at a certain church and give some of the women and children instructions to beat their drums. That was the signal to come to the tabernacle. In about an hour the other women had put on white dresses, the men had cleaned up a bit,

and, giving the drummers time to change their clothes, we soon had a service started. Our speeches and sermons were greeted with "Amens" and "Hallelujahs," but at least that showed they were listening.

We were back in Luca. One morning Mrs. Meulenberg got up and noticed red spots on her arms and legs. She had noticed a few before, but never that bad. She asked Mrs. Frame what she thought about them, and received the simple answer, "Bedbugs." For a little while we had a revolution going. All three of my companions were ready to pack and go to a motel. When I saw how serious they were, I issued an ultimatum. "You can all go, but I have work to do here. I want to know these people, and to know them, I have to live with them." That was that. We all stayed.

One Thursday we decided to go to Kingston. We wanted to see whether we could obtain a certificate for Rev. Frame, giving him the right to perform weddings. This he greatly desired, and we thought we would do him that favor. We stayed in what might be called a Bed and Breakfast, two upstairs rooms with a "bath," that is, a spray over a tub. When we decided to retire the landlady said, "I have two dogs and two night boys, but lock your doors and windows." We had planned to return to Luca on Friday, but were held up by all kinds of technicalities. We were sent to one place, where the doorkeeper wanted to know our business. Politely we were referred to "second floor, third door." There we once more explained our business. The man listened attentively and decided that we were in the wrong place. We should go so many blocks west, and so many blocks south, and there they could help us. This went on and on, while we perspired along the way. Finally we met a woman of Spanish background. She listened to our tale of woe and told us to give her an hour to work on our problems. When we returned she had everything worked out for us.

But in the meantime the people in Luca thought we had fallen among the thieves and robbers and would never return. Needless to say, they were glad to see us back.

One Sunday night Rev. Frame had planned a service on the soccer grounds in the town. The "Bishop" would speak. We had quite a crowd. But the interesting part was that I had often wondered if something like that would be possible. Now I was confronted with it. I spoke on Matthew 11:28, explaining to them that a white man is just as black inside as anyone of the colored race. There seemed to have been quite a reaction in the town. But we met none of them in the Sunday services.

---

All too soon our time was up. The morning of our departure dawned. We had failed to report to the airport to check our tickets for our return, so our seats were canceled. But there was a British plane leaving in an hour. We dashed off to the motel, packed our baggage by throwing everything in willy-nilly. Then we had to get rid of our car and report at the plane. They were waiting for us, so we hastily stepped aboard and soon were going almost straight up into the sky. At customs, I warned the inspector that our luggage was a mess. But he opened my suitcase, picked up socks and underwear that had tumbled out, hastily slammed it shut, and refused to open the rest.

A new field had opened. Because showing the pictures of Jamaica attracted interest in Grand Rapids, the Meulenbergs, Mother and I decided to make a trip through the churches by train. We stopped in Doon and saw Herm's family. Then on to Loveland, Redlands and Lynden. On the way to Lynden, Mother developed a cyst in her large bowel. She suffered great agony in San Francisco and in Lynden. We went to a doctor in Sumas, who advised us to return home as soon as possible. We arrived home late on a Thursday evening. The next morning I called the Ferguson hospital. By 2 o'clock in the afternoon, Mother was in surgery.

In 1964, after spending sixteen years in First, we moved to Redlands, California.

\* \* \* \* \*

The years of hard work, long hours and bitter struggle had taken their toll on Rev. Hoeksema. Especially the latest strife within the church had been extremely painful and difficult. He remarked at one time that '53 was in some ways worse than '24, because this conflict was brought about by men whom he had trained, whom he had trusted, and who now turned against him and were out to destroy the church.

He no longer walked with a cane, but his one leg did not come along readily. His arm and hand were impaired so that Homer had to help him in typing his articles for the *Standard Bearer*. His voice had lost some of its resonance, but was still strong. His cheerfulness that brought a pleasant smile to his face had faded and his former hearty laughter was no longer heard. It was evident to all of us that our pastor was aging. This was especially true when he first came to the pulpit on Sunday morning. Yet as he carried on in the service he seemed to gain energy and when he was preaching he seemed younger, once more filled with enthusiasm and the zeal for the

Word. He always enjoyed preaching, possibly more than anything else.

His mind was still clear. There were those in the audience who feared that he might not be able to carry on through the entire service, or that he might become confused. Yet that never happened. In one instance he stated that he wanted to point out six facts. Some among us wondered, will he be able to remember them, will he keep them in logical order? Yet step by step he continued through the six points without hesitation.

He continued to write in the *Standard Bearer* and also continued to teach in the seminary. Sometimes he had but one student, but he diligently taught and enjoyed the work.

He and I continued to enjoy a good working relationship. On Thursday, I'd call him up for the sermon information for the bulletin and he'd say, "Well you know what I'm going to preach on. Just make a theme and division." So I would, and he'd usually use that too. Except once he got on the pulpit and said, "Now the bulletin has this theme. But I changed that." Knowing he was preaching on the catechism and knowing his make up, I could formulate his theme and points. I knew too what line we were on, whether he was emphasizing the covenant, or justification, and I drew up the theme and divisions accordingly. It usually went well.

Some of the older ministers would offer their sermon outlines to the younger ministers, especially for busy times. Rev. Hoeksema did the same for me, but I refused. I knew from the start that would never work. I had to preach my own sermons my own way.

The opposition in the CRC had not lessened. We had occasion to meet with four of the professors of Calvin Seminary to discuss a small matter. On the way to the meeting Rev. Hoeksema remarked that he dreaded meeting these men. The business was transacted in short order and we were ready to leave when one of the men invited us to have coffee with them. Rev. Hoeksema declined, but I suggested that we stay. We no more than sat down and all four of them accused him of teaching a parallel predestination, that is, that even as God chooses his elect purely by grace and in no way because of their works, so God also reprobates the wicked sovereignly, regardless of their evil deeds.

We asked them to prove that he taught this. With an almost sarcastic smile one of them remarked that it was virtually self-evident. We insisted that they prove that this was his teaching, but they brushed all further dis-

---

ussion on the subject aside. We left there more than a bit unhappy.

A quotation from his *Reformed Dogmatics* will show that a parallel predestination was by no means the conviction and teaching of our pastor. On page 161 we read, "Reprobation is the eternal and sovereign decree of God to determine some men to be vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction *in the way of sin, as manifestation of His justice*, and to serve the realization of His elect church."

In the summer of 1958, Rev. Ophoff, the trusty colleague of Rev. Hoeksema, who had resolutely supported him through all the struggles, suffered a stroke while on his way home from a trip to Canada. He and his wife stayed at a hospital in Toledo, Ohio until he was able to make the trip home. Since Rev. Hoeksema desired to see him as soon as possible, we visited him in the hospital in Toledo, where we had opportunity to talk with him, encourage him and pray with him.

Mrs. Ophoff was a remarkable woman, a faithful wife and a kind, understanding mother. When they returned home, she took excellent care of her husband, even to the extent that she virtually collapsed under the burden. Rev. Ophoff never fully recovered. At times he felt a sense of guilt, wondering whether he had done the right thing by staying up those long nights to prepare articles for the *Standard Bearer* or lessons for the seminary. Yet at that time he had no choice, the work awaited him.

He was gradually failing, but never faltered in his assurance of God's promises that cannot fail. He remained a staunch defender of the truth he loved as long as he lived. He was taken home on June 12, 1962 at the age of 71 years, there to hear it said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord." When he departed, Mrs. Ophoff was in a rest home and hardly realized what had happened. Yet when she saw him in the funeral parlor a single tear fell upon her cheek. Our pastor preached the funeral sermon on Psalm 73:24: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." We all missed him.

In the early 1960s, Mrs. Hoeksema's health began to fail. She had been a loyal help to her husband throughout all the years of their marital union. She also knew how to rear and guide her family, especially in times of storm and stress. Her husband depended upon her sound judgment of people's characters more than most people realized. He did not appreciate simpering people or sugar-mouthed individuals, but he did readily accept and trust a person at face value. He could not imagine that any

one would be dishonest or deceitful, since he himself was straight-forward and said exactly what he thought, even at times quite bluntly.

It was a pleasure to visit Mrs. Hoeksema during the time of her failing strength. I was always greatly impressed by her deep spirituality and confident hope. On September 23, 1963 the Lord reached out to take her into the rest that remains for the people of God. Our pastor sorely missed her. An important part of his life was taken from him, leaving a great void that could not be filled.

Gradually he was forced to give up his preaching, instructing in the seminary and contributing to the *Standard Bearer*. He had always hoped to die in the harness, that is, to be taken away in the midst of his labors, but the Lord had something better in store for him. He had time for quiet reflection and fellowship with his Lord. He experienced possibly more than ever that through prayer and meditation God shares His own communal life with His saints in intimate covenant fellowship. He could say with the sweet singer of old:

*Yea, the secret of Jehovah  
is with those who fear His Name;  
With His friends in tender mercy  
He His covenant will maintain.  
With a confidence complete,  
toward Jehovah my eyes are turning;  
From the net He'll pluck my feet;  
he will not despise my yearning.*  
(Ps. No. 415, verse 7)

He had seen the churches recovering from the shock of 1953 and in his own family experienced God's promise realized, "I will be thy God and the God of thy seed forever." He was full of days, and was ready to enter into the rest. His departure was on September 2, 1965. He could say with the apostle Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:7, 8).

His son, Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema, who succeeded him as editor of the *Standard Bearer*, wrote:

My copy for this issue was not ready yet when the tidings came early this morning, September 2, that the Lord had granted my beloved father the desire of his heart that he would be delivered from this life, which is nothing but a continual death, into the

---

glory of the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

His departure, though painful for and mourned by his dear ones and by all of us who came to know him as pastor, teacher and friend, was not unexpected. For several months already the Lord had removed him from his active labors in our churches, and particularly in his beloved First Church. Besides, he himself had expressed the wish, when he was losing his ability to communicate a couple of months ago, that, "I hope it won't be long." And now the Lord has delivered him. Last Sunday we at First Church prayed that when we could no longer reach him, the Lord might reach him with His Spirit and grace to comfort him. Well, the Lord certainly

answered that prayer. He reached him and called him home.

With the passing of these two giant defenders of the truth, another era of our history had come to a close. They have passed on the Sword of the Spirit to the next generations. Also to them comes the Word of the Lord: "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might!" (Eph. 6:10). "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58).



---

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

---

## Church History

# The Church of Oudemirdum

by J. P. deKlerk

In the southwestern part of the Dutch province of Friesland you find the old State Reformed Church of Oudemirdum (see picture).

In the newspapers of the region, *De Balkster Courant* and *It Pompeblêd*, this church building is very much in the news, because it has been discovered that all the woodwork is under the attack of gnawing beetles (in Dutch: "*de bonte knaagkever*"). These small animals ruin everything and therefore it will be necessary to renew/replace all the wood.

This church was built in 1790, enlarged in 1883 and again in 1926; only the west side of this building is original.

During the years of the occupation by France, the so-called "Bataafse Republiek" (1794-1806), the property



---

rights of the tower (with bell ) were split up with the church building, which meant the tower is owned by the government, the church is owned by the Reformed congregation (of which 15% tax had to be paid to the government). So this means that the government has to take care of the tower, but the congregation of the church building is responsible for its complete restoration.

In the beginning of 1900 the church received an organ as a gift. It was used for the first time in May by organist H. A. Leffring.

The ministers of the church since 1790 were quite different in their opinions; some conservative, some modernist. It is interesting that, according to the archives, each time a conservative minister came, the church was almost too small for the number of people at the Lord's Day; but when there was a modernist minister, most members stayed home (modernists called themselves to belong to the "Groninger Richting," who did not believe that the Scriptures were the Word of God and they said that the Devil did not exist.). ❖

---

---

# Synodale Church of Oudehorne

by J. P. deKlerk

Halfway through the main road from Heerenveen to Donkerbroek (in the Dutch province of Friesland) you find the village of Oudehorne. Here stands this Synodale Reformed Church, now part of the "Samen Op Beg" (Together On Our Way) movement in The Netherlands. It is a simple small church, well looked after, about 75 years old.

The soil in the area produces large amounts of industrial potatoes. This area was formerly a peat colony. There are also some factories relating to the potato industry in the area surrounding the church. ❖

---

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



## Church News

### BAPTISMS

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

**The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:**

Jelliot James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Gunnink—Byron Center, MI

Ava Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Grant Klein—Doon, IA

Owen Thomas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tomm Heyboer—Faith, MI

Dalton William, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bill Van Overloop—Faith, MI

Marissa Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. David Steenwyk—Georgetown, MI

Zachary James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jamie Langerak—Grace, MI

Nicholas Harry, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bill Leep—Grace, MI

Britney Le and Brooke Ann twin daughters of Mr. & Mrs. Mark Bleyenbergh—Grandville, MI

Troy Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Michael De Boer—Grandville, MI

Trey Austin, son of Mr. & Mrs. Toby Boogerd—Hull, IA (daughter church)

Jocelyn Rae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jon Mooy—Loveland, CO

Derrick James, son of Mr. & Mrs. James Jansma—Loveland, CO

Weston Jay, son of Mr. & Mrs. Stephan DeJong—Peace, IL

Nathan Gerrit, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ed Hoksbergen—Randolph, WI

Jason Evert, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Krosschell—Randolph, WI

Cameran Elice, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dale Zandstra—South Holland, IL

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

### CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

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

*Proverbs 22:6*

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

Samuel Mahtani—Bethel, IL

Mike Booth—Byron Center, MI

Jeff VanTil—Byron Center, MI

John VanTil—Byron Center, MI

Brian Tanis—Hope, MI

John Hopkins—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. Steve Griffioen and Miss Sheila Bruinsma—Peace, IL

Mr. Joel Noorman and Miss Laura Reyenga—South Holland, IL

## A Wedding

She rode on a camel amid a train of menservants, maidservants, and their belongings. They had traveled for many days, but now they were almost home. Home—to where this very beautiful young woman had never been before. Was she nervous? Was she scared? She had willingly left her family and friends with only hours to pack and say good-bye. Now she was here in a strange land, to marry a husband she had never heard of or seen before.

She wore gold bracelets on her hands and other costly pieces of jewelry and clothing. The chief and eldest servant had given them to her as gifts. Thus she knew the man she was to marry was rich. But she knew something else as well. She knew he feared God. The servant had made that plain too. He was seeking a wife for his master's son from his master's kindred line to the covenant. And he sought this wife only with God's help.

It was a very long way to go for a wife, but his master assured him that the angel of the Lord would go before him. The angel certainly had. How else would this beautiful girl riding beside him leave her father and mother in less than one day to follow him to an unknown country and life? The Lord had prospered his way. That was the only explanation there could be. And now—now they were almost home.

The shadows were long. It was near the close of day. A man stood in a field meditating in prayer. He feared God. He trusted God. He looked up. In the distance he saw a train of camels. Behold, his father's servant was coming home! He began to walk toward them.

The young woman saw the man coming to meet them.

"What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?" she asked the eldest servant in the train.



# "LITTLE LIGHTS"

*... let it shine!*

by Connie Meyer

"It is my master," he replied. It was the man who would be her husband.

As custom fitted, she modestly took a veil and covered herself, then alighted off her camel in respect of him who neared. Soon they were together in the field and the servant told the man, Isaac, about all the things he had done.

What were the thoughts of this bridegroom and bride as they met for the very first time? They feared God. They trusted God. Isaac knew that the covenant promises of their sovereign and loving God would and must be kept: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

"And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her..."

Thus Rebekah became Isaac's wife, and in due time the covenant mother of Israel. What a blessing. What a privilege. God had purposed their lives to serve His covenant plan of salvation for the coming of Christ and the glory of His name!

**Read how God brought Rebekah to Isaac in Genesis 24.**

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

## BEACON LIGHTS

621 Williams Street  
Randolph, WI 53956

Periodical  
Postage  
paid at  
Jenison, MI  
(UPSS046-840)



*Beulah Beach  
August 13 - 17, 2007*

*Conventioneers:*

*Are you getting excited?*

*Wondering what to bring?*

*Check our website for  
a list!*



**WWW.PRCCONVENTION.COM**  
WWW.BEULAHBEACH.ORG - VERMILION, OHIO