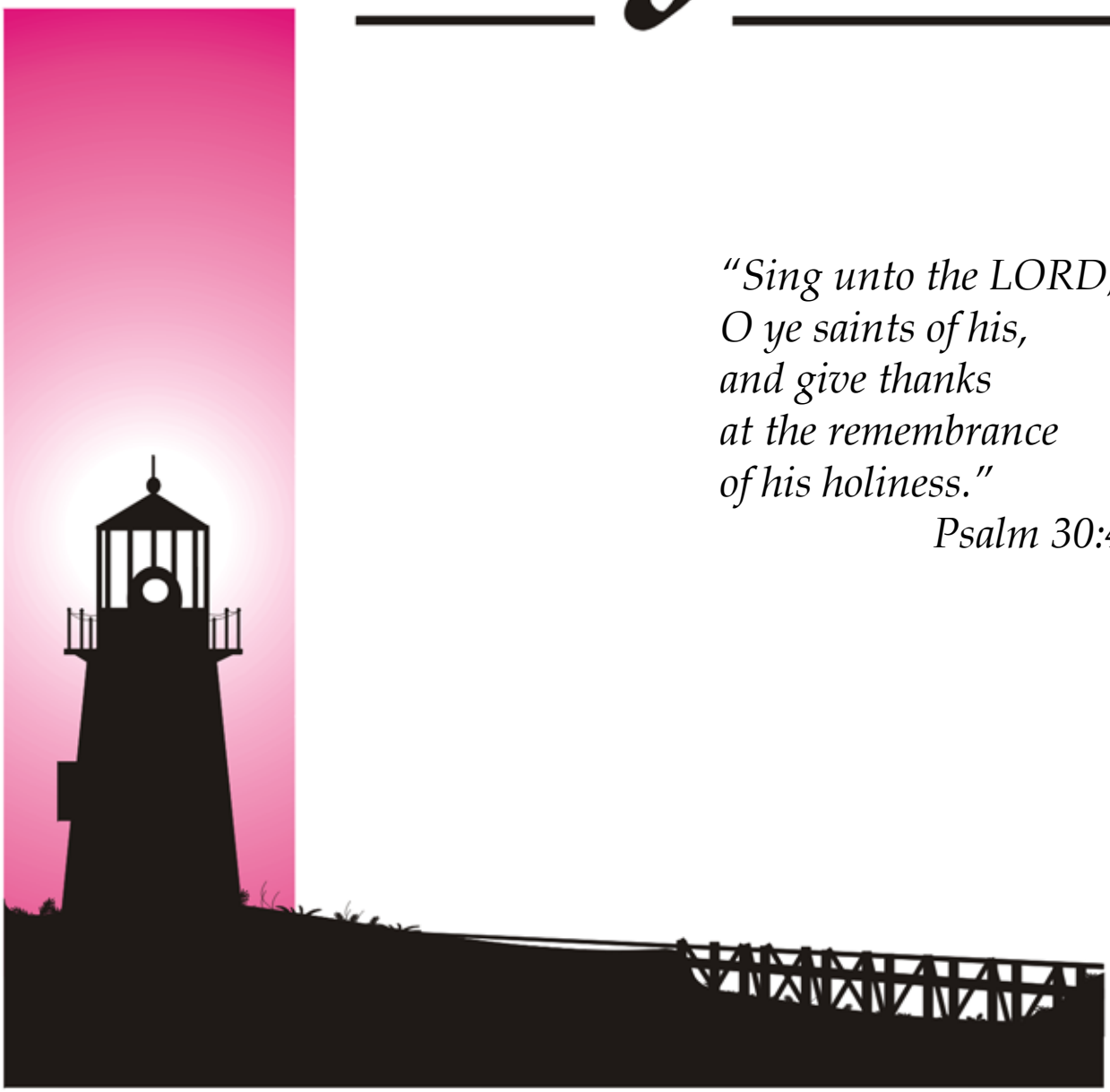
Beacon Lights

November
2008

Volume LXVII
Number 10



"Sing unto the LORD,
O ye saints of his,
and give thanks
at the remembrance
of his holiness."
Psalm 30:4

Table of Contents

Editorial
3 **The Pilgrims and Thanksgiving Day**

Story Time
6 **The Gift (9)**

Church Family
8 **Bringing the Word into the Teaching of the Liberal Arts**

Gem of the Month
10 **Jesus' Temptations**

Devotional
11 **Watching Daily At My Gates—November 16 – December 15**

Where We Stand
15 **The Antithesis and Witnessing (5)**

Our Young People's Federation
16 **Explanation for a Change**

Church History
18 **I Remember Herman Hoeksema (2): Personal Remembrances of a Great Man**

22 Church News

Little Lights
23 **The Day You Were Baptized—A Thanksgiving Prayer**

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.

BEACON LIGHTS

EDITOR
John Huizenga
Email: 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
Jeanine Huizenga
621 Williams Street
Randolph, WI 53956
Phone: (920) 326-6186
Email: subscriptions@beaconlights.org

BEACON LIGHTS ON THE INTERNET
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 Bleyenberg
Email: DMBleyenberg@tds.net.

BOOK SALES
Contact the Business Office

TYPESETTER
Robert Vermeer

PRINTER
James Huizinga

MAILERS
Bill & Fran Leep

The Pilgrims and Thanksgiving Day

by Mr. G. Borduin

The time of year has rolled around again when old and young are directing their thoughts to Thanksgiving Day, and plans are being made to celebrate the festival among relatives and friends after attending church services to thank the providential Father for the abundance of food and clothing and for other favors he has bestowed upon us in the past year.

In this connection it would be interesting to review the origin of this harvest festival, and this would take us back to the time of the Pilgrims. It will be remembered that the Pilgrims came over in the Mayflower in 1620, landed in Cape Cod Harbor, and stepped out on a rock which they named Plymouth Rock. The little settlement that was then started they called Plymouth after the place in England from which they embarked. When they had gathered in their first harvest the following year they had their first thanksgiving day. These facts are fairly well known, but there are many interesting details in both the preceding history of this day of feast and in subsequent events that would be worthwhile mentioning. Accordingly I have gathered material from various sources, and will attempt to give the gist of it in this article.

First, as to the origin of the Pilgrims it may be said that they were called pilgrims because of their various wanderings. In England a large number of the clergy and people were dissatisfied with the form of religion in the State Church. About seventy years before this time the state religion had been changed from Catholic to Protestant, but the change had not been complete, and it was this state of affairs that caused many of the clergy and people to demand a more thorough purification from the old observances and doctrines. Because of this they were called Puritans. This demand was not only refused by the government, but they were also punished for not using the prescribed form of worship.. This led some of the clergy to question the authority of the government in things religious. They came to believe that any

body of Christians had the right to organize itself into a church independently from any external authority. When they began separating themselves from the Church of England and organizing themselves into independent congregations they were called Separatists and Independents. One of these Separatist churches was at Scrooby, in eastern England. Not being allowed to worship in peace they fled to Leyden, Holland (1608) where they lived for twelve years. But evil influences surrounded their children, and they longed for a land where they could worship God in their own way and save their families from worldly follies. America offered such a home. They came, braving every danger, and trusting God to shape their destiny.

Accordingly on September 6, 1620, one hundred and two pilgrims embarked at Plymouth, England on the Mayflower, a little vessel hardly as large as a lake excursion boat of today, though by the standard of that day it was a well-equipped, if not luxurious boat. On December 11 they reached Provincetown Harbor in Cape Cod. (This December 11 old style is the same day as December 21 new style. In 1752 eleven days were added to correct an error in the calendar. This made the date the 22nd. However, only ten days should be added for 1620). They had paid for transportation farther south, but the Dutch bribed the ship's captain to keep away from Holland colonies at what is now New York. Before landing, the little group drew up what has since been known as the Mayflower Compact. In this they expressed their loyalty to the king of England and agreed to maintain law and order in accordance with the will of the majority. This was a new idea at that time. A little shallop was sent out to reconnoiter before landing, but it was lost in a furious storm and lost its rudder, sail and mast. Late at night the party sought shelter in the lee of a small island. They spent the next day in cleaning their rusty weapons and drying their wet clothes. Every hour was precious, the season was late, and their companions on the Mayflower were anxiously awaiting their return; but "being ye last day of ye week they prepared there to keep ye Sabbath." This incident gives an idea of their religious character.

They spent considerable time in selecting a suitable place to build their log houses. They finally found a place which furnished fresh water, a safe harbor and a hill on which they could build a fort. They suffered severely during the first winter. They were hampered by the weather in building their homes and in obtaining food. They had no experience as hunters or fishermen, and the fishhooks they had brought along were too large for the fish there. The chief food was clams, mussels and eels. The climate was more severe than that to which they were accustomed so that many fell ill with pneumonia. By the next spring one half of their little company, including their first governor, John Carver, died from the effects of disease, hunger and exposure. Nevertheless when the Mayflower sailed again in April not one of the survivors wished to return. At one time there were only seven persons who were well enough to take care of the sick. Miles Standish was one of those who proved himself a tender nurse as well as a fearless soldier. You can imagine what hardships must have been endured if you consider that they had only a few hand tools, such as axes and hammers and small saws with which to fell trees, cut them into proper form for building their houses, and had no horses or oxen to move them, but had to move them all by man-power through the deep snow.

Lest the Indians should learn how greatly their number was reduced they buried their dead at night, and in the spring corn was planted over the grave. Fortunately the settlers were able to win the friendship of some of the Indians. Tisquantum or Squanto, an Indian who had been captured by the crew of an English vessel to be sold as a slave in Spain, but who had escaped to England, and there learned the English language became their interpreter. Through him and Samoset, an Indian chief, a meeting was arranged with the powerful Massasoit, sachem of the Wampanorgas, and a treaty of peace was signed which was not broken for fifty years. Massasoit was a true friend and once he sent the settlers news of a threatened attack by another tribe of Indians. One day an Indian brave came bearing the skin of a rattlesnake filled with arrows as a challenge to war from the chief of the Narragansets. Governor Bradford returned the skin filled with powder and shot. The Indians appreciated the answer and abandoned the attack.

The friendly Indians also taught them how to plant Indian corn, and next year's harvest banished famine and want from the settlement. In ten years the result of this grave venture of freedom-seekers in the New World had proved not only a great religious victory, but also an economic one, and thus proved

the way for further colonization.

It must have been a happy occasion that November day in 1621 when the Pilgrims realized their first harvest was a very good one, and they sent four men on a hunting trip for the first Thanksgiving turkey. The little group had been hungry so often that they could scarcely gaze on a plentiful supply of food without thoughts of thanksgiving. As soon as the harvest had been gathered in, Governor Bradford appointed three days for feasting and thankfulness. He left nothing undone to make the day a success and a real holiday, for "he dispatched foure men on fowling, so that we might after a more special manner rejoyce together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors. They foure in one day killed as many fowle, as with a little help beside, served the company almost a week." Also he sent Squanto to Nancasket to dispatch from there a runner to Massasoit inviting him with his brother and a fitting escort to the feast on the following Thursday. Governor Bradford, as usual, was up early, for he loved that early morning hour for devotion and meditation. The guests, the invited Indians, coming early, undoubtedly found guests to welcome them.

Soon the roll of drums announced the morning prayers, which began each day for the pilgrims, and certainly were not omitted on this day of thanksgiving. The Indians must have stared openmouthed at this demonstration of devotion to their God, and at the sight of so many stern pilgrim fathers, busy mothers and homespun-clad children who were gathered for morning devotions.

Speaking of children, there must have been plenty of them, for the usual quota per family was between fifteen and twenty, although the mortality rate was high. And what strange names they bore. One family included a Hopestill, Wait, Thanks, Desire, Unite, Supply, Experience, and Waitstill. The first child born on the Mayflower was named Oceanus. Events, emotions, Bible characters, and even whole Bible verses became names for children who were, of course, not able to protest or defend themselves.

Going on with the feast, we find that they "gathered in the meeting house beginning some halfe an hour before 9, and continued untill after 12 oclocke", with psalm singing, prayer and sermon. Then came "making merry to the creatures, the poor sort being invited of the richer." A sumptuous meal was served of meat with mustard, turnips, clams, plum porridge, turkey with beechnut dressing, and hasty pudding. A bushel of popcorn was added by Massasoit's brother. This was the first popcorn the colonists had ever seen.

The meal over, a lengthy grace was said.

Miles Standish had prepared, so he thought, a pleasant surprise for the Indians, who had on their holiday paints. Chief Massasoit wore a chain of bones about his neck, a bag of tobacco down his back, and a knife dangling on his chest. His head and face were oiled we know, because one chronicler relates that "he looked greasily".

But if the Pilgrims had hoped to please their guests, they were disappointed. They had prepared a display of musketry, a wild fanfare of trumpets, and a terrifying roll of drums. The sound of so much exploding gunpowder and the sight of the military display struck terror into the hearts of the Indians. They wondered if they had perhaps been lured into a trap.

So the diplomatic Quadequina, Massasoit's brother, suggested the Indians go hunting deer for awhile until the ardor of the Pilgrims for shooting had spent itself. The Indians returned early the next day with enough venison to last the group for four days. Such was the first Thanksgiving.

In the course of the Revolutionary War the Continental Congress appointed November 18, 1777 to be observed generally as Thanksgiving Day in consequence of the surrender of Burgoyne. In the first year of his office, President George Washington issued a proclamation recommending that November 26, 1789 be kept as a day of national thanksgiving.

For years the festival was exclusively a New England institution celebrated by religious services in the churches, the sermon often being a political address. The day gradually became a custom in the western and some of the southern states, each appointing its own day. In 1864 President Lincoln issued a proclamation in which he set aside and appointed the last Thursday in November as a day of national thanksgiving "for the defense of unfriendly designs without, and signal victories within over the enemy

who is of our own household."

Each president has since followed Lincoln's example in proclaiming a day of thanksgiving, and, of course, the governors of the various states also issue a proclamation. For years the custom has been to proclaim the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day. But in 1939 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt proclaimed the fourth Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day for commercial reasons—there being more shopping days between Thanksgiving and Christmas by that arrangement. Twenty-three states followed the president's lead but the other twenty-five refused to change the custom, and stuck to the traditional last Thursday. In 1940 the president again proclaimed the fourth Thursday as Thanksgiving Day, and all but sixteen states followed his lead. In the next five years the fourth and last Thursdays are the same, so there was no confusion. In two out of seven years November has five Thursdays. But this year again November has five Thursdays so again we will celebrate two Thanksgiving Days. Forty-one states will celebrate on the fourth Thursday, November 23, seven states will celebrate on the last Thursday, November 30, and one state, Georgia, will celebrate both days.

No settlement of the issue is in sight. However, let us not commercialize the day. Originally the day had no commercial significance. It was only intended as a day to be set aside to give our heavenly Father our thanks and express our gratitude for his gracious blessings. And let us not forget that each and everyone of us is able to celebrate this day, for we have all received grace in one form or another, be it in prosperity or adversity, in joy or in sorrow, in health or in sickness, for we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, that are called according to his purpose. ❖

Reprinted from November, 1944.

Story Time

The Gift (9)

by Tom Cammenga

In the last installment of "The Gift" the oldest daughter of the old man's neighbors was diagnosed with cancer in her leg. Although all had known this was a possibility this type of news is never easy and left the VanVleets leaning on their God, something they would be much more conscious of from now on.

The old man watched as Jack and Janet drove into their driveway. Truth be told he had been waiting and watching for the last half an hour. He knew they would not run over to tell him the news and he most certainly would not go over there, at least not any more today, but he thought he would probably be able to tell simply by their body language whether it had been negative or positive. So he sat in his chair by the front window and watched.

Once the car came to a stop they sat there for just a minute, got out and walked hand in hand into the house, both smiling. Well, he thought, that was that. It must have been good news after all and he was happy about that. They were such a wonderful family, to think of them having to go through something like that, well, it just didn't seem fair.

He was struck by that thought as it crossed before his consciousness. Fair. What really was fair? Was it fair that the love of his life had been taken away from him? Oh, of course, they had many good years together but they could have had so many more. Was it fair that they had never had children? This was something on which he had never dwelt much before his wife had passed away but now it seemed to be on his mind almost constantly. The loneliness he felt was just so heavy. Sometimes it

seemed that it would simply crush him. And what of grandchildren? He hadn't held a baby in his arms since, well, he couldn't actually say whether he had ever held a baby in his arms. Oh how he ached to do that. He couldn't explain why but the desire was suddenly almost overwhelming.

With a large sigh he got out of the chair and went into the kitchen to make some supper. Over the years he had become quite a cook and had always enjoyed making meals. Even though it had only been for the two of them he had amassed quite a collection of recipes, and had even come up with many of his own, whether new or variations on others. He also enjoyed baking, although not quite as much. That's what he would do tonight, he thought. He would make a huge batch of his chocolate chip cookies and bring them over to the neighbors tomorrow.

The sudden wave of melancholy that had swept over him was now gone just as quickly as it had come. He went about preparing supper humming softly to himself, his thoughts now filled with what ingredients he would need and whether cookies would be enough? Maybe he should also make some bars because now would be a perfect time to make pumpkin bars.

The night for Jack, Janet, and their children would be a bit different. For although the old man had made the assumption that all was well and was planning a minicelebration, this family now faced what probably for them was the greatest challenge they had ever faced.

They had first sat down with Ruth and given her the news. Jack had actually spoken while Janet sat next to Ruth.

"So, from the looks on your faces I am guessing that it's more than just a bruise," Ruth said matter of factly, trying to smile and succeeding, at least somewhat.

"Ruth," Jack began, "We talked to the doc and you're right, he thinks there is more to it than that." He reached out and put his hands on her knees and looked her in the eyes. "He isn't positive but he thinks it is cancer."

For a minute Ruth sat and took in what her father had just told her. Actually, she had already been quite sure that it was cancer and had been reading up on the different possibilities so it was not a big shock for her to hear this news. But, just as the reality of the situation had been somewhat disconcerting for her parents so it was for her. For some reason hearing someone else, her father no less, say that word was a bit upsetting. She had not thought that she would be as afraid as she now felt. And yet, even with that, there was also some comfort in knowing what the problem was. Knowing what they now faced and moving ahead with, well, probably with some type of treatment.

Janet put her arm around Ruth and hugged her tight. "Are you ok?" she asked in a quiet voice.

"I…..I think so," Ruth said as her mother loosened her embrace somewhat and looked at her. "I guess I'm a little afraid but I already kind of thought it might be more than just a bruise."

A small tear ran down Ruth's cheek then and as if it were their queue, both Janet and Jack wrapped their arms around their little girl and each other. The helplessness they both felt was almost overwhelming. Here was their daughter, cancer possibly attacking her body and there was absolutely nothing they could do about it. They now felt as though they had been taken from the summit they had seemed to be on when they had arrived home after talking and praying together and plunged into a dark and foreboding valley once again. They were on what many would call a roller coaster ride; one on which they would continue to ride for some time to come. Unknowingly Jack and Janet shared the same question at that moment. How can this be for our good? How can this be for Ruth's good?

After they had comforted one another and talked for a bit they decided that it was time to tell the rest of the children. But before they did Jack led them in a short prayer as they all held one another's hands. Unbelievably his voice never wavered nor was there any hesitation brought on by emotion. On the outside he appeared to be a rock once again and would continue to be so. On the inside however he was broken and battered already and what scared him, what frightened him more than anything, was that he knew this was only the beginning. Only the beginning of what he was sure would be a very difficult journey, at the end of which, no matter how good the treatments, no matter how skilled the doctors, they might still lose their little girl. It didn't seem fair. She was such a good girl.

The remainder of the evening was somewhat subdued around the VanVleet household. After giving the news to the rest of the children they had abandoned the thought of a normal supper and settled on sandwiches and cereal for any who were hungry. Once the younger children were in bed their pastor came by for a while to comfort and build them up by bringing the word of God to them. Tomorrow they would have to tell both sets of grandparents and neither Jack nor Janet looked forward to that. As that thought crossed Janet's mind she remembered Mr. Michealson telling her earlier that afternoon that the doctor's appointment was a bridge she would have to cross later. That, she thought, was probably something

she was going to have to get used to doing. Crossing bridges one at a time. She was sure that a multitude of bridges awaited her and her family along this road on which the Lord was leading them.

As busy as he was in the kitchen with the baking, the old man didn't see the neighbors' pastor arrive nor did he notice him leave. So enthralled was he that he even missed the first five minutes of the news that he tried to watch before going to bed at night. For the first time in quite a while he was happy. For the first time in a long time he had enjoyed the evening. For the first time in a long time he felt a certain contentment as he busied himself with cleaning up the mess he had made. What a day. It seemed to have gone on forever and in a way he wished it would go on and on. But, he thought with a smile, he was just getting too old for that.

He was a bit afraid that he might have trouble getting to sleep because of the excitement he felt. Finally he had a chance to do something for the VanVleets. They had done so much for he and Jenny and especially for him now and it made him so happy that he could now repay them. Thankfully he was also quite tired from the day as well.

Of course he didn't know the reality of the situation and wouldn't find out until the next day when he brought the cookies and bars to them. For now, for tonight his heart felt a gladness that it had not felt in a long time. So happy was he that as he sat on the edge of his bed he folded his hands and prayed a prayer of thanksgiving. No, it wasn't an experienced prayer; in fact it was a simple thank-you for what he assumed had been good news for Ruth and her family. What he didn't know, what he couldn't know at that point was that it was the Lord leading him. It had been a long, long time since he had prayed by himself and though short and simple, it was fervent. Though never lost, he had strayed far away and the Lord was now beginning to call him home. ❖

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

Church Family

Bringing the Word into the Teaching of the Liberal Arts

by Jon Mingerink

The calling of the Christian school teacher is to bring God and his Word into the teaching of the liberal arts. This is an extremely important calling, if not the chief calling of the Christian School teacher. It is what sets the Christian School apart from any other type of school; it is rooted in the Word of God and that Word is woven into the daily framework and instruction that occurs. This is quite possibly not only the most important work that the teacher performs, but also the toughest. As a future history teacher, bringing God and his Word into the teaching of history starts with its very definition. As I am sure many have heard through the course of their instruction, history is his Story.

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 21, Question and Answer 54 asks, "What believest thou concerning the `holy catholic church' of Christ?" The answer, "That the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to himself by his Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing m true faith; and that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member thereof." That is exactly what history is. History is the story of how "the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to himself by his Spirit and Word…, a church chosen to everlasting life." Each event that occurs in time is directed towards that

goal. Everything that occurs is meant by God to gather, defend, and preserve his church. That is history and that is how history is to be interpreted.

History is not names and dates or the study of important events that have occurred. It is not the story of man's journey through time and the amazing or catastrophic things that man has accomplished throughout. It is not that in 1776 the Declaration of Independence was signed, declaring to the world the freedom of the 13 colonies from Great Britain, or George Washington was the first President of the United States, or that the Civil War was from 1861 to 1865 and that Robert E. Lee was the leading general of the Confederate States of America, and Abraham Lincoln was our President at the time. While this is all a part of history and helps make up history, it does not tell you what history is. All of these facts are important, but why? What makes them important? Why must a child of God learn the historical events that have occurred in time? The answer is given to us in Joshua 4.

When God dried up the river Jordan to allow his people to pass over on dry ground and claim the land of Canaan, God instructed Joshua to take twelve stones out of the river Jordan to create a memorial. The reason for this memorial was so that "when your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, what mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God forever" (vs. 21-24). That is the ultimate purpose of history, so that fathers, mothers, and teachers may instruct the children and teach them the great wonders and mighty deeds of the one true and living God so that his name might be glorified and that they might fear him forever.

Each and every day history must be taught from this point of view. If it is not taught from this point of view, then the student can justifiably ask, "Why do I need to know this?" The work of the Christian schoolteacher is to bring the amazing works of Christ to the students each day. As Article 12 of the Belgic Confession states, we believe that God created all things, "giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator; that he doth also still uphold and govern them by his eternal providence and infinite power for the service of mankind, to the end that man may serve his God." God created all things to serve him and he continues to uphold and govern all things. Everything that has happened and ever will happen has been directed by God and is in accordance with his council.

While this may seem like a simple task it is by no means easy; as Paul says in I Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see through a glass, darkly." God has revealed many things to us in his word that helps us to understand what has happened and what will come. I think of the many prophesies of Daniel, Christ's explanation of the signs of the times, and Revelations running of the four horses as some examples, but still, we see through the glass darkly. We do not know why everything happened. Many things are a mystery and will remain a mystery. Just in the last century, millions upon millions of people were the targets of genocides, murdered, died in battle, and all for what purpose? How is the church defended, protected, and maintained throughout all of that? Why are men like Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, and Hussein allowed to come to power? The destruction and death caused by men such as these is just chilling. What purpose was served in this? Truly, God has a reason and plan for and in some way the church is benefited by it, but it is very difficult to see the reasons and explain them.

My brother once said that what amazes him most when looking back on history is that for every Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, or Tojo that comes to power, God directs and counters these men with the likes of Eisenhower, Churchill, and Marshall. God sees to it that ordinary men are given the gifts and talents to perform extraordinary tasks. That is what is so fascinating about history and the importance of history, that God works and directs everything. He is in control of all things.

The Reformed teacher has a very distinct calling compared to any other teacher. The Reformed teachers calling is to ensure that God and his Word are taught in all things. Each day, each lesson must be taught from that understanding. It is a difficult and labor intensive task, but a task that is willingly performed in the service of Christ and his Kingdom. ❖

Jon is a member of Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. He wrote this article as a Protestant Reformed Scholarship essay.

Jesus' Temptations

When Jesus, weak from hunger
After fasting forty days
Was tempted of the devil
To reject his Father's ways,
Although he had the power
To change stones into bread,
He'd not comply with Satan
But directed him instead:
It is written in God's word —
Bread alone will not suffice,
Obedience must be shown;
That is more than sacrifice.

Then to a pinnacle he took
Our Savior, and requested
That he plunge down toward the ground;
For God had manifested
Angels would take care of him,
Never leaving him alone;
In their hands they'd bear him up
Lest his foot might strike a stone.
It is written, stated he,
You may not tempt the Lord!
Our Savior never faltered
But rested on God's word.

Now from a tow'ring mountain
Satan showed a mighty view;
All kingdoms of the world
With all their glory, too—
He'd give it all to Jesus
With just one stipulation:
Fall down and worship me—
I'll give you every nation!
Get behind me, Satan,
For it is written too
That only God, the Lord,
Has that great honor due.

The devil then departed,
For Jesus would not stray
From Father's good commandments;
Completely he'd obey.
Obedience to the Father
Extended to his death.
That we might have redemption
He gave his final breath.
But over death he conquered
And now he reigns supreme;
His children shall reign with him
In heavenly regime.

—Thelma Westra

Family Conference 2009

Hosted by

First PRC of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

July 2-5, 2009

"Calvin & The Christian Family Life"

Join in a week of uplifting Christian Fellowship

Speakers:

- Prof. D. Engelsma
- Prof. B. Gritters
- Rev. J. Marcus

Visit our website: EdmontonPRC.org

www.edmontonprc.org

Watching Daily At My Gates

The Song of Zion

A Psalter-Psalm Devotional of Praise to Our Sovereign, Covenant God
(Reprinted from November and December, 2000)

by Skip Hunter

November 16 Read Proverbs 15:14-20

In this age of materialism we would do well to ponder the truths presented in verses 16 and 17. We live in a world where more is better and if you do not have more of this world's goods you have nothing. Over against this philosophy is the philosophy that if the fear of Jehovah does not characterize our lives we have nothing. Out of a desire for more worldly pleasures comes a strife that breaks out even within a family. Family peace is found in having peace with God. Having godly contentedment will give to us the peace that passeth understanding. Seek this peace and shun the world's pleasures and goods. Sing Psalter 246.

November 17 Read Proverbs 15:21-27

Back to the tongue we go in verse 23. Do you have joy with the answers of your mouths, young people and children? You will not have it if your speech is full of putdowns and sarcastic words to those around you. Oh, you may get a laugh at first, and some may think you clever, but those words will soon turn bitter and become hard to swallow. Rather than this course, seek to speak words of comfort and love to those whom God places on your paths. Those words may not make you popular with the "in" crowd, but they will be approved by God who hears all things. Speak the good words of wisdom and you will speak words which taste sweet for ever! Sing Psalter 25.

November 18 Read Proverbs 15:28-33

Children and young people, you might have in your head that every adult in the world loves to "yell at you". They seem to correct you for every little thing. You wish that they would leave you alone and quit picking on you. If this is your feeling, go and read verse 32 again. Do you hate your souls? Is your opinion that you want to go to hell and be left alone? Then refuse your parents' good correction and you will find yourself being absent from God's good favor. But if you listen to the correction of those whom God has placed over you, you will get understanding, and, as we have seen before, this is a good thing. Seek correction, people of God, for in doing so you will be seeking wisdom. Sing Psalter 334.

November 19 Read Proverbs 16:1-7

There is both a wonderful and a sobering truth in verse 4. First of all we find that God has made all things for himself. What does that mean? First of all, we see that all things must serve his glory. Whether it is the bright blue sunny day which radiates with glory or the gloomy gray day which seems to be suffocating, both are for God's glory alone. Secondly, this truth should make us very humble as we see that all things are for God and not for us. It is a sobering thought that even the wicked are made for the day of destruction. This day is coming. We will be judged for our sins. This should cause us to think about how we are living our lives. Let us give God all glory and all thanks. Glory for the wonders that he has created, and thanks for his work of salvation in our hearts and lives. Sing Psalter 15.

November 20 Read Proverbs 16:8-13

We are a planning people. Look at the date books, computer reminders, and other types of organizers that we own. Some of us have each day and hour planned for the next six months. We think we know what we are going to do far in advance. Is this so wrong? Not necessarily. It depends how we look at what we have planned. Is it because we want to be in control of our destiny? Is it because we think that we shape the course of our own lives? Nothing can be farther from the truth. It is the testimony of verse nine and James 4:13-15 that it is God who controls our destiny and the shape of our lives. We must properly say if the Lord wills as we write down each date. We must bow before the will and good counsel of him who knows best. Let us be conscious of the fact that it is God who controls our steps, and let us bow before his will as we live our daily lives. Sing Psalter 29

November 21 Read Proverbs 16:14-20

If there is ever a verse that bears repeating each day of our lives, it is verse 18. Along with the thought of yesterday's verse, this one should bring us to our senses and help to shape our attitude about life. If we become proud of who we are and what we accomplish, rest assured, people of God, He will haul us up short and bring about a fall. If we think that we are some great one or have done some great things, we must prepare for the crash that will soon come upon us. Sometimes the crash will be just a bump to remind us of who we are, and sometimes it will be a huge crash that reduces us to a mass of shivering pulp. Pray for the grace not to walk in pride, and pray for this daily. Sing Psalter 136.

November 22 Read Proverbs 16:21-27

We have seen the thought of verse 25 before. Repetition should cause us to stop and give a long look to that which is written by God in his Word. Man thinks a lot about his way. Man plans his way. Some, and we must include ourselves in this, even work to make our way go around God if that were at all possible. The way of a man is to get for himself as much honor and glory as he can. Whether this is done by amassing huge amounts of some physical properties or wealth, or if it is done by making oneself famous in the world; man wants to make his own way in this world. By doing this we are putting ourselves on the paths of destruction. This is not God's way. God's way rests in humble obedience to his will. God's

way means that we do all things for his glory even as he has created all things. Let us stop and consider our way and ask God to help us not to make our way the path to destruction. Sing Psalter 354.

November 23 Read Proverbs 16:28-33

In the words of verse 31 we find two admonitions. First of all, we find the admonition to honor those to whom God has given great age. Those who have attained the age of three score years and ten have attained a measure of glory on this earth. That glory is found in the wisdom with which God has given that elderly saint. The second admonition is that all elderly people are not covered with glory if they did not attain their age walking in the fear of Jehovah. As those of us who reside in the United States celebrate Thanksgiving Day today, let us give thanks for elderly saints who walk with us and show us the way of righteousness. They are part of the cloud of witnesses who line the course as we run the race set before us. Thank you parents and grandparents who show to us the way of a Godly life. Sing Psalter 360.

November 24 Read Proverbs 17:1-7

Yesterday we saw that Solomon acknowledged the wisdom that God gives to those aged saints among the church. Today in verse 6 we see the beauty of the covenant as shown in the children and grandchildren of the church. It is a joy to grandparents to see their children walk in the same faith that they themselves do. They love to see them make confession of faith in front of the congregation. And they love to hold their great-grandchildren after baptism. The covenant which God has established with us is a most precious thing. Let us give thanks to God for the covenant blessings that he has given to us. Sing Psalter 359.

November 25 Read Proverbs 17:8-14

Today we gain a respite from the world and its activities. We have the privilege of going to his house and receiving rest for our weary souls. We need this rest as we take up our labors again tomorrow. In verse thirteen we have instruction given to us about our life in the world. We must never look to bring evil upon someone. We have many opportunities to do this in our business dealings, in our school relationships, and even with our next door neighbors. Let us not do evil to those whom God has placed in our paths. In the first place, this is not a neighborly thing to do. Secondly, it brings despite upon the name of Christ and his church. Finally, it is no way to show thanksgiving for God's love toward us. Let us do good to all men even those who treat us evilly. Sing Psalter 13:1,2,and 5.

November 26 Read Proverbs 17:15-21

People of God, do you act as true friends and brothers to those who are in the family of faith? Young people, are you friends with those whom God has called to be your spiritual brothers and sisters? Children, how do you act toward all of your classmates? Verse seventeen tells us that a friend loveth at all times. True friends are not friends only when it is convenient and profitable. True friends are friends in good times and bad times. True friends do not ignore each other when "certain" other people are around. A true brother and sister stands by his or her family members when the world is ridiculing them for the faith. Do you consider yourself a friend? Do you act as Christ acted toward us? Think about these things, children and young people, and apply them in your lives as Christ wants you to. Sing Psalter 369

November 27 Read Proverbs 17:22-28

In verses 27-28 Solomon comes back to the theme of the tongue. We have spent much time on this idea as does Solomon. We might be inclined to think that another meditation on this topic is overdoing it. The Holy Spirit does not. He inspired Solomon to pen these words because they are needed by the church. Think back over today's conversations, people of God. Did you hold your tongues when your words were not needed. Did you consciously refrain from breaking the third and ninth commandments today? Notice that the world understands that holding the tongue is wise. How much more should not we who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb keep our tongues from all evil? Let us be wise and let us apply wisdom as we speak. Sing Psalter 105.

November 28 Read Proverbs 18:1-8

Verse one may appear a hard one to understand. But if we see that one of the ideas found in this verse is selfishness, we can understand it better. One way that we can understand the word "desire" is that which we want for ourselves no matter what the cost. We may be so selfish that we separate ourselves from our friends and scorn their wise counsel. In doing this we scorn the wisdom of God in many areas of life. We are told to "love our neighbors as ourselves." Yes, we are to love ourselves, but we are not to love ourselves at the expense of our neighbors. Let us watch out for our selfish desires that they not cause us to stray from the paths of wisdom. Sing Psalter 96.

November 29 Read Proverbs 18:9-16

In verse 9 we find two admonitions to which all of God's people do well to take heed. Especially students need these admonitions of a wise father. First of all, we are told not to be lazy in our work. How do you carry out the assignments or chores given to you by your parents, teachers, or bosses? Do you do them to the best of your ability? Do you carry them out completely or just enough to get by? Do you let things slide for your own desires? Secondly, we are told not to be wasters. We can waste many things. Our time, money, abilities, are just a few of these. One of the worst ways to waste something is to waste the opportunity to serve God in whatever way we are called. Students are called to be students. To waste anything in that calling is foolish. Heed Solomon, young people, and be wise in your calling to be a student. Sing Psalter 70.

November 30 Read Proverbs 18:17-24

Are you looking for a wife, young men? Verse 22 assumes that you are looking because you will not find anything with out looking for it. A young man has three areas to fulfill along the path God has laid out for him. One of these is confession of faith. Another is finding the occupation by which he will serve God in his life. And then there is this business of finding a wife. Now it is true that God does not give to every man a wife. This is the exception not the rule. Even though the verse uses "a" wife, we must heed all of Scripture and know that that means a godly wife. This should go with out saying. Finding the godly wife meant for you is to gain favor with the Lord. Why, we might ask? To find a wife is to carry out the calling of picturing the marriage of Christ and his church and also to carry out the calling to bring forth covenant seed. Find the wife God has chosen for you and know that this will bring favor from Jehovah. Sing Psalter 360.

by Cornelius Jonker

December 1 Read John 15:16-19

James 1:1 We begin this series of meditations on the general epistle of James, with the prayer that we may better understand what the Spirit is saying to the church of Jesus Christ, of which we are living members, and how we are to behave accordingly. The author is James, most likely the brother of Christ, who apparently did not believe in Christ until Jesus appeared to him after his resurrection. He refers to himself as a "servant of Jesus Christ" meaning "slave;" not a forced servitude, but a willing one. The recipients of this epistle are the twelve tribes of the dispersion, namely, the church. They are pilgrims and strangers, spiritually separated from the world and persecuted for righteousness sake. Does this description fit you? Or do you feel completely at home in this evil world? If so, self examination is in order, for Jesus states in John 15:19, "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Walk then today as children of the light and ask God to keep you unspotted from the world. Sing Psalter 201:5, 6.

December 2 Read II Corinthians 6:1-10

James 1:2 The author immediately begins with an admonition that sounds almost impossible to understand. He says, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers (or a variety of) temptations." He makes it very emphatic by describing it as all joy. How do you and I react when events happen to us that we consider unpleasant or even very grievous to bear? Must we succumb to despair or bitterness? Not at all. Must we really rejoice? Difficult as it may seem, the answer is yes because God's Word tells us so. We can't escape temptations because they surround us. Some may allure us, such as worldly pleasures or riches, but most are the opposite such as financial problems, depression, illness, or even death. Even in these situations we must realize that this is under God's sovereign control and he will use it to our advantage. Pray for grace to be always submissive to God's will. Sing Psalter 34:1, 2.

December 3 Read II Peter 1:1-8

James 1:3 We learned yesterday to count it all joy when temptations befall us, and our verse today gives the reason. The reason is that the trying of our faith works patience. From our point of view these events appear as temptations, but actually they are trials from the hand of God. They serve a very good purpose, namely, that our faith is tried. When true faith is tried, it emerges stronger and produces patience. Patience means to persevere, to bear up under severe trials and is really faith in action. We can't possibly accomplish this by ourselves. It is the work of the Spirit within us, a gift of God's grace. As you are privileged to worship and hear the Word of God today, may the Holy Spirit use this means of grace to strengthen your faith to the end that patience may be much in evidence. Sing Psalter 100:1, 2.

December 4 Read Philippians 2:12-16

James 1:4 How do you behave under pressure? Do you flinch and retreat when troubles come your way, or do you stand firm? A new soldier or untrained recruit may turn and run when a powerful enemy appears, but the proven soldier stands firm. So it is in the battle of faith. The believer, who has patience made perfect by faith, strengthened in trials and fed by the Word ol God, can face any situation, and so we are exhorted to let patience work. How do we do that? By means of prayer, by feeding on and studying God's Word. By God working in us both to will and to do according to his good pleasure. May you truly experience that godly patience. Sing Psalter 100:3, 4.

December 5 Read Proverbs 8:1-11

James 1:5 The author in this verse seems to presuppose that an objection might be raised in light of the previous admonition to let patience have her perfect work. We are so weak and foolish in and of ourselves. Who is wise enough and able to accomplish this? God gives the answer to our impatience—ask for the gift of wisdom. What is wisdom? Good judgment or prudence. We ask for wisdom in the same manner we ask for patience. In the way of communion with God. Solomon asked for a wise and understanding heart, and God not only gave him wisdom, but great riches and honor besides. So pour out your soul to God. Ask for wisdom, children and young people, in your studies and search for your life's mate. Pray for wisdom, mothers and fathers and elderly persons, in your daily calling. And pray for wisdom, officebearers, as you perform your duties in the midst of the Church. Sing Psalter 336:2.

December 6 Read Philippians 4:4-7

James 1:6 In this verse James instructs us in the manner in which we should pray for wisdom. We must ask in faith. We all know what faith is, don't we? Faith is a living bond which unites us with Christ. It is a certain knowledge and a hearty confidence. True prayer then proceeds from a heart that is confident that God will hear and answer. Does that characterize your prayers? Do you ask in faith, without doubting? Doubting brings instability like the waves of the sea tossed by the wind. Then if our prayers are not answered we must realize that it is because of us. In humble penitence, turn to Christ, Who said to the father of the son possessed with an evil spirit "all things are possible to him that believeth." And his response, which must be ours also: "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." Sing Psalter 185:1, 3.

December 7 Read Matthew 6:5-8

James 1:7 We learned in our previous verse that only the child of God who prays in faith will be heard of God, for when we pray in faith, we pray according to God's will. In today's verse we are told that whoever prays without faith must not even think that he will receive anything of the Lord. The wicked may utter prayers, but they are an abomination to the Lord. A well known columnist recently wrote a newspaper article entitled "Football game prayer is in-your-face faith." He said that "Public praying at football games is as compatible as playing football inside a church" and it is an in your-face-faith rather than an in-your-heart variety." He then quoted Jesus' words, "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues (football stadiums?) and on the street corners to be seen of men... But when you pray go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father" (Matt. 6:5-6). May we, led by the Spirit, pray to God with faith unfeigned. Sing Psalter 72:1, 4.

December 8 Read Proverbs 15:1-7

James 1:8 James points out to us today a picture of a man who cannot make up his mind one way or the other. Could this possibly be a picture of you? In your prayers do your lips utter a petition for forgiveness of sins without having a godly sorrow because of them? In your speech do you ever say one thing but mean something else? Do you love the world and its pleasures, but also profess to be a faithful church member? We are reminded of apostate Israel in II Kings 17:33 where we read, "They feared the Lord and served their

own gods." This is an abomination to the Lord. We are exhorted later in this same epistle that our yea must be yea, and our nay must be nay. That principle we must cultivate and ask for grace to be stableminded not only in the context of our prayers as we are reminded in this passage, but in all our words and walk. Sing Psalter 333:3, 4.

December 9 Read Psalm 27:1-6

James 1:9-11 In this passage we have a contrast which James sets up to show how God comforts us in affliction. There is a poor man and a rich man. The poor man is told to rejoice because he will be exalted and the rich man will perish. You may say, "Is that just? Is having riches wrong?" We answer that certainly there are instances of godly rich men in Scripture. But James elaborates further and calls the poor man a brother, obviously a sincere child of God, while implying that the rich man is an unbeliever. Do you possess few worldly goods but have the assurance that you are a child of God? Then you have everything! Don't envy the rich. Asaph in Psalm 73 faced this problem until he went into the sanctuary of God and understood their end. Young people, don't set your affections on this world and its riches. Choose a vocation where you can be of service to God and his people. Then you too will experience his blessing. Sing Psalter 204:1, 2.

December 10 Read Ephessians 6:10-17

James 1:12 What temptations have you faced this past week? How did you handle them? Did you succumb to peer pressure perhaps, or other situations that affected your dress, speech, conduct and places you attended that did not befit a Christian? How can we bear up under these temptations? By patient endurance and by loving the Lord as the last part of the verse states, our incentive is the crown of life. Our love is not first, but we love God because he first loved us. I John 4:19. Then we are blessed and happy. Being friends with God, we are enemies of Satan and recognize sin for what it is. As you attend worship services today, thank God for his covenant faithfulness. Listen attentively to the preaching of the Gospel, and by faith put on the whole armor of God so that you can stand firm against the wiles of the devil. Sing Psalter 202:1.

December 11 Read Psalm 37:7-11

James 1:13 Yesterday we read of the blessedness of the one who endures temptation. Now we see a man who succumbs to it. Temptation implies a wicked motive, and all too often we give in to sin, enticed by our mortal enemies, the devil, the world and our own flesh. Remember what Adam said after he fell into sin by eating the forbidden fruit? "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat," thereby obliquely placing the blame upon God. We may never say "I am tempted of God." God is holy, perfectly righteous and pure, and it follows that he cannot sin nor be tempted to sin. What is our calling then today? Pray for patience to endure any temptations that may come our way, and that the Holy Spirit may preserve and strengthen us in our daily walk of faith. Sing Psalter 103:1, 2.

December 12 Read Galatians 5:19-25

James 1:14 This verse really brings home how sinful we are and how deeply it lies within our nature. None of us likes to hear this. We much prefer to listen to the world's philosophy of how much good there is in every person and how to practice self esteem. God's Word tells us how sinful and lustful we are. The word lust refers to every sort of covetousness whether that be wicked sexual desires, or material goods, or pleasure or anything that entices us to sin. How do we cope with this? How can we fight this sin? We can begin by saying "Get thee behind me Satan." We can deliberately suppress evil thoughts instead of taking pleasure in them. We can refuse to attend events which entice us into sin, and turn off the television programs which promote all sorts of evil. We must not walk with the world but choose godly companions. Above all, pray sincerely for God's grace to resist temptations. Sing Psalter 21:1, 4.

December 13 Read Romans 7:18-25

James 1:15-16 These verses elaborate on yesterday's passage and use a figure to show the consequences of being drawn into sin. Just as an earthly child is conceived and brought forth and grows to full development, so it is with lust. An evil desire gives place to evil thoughts which conceive sinful deeds. These sinful deeds multiply into more wickedness, and except for the grace of God, the result is death, spiritual, physical, and eternal. Therefore, James warns us in verse 16 not to be deceived, and in I Peter 1:3 we read "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." We have a constant battle to fight, don't we? But take comfort, people of God, the victory is ours through faith. Cultivate that faith, stand firmly upon God's Word and fervently pray that the Spirit may guide you in the paths of righteousness. Sing Psalter 99:1, 5.

December 14 Read Titus 2:11-15

James 1:17-18 James turns our attention in these verses to a great comfort. As we look back on some of the preceding verses, we realize how easily and hopelessly we can fall into depths of sin. The question naturally arises, "What is the possibility of escape?" Our text gives the answer. Our God is sovereign and he bestows upon us good and perfect gifts. Oh, we could mention a great many, but our text speaks of one of the greatest gifts of all—that of regeneration. Our natural birth is a marvelous wonder, but our rebirth, where God calls life from the dead, is even more wonderful. Do you experience that new life? Does it show in your desires, actions and words? We are described as firstfruit of his creatures. This is not only interesting, but very comforting. It means we are dedicated to God as his personal possession and a part of his family. What a wonderful comfort! What a calling is ours to be set apart from the wicked world and live for God. Focus anew on this calling today. Sing Psalter 141:1.

December 15 Read Proverbs 10:16-20

James 1:19-20 The first word in our passage today is "Wherefore." This is meaningful. We are to remember the rich blessings that were spoken of in the previous verses. Since we are born again creatures in Christ, we are now called upon to be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. Do these commendable traits describe you? How often in our daily lives the opposite is true, but we believe this admonition refers to our hearing the Word of truth spoken of in the previous verse. We may not question the inerrancy of that Word but rather be silent and listen. The Word is the chief means of grace and is powerful, like a two-edged sword. Sometimes the Word steps on our toes, so to speak, and we become offended and angry. We resent criticism and dislike being told what to do and in sinful wrath we become angry at the preacher and others. This wrath does not work the righteousness of God. Pray for grace to willingly practice these necessary virtues. Sing Psalter 162:1, 2.

The Antithesis and Witnessing (5)

by Prof. Herman Hanko

Christian witnessing is, first of all, a godly life. A godly life attracts the attention of the unbeliever. He reacts with a question concerning the sense of a godly life, for he can see no sense to it. His motto is, "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." It is at this point that witnessing becomes verbal. It is at this point that we must be prepared to given an answer of the hope that lies within us.

* * * * *

A godly life is an expression of our hope. Our hope is simply that "this world is not my home; I'm only passing through." Our hope is an expression of our desire to go home, and our home is in heaven where our Father lives and where our elder brother lives. We want to go home. And the land in which we now live is a foreign country to us, in which the citizens of the country hate us and make our life miserable—unless we are satisfied to keep our mouths shut and live the way they do.

So, because they find us so odd, they ask us why we live the way they do. Our witness is, therefore, first of all, our peculiar (to the citizens of this country) walk. And then, when the questions come, our witness is our defense of our hope.

The wicked, Peter says, ask us a "reason" for the hope that is in us. Why do you live the way you do? Why won't you join us in our "fun?" Why are you so different? Explain yourselves.

Why do you live the way you do? Why won't you join us in our "fun?" Why are you so different? Explain yourselves.

We must give an answer.

The word that Peter uses here is really better translated "apology." This word "apology" is a bit of a puzzle. We take it in the sense of telling someone that we are sorry for what we have done. We apologize. That can't be what Peter means. We do not and never ought to apologize for our Christian life—although sometimes we act as if we do need to apologize. We are shy about our faith. Or, worse, we are scared that the wicked will mock us for how we live. And so we become very hesitant and apologetic as if we mean to say, "We are really sorry for not drinking booze with you; we are really sorry for not going to your movies; we want to apologize in case we have offended you by telling you not to swear." All sorts of wrong apologies.

But Peter does not mean that kind of apology. That kind of apology would do more harm than good. Peter means with the word "apology" what we mean by the term "apologetics." When I was examined by Classis East prior to my ordination into the ministry of the Word of God and the sacraments, I had to be examined in "Apologetics." It was not such an easy exam for me, because I had never had any instruction in this subject. In fact, it seems to me that I rarely heard the word. Even the subject in which I was examined was not called "Apologetics," but "controversy." Perhaps the churches were afraid that the term would be taken in the wrong sense.

Apologetics or Controversy meant "defense of the faith."

Apologetics or Controversy meant "defense of the faith." The Classis wanted to know whether I could defend the faith. They wanted to know if I could defend the truth of God's sovereignty over against an Arminian. They wanted to know if I could explain clearly why we believed that the gospel was not a well-meant and gracious offer of salvation. They wanted to know if I knew how to defend particular grace over against common grace. And they wanted to know if I could explain the hard texts that were used by those who defended heresies, so that I could show how these texts were being hopelessly and wrongly twisted.

We have to *defend* our hope of going to heaven to

those who ask us about it. We have to explain clearly the reasons why we live the way we do here in the world. We have to be able to say, "We believe the truth that is revealed in Scripture, and this is what that truth is." We have to explain carefully and clearly what it means to believe that God created the world in six days of twenty-four hours and why evolutionism in all its forms is a deadly heresy that destroys the truth and all morals. We have to explain why, if those who ask appeal to science as proof of a very old earth, they are dead wrong in their science and why they may not appeal to science to show that the Scriptures are wrong. We have to explain that the reason why Arminianism is a heresy is because it says something terrible about God: it says that God can't save unless man lets him save. We have to make a strong point of it that we love God and we cannot bear people saying bad things about him—any more than we can stand it when people say bad things about our parents whom we love.

We live the way we do because we love God, do we not? And to love God is a defense of God and a defense of our hope. This sort of thing is witnessing at its best. It is God-glorifying. It is divinely approved. It has the seal of heaven on it. It is the witnessing that God will use to "bring others to Christ."

But, and I guess this is most difficult of all, we defend our hope also by telling those who ask us questions that the way we live is the only way to go to heaven, and that the way they live is a sure road to hell. There are not that many people who are forever talking about witnessing who are willing to say these things. But it has to be a part of our "apology", our defense of our faith. The wicked are under solemn *obligation* to obey God, and God demands that men keep his law. God does not stand in front of men and beg them to believe. He *commands* them that they must believe at the peril of their souls. God does not pleadingly tell them how much he loves them; how he has done all he can to save them; and how much he would like it that they now accept his kind offers and in that way escape hell. He tells them they *must* do what he commands, and that they will be destroyed if they do not listen and obey.

This is the sticky part of witnessing, and there be few who are interested in anything like this.

This is the sticky part of witnessing, and there be few who are interested in anything like this. Everybody knows that this sort of approach to witnessing will get one into trouble and will inevitably end in suffering for Christ's sake. And no one likes that—except those few who understand that it is a privilege and a blessing to suffer for the cause of Christ and that it is only through much tribulation that we can go home to Christ (Acts 14:22).

Witnesses love the truth and are willing to die for it. Witnesses are people of unwavering conviction and are ready to suffer for their conviction. Witnesses are people who are courageous and brave and are not scared by the hostility of others. Witnesses are true pilgrims in the world who live an antithetical life. ❖

Prof. Hanko is professor emeritus of Church History and New Testament in the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary.

Our Young People's Federation

Explanation for a Change

by Justin Koole

395 and $140,000.

What do these numbers represent and why are they important?

They are the number of young people that registered for the 2008 convention hosted by Byron Center PRC and the approximate total cost of this past year's convention. This is important because while the attendance has almost doubled the past 15 years, the size of the host church has basically stayed the same. Now, multiply the total number of attendees by the registration fee (400 x $125) and the host society received $50,000 toward the cost of the convention. Obviously, the host

church still needed to raise $90,000. While some of these amounts are estimates and/or assumptions, they are reasonably accurate to prove the point. So, where does this money come from?

The money comes from two places: 1) The Executive Board (Board) and 2) Fundraiser, Fundraiser, Fundraiser.

Also, by way of introduction, telephone calls were placed to Reformed Youth Services (RYS) (mainly supported by the United Reformed Churches in North America) and Youth Unlimited (YU) (mainly supported by the Christian Reformed Church in North America) to determine the registration fees of their respective young peoples' convention. The 2008 convention registration fee for RYS was $320 and YU was $385, respectively.

As is evident, this is the looming issue facing the host society and steering committee each and every year. How do we raise enough money to be able to meet the expenses of the annual young peoples' convention? This concern is a real difficulty and is the reason behind the writing of this article on behalf of the Board of the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young Peoples'.

Since young peoples' conventions have been held (1939 was the first according to prior *Beacon Lights,* with a two year break for World War II), the Board requested, in 'loose' rotation, that various churches of the denomination organize and host an annual young peoples' convention. When the conventions were relatively small, raising enough money to cover the expenses was relatively simple. In fact, until approximately 20 years ago, the young people stayed in the homes of the members of the church. But, with the amount of conventioneers steadily increasing every year, this became impossible. Steering committees made the decision to have the young people lodge together at one facility; which significantly increased the costs.

And therein lays the problem.

The funding of young people's conventions is done through various means. 1) The host churches charges a registration fee to the attendees in the range of $100 – $150. 2) A significant portion of the funding is through the host church raising money by fundraisers throughout the year preceding the convention. 3) The Board distributes monies to the appropriate host church per their request.

The question is how is the Board able to distribute money? The Board receives monies from dues collected from the societies that are members of the Federation. Approximately $10 per member goes towards helping fund the conventions. Additionally, each society is requested to hold two fundraisers each year with the proceeds forwarded to the Board. Through these means the Board is able (and willing) to help fund the convention and reduce the costs for the conventioneers.

Several years ago, the Board followed the normal procedure and asked the church that was next in the 'loose' rotation if they would be willing to host the next convention (once every 10 years approx.). Several months went by and eventually the request was declined. The Board then asked a second church whether they would be interested and again the request was declined. The Board was now getting a little nervous since the 2009 convention was only a year and a half away, but no host church. (Often, camps and/or universities need at least a two year notice to be able to reserve the facility.) There was a real possibility there would be no convention held in 2009. The main reason for the decline was the amount of money that needed to be raised through fundraising. That 'looming mountain' was simply too large to overcome.

The Board was in a real quandary as to how to proceed. The Board understood the rationale behind their reasons for declining to host the convention, yet the reality looked pretty bleak. So, the decision was finally made to send our request to another church.

After several months of deliberations, a steering committee from that church (Trinity PRC) sent a letter to the Board with a proposal explaining a different process for funding conventions. The Steering Committee requested a meeting with us, as the Board. So, early in 2008, several members from Trinity PRC met with the Board and presented their proposal.

Their proposal was pretty straightforward. Instead of putting the heavy burden on one steering committee each year to hold fundraisers to cover the majority of the expenses of a convention, the proposal was to put the burden on each attending conventioneer and, essentially, on each church. Basically, the proposed policy amounted to taking the cost of the convention and charging those who actually attended the convention with covering the entire cost of the convention. The conventioneers would then have the opportunity (and duty) to raise their own funding within their own churches, and each congregation would have the responsibility of helping defray the expenses of its own conventioneers. A by-product of this new proposal would also mean that the smaller congregations would have an opportunity to host conventions, giving a much appreciated break to the larger congregations.

Having considered the proposal carefully, the Board

decided to adopt this as the new fundraising policy. The new policy means that instead of raising money to send to the Board, as was done in the past by two required fundraisers, the money each young people's society now raises will instead be used directly to lower each of their own conventioneer's registration fees.

The Board realizes this newly adopted method of raising money to fund the conventions is quite dramatic, putting an increased financial burden on each conventioneer. The registration fee each conventioneer will need to come up with will approximately double ($300 - $350) compared to the registration fees of the past number of years. However, this increased registration fee will be off-set in two ways. First, the Board has funds available to help the host society reduce these expenses and thus lower the registration fee. And second, the Board is convinced that by means of the fundraisers each society holds in its own congregation for its own conventioneers, the increased registration fee each conventioneer will have to come up with out of his/her own pocket in many instances will turn out to be only a moderate one, and in some instances, perhaps none at all.

The Board requests your understanding and patience during this change. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us in writing:

The Federation of YP Societies
P.O. Box 256
Jenison, MI 49429-0256

In Christ,
Justin Koole
Executive Board member
Retiring Youth Coordinator ❖

Church History

I Remember Herman Hoeksema: Personal Remembrances of a Great Man (2)

by Prof. David J. Engelsma

Development of the Covenant

Hoeksema also developed the doctrine of the covenant. This is the doctrine that is central to the message of Scripture and dear to the Reformed churches. In one important respect, this too was consistent development of the truth of salvation by grace alone, in accordance with the decree of election. Hoeksema simply applied the Canons of Dordt to the truth of the covenant.

Hoeksema taught that God establishes his covenant with Christ as the head of the covenant of grace and with the elect church, whose members are all true believers and their elect children, as his body. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises [of the covenant] made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ…And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:16, 29).

Regarding the covenant with the children of godly parents, the basis and meaning of infant baptism, Hoeksema taught that the covenant promise, the covenant itself, and covenant salvation are for the elect children only. In the clear language of Romans 9:8, only "the children of the promise are counted for the seed," not the "children of the flesh." The covenant, therefore, is unconditional. It depends for its establishment, maintenance, and perfection only upon the sovereign grace of God, whose source is unconditional election. The covenant is not grace for all the physical children alike, which grace would then both depend for its saving effect upon the faith and obedience of the children and be resistible and losable.

In another, equally important respect, Hoeksema's development of the truth of the covenant consisted of viewing the covenant as essentially a living bond of fellowship between Christ and the church and between Christ and each elect believer personally. Hoeksema located the ultimate source of the covenant in the very life of the triune God himself. He explained the life of God as the eternal communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. The covenant of grace, by the decree of the triune God, is God's taking of the elect church into

his own family-life in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. The covenant then is not merely a means to get the elect saved, but salvation itself, the greatest good for men and women, and supreme bliss.

> Hoeksema located the ultimate source of the covenant in the very life of the triune God himself.

This development of covenant doctrine was monumental and marvelous. The truth and experience of the covenant as fellowship with the ever-blessed God are the peculiar riches of the Protestant Reformed Churches and their members.

And, we are delighted to observe, of late the riches of other Reformed churches as well.

Here is a curious thing. In the past, indeed the not-too-distant past, the prevailing, if not only, conception of the covenant in Reformed and Presbyterian churches was that the covenant is a cold and sterile contract, a business-like agreement, a threatening promise and demand, that is, a promise of God dependent on compliance with the demand by men.

In recent times, a radical change in the conception of the covenant has been taking place. On every hand, the covenant is now being described as a bond, as fellowship, as a living relationship of love. Indeed, some Reformed theologians have lately begun to trace the covenant to the triune life of God. The language of contract has virtually disappeared from the vocabulary of the covenant.

We Protestant Reformed people rejoice at this change in the prevailing covenant conception.

But we notice that there is hardly a word of acknowledgment that the Reformed theologian Herman Hoeksema was teaching this conception of the covenant eighty years ago, when he had the weight of the entire Reformed church-world against him. Much less is there any acknowledgment of Hoeksema's influence in the forming of the new conception of the covenant. Theologians who are ready to footnote a cough they make while writing will not reference Hoeksema's Reformed Dogmatics or Believers and Their Seed. Indeed, there are writings on the covenant and the Trinity that border on plagiarism of Hoeksema and of other Protestant Reformed writers who are developing and applying the doctrine of the covenant as fellowship with God that acknowledge no debt to those whose work they are using.

Regardless of this lack of grace on the part of the theologians, these "new insights" into the covenant indicate the greatness of Herman Hoeksema as a theologian.

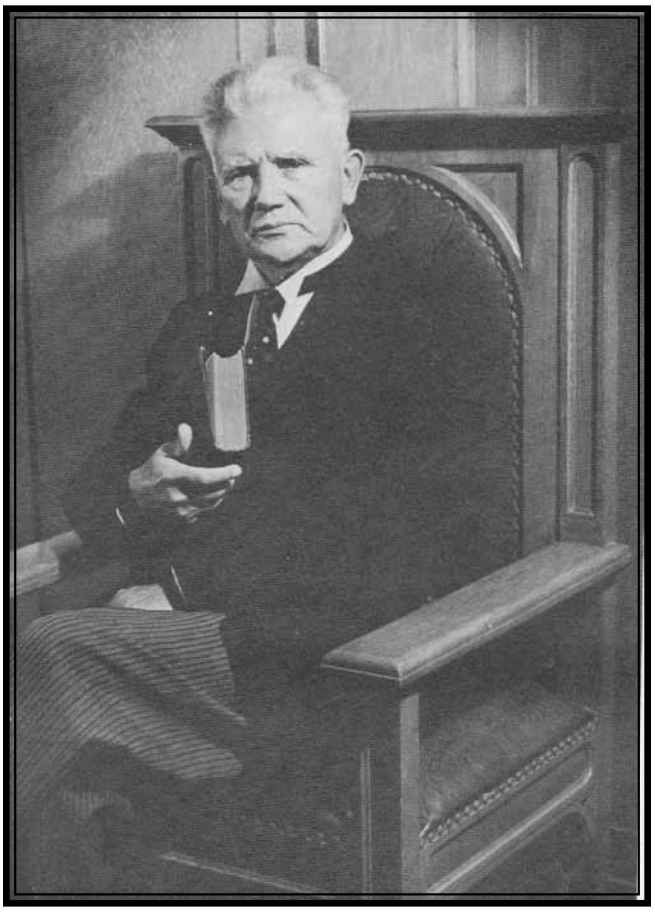
Defense of the Faith

In addition, Hoeksema was a great man in that he defended the truth—not just the truth as he saw it, but the truth—against its adversaries, and suffered greatly for his defense.

He was a man of courage.

Courageously, he defended the truth of sovereign, particular grace against the intrusion of the lie of universal, resistible grace—"common grace" to all humans without exception and saving grace to all who come under the preaching of the gospel. His defense of the gospel cost him his already prominent position in the Christian Reformed Church in 1924 and his name in the Reformed community to this day.

In his commentary on Revelation, Hoeksema remarked, wistfully, that it would be a privilege to be among those who may confess Christ even unto death in the time of Antichrist. With the humility characteristic of the man, he quickly observed that only special saints



may enjoy this privilege. He was regretting that he could not be a martyr.

But in a rare lapse of perception he was mistaken. There are other ways to lose one's life for Christ's sake than by shedding blood. Hoeksema's enemies killed him ecclesiastically. They cast him out. They killed him by defaming his good name, world-wide—hyper-Calvinist!—which is more painful than physical death.

Yet these very enemies could not help admiring Hoeksema for his courage. Back in the late 1970s, when the "conservatives" were still numerous in the Christian Reformed Church, an older Christian Reformed minister, then at the center of the life of the Christian Reformed Church, told me that it was the settled policy of the Christian Reformed ministers from 1924 on to ignore Hoeksema publicly. "However," he added, "we ministers are not together for fifteen minutes before we are talking about him." "Why?" I asked. "Why do you find yourselves bringing up Hoeksema fifty years and more after you put him out?" His answer was that Hoeksema fascinated them as a man who was willing to give up everything for the sake of what he confessed.

Courageously, Hoeksema defended the gospel of salvation by discriminating, almighty grace in the fierce, internal struggle of the Protestant Reformed Churches over the covenant in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The issue was simply the relation of the covenant and its salvation to divine election. Though it cost him two thirds of his own congregation and more than half of the members of the denomination, Hoeksema contended for the covenant of sovereign grace. He could not have done otherwise, for it was his heart's conviction that the doctrine of a covenant established by grace with all the children alike, dependent for its continuance and final salvation upon conditions performed by the children, is, as he often said, nothing but "Arminianism in the covenant."

God has proved him right in recent history.

Prophetic

This is another aspect of the man's greatness, that he was prophetic.

He warned the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) during the common grace struggle in the 1920s and 1930s that the doctrine of common grace would bring the ungodly world into those churches on the floodtide. A work of grace in the ungodly whose purpose is to warrant and mandate the church's cooperation with the world in building an earthly kingdom of God and the believer's union with unbelievers in order to create a good and godly culture must corrupt the church and believer. It will break down the biblical antithesis, which is rooted in God's eternal, double predestination effecting the fundamental division of the human race into two, separate, hostile, warring kingdoms.

He warned the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) during the common grace struggle in the 1920s and 1930s that the doctrine of common grace would bring the ungodly world into those churches on the floodtide.

It has.

The doctrine of common grace with the mentality that created it, loved it, defended it, and practiced it has destroyed the Free University of Amsterdam spiritually. That once grand institution, founded on "Reformed principles," has abandoned the last vestige of the Reformed faith. It is now a spiritual wasteland and Babylon, where are "wild beasts of the desert…[It is] full of doleful creatures…and satyrs…dance therein" (Isaiah 13:21). For among the "Reformed principles" that formed the foundation was the world-conforming, world-welcoming common grace theory of Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck. The "principle" of the certain destruction of that Reformed university was laid with its foundation.

The mentality and doctrine of common grace have destroyed the churches of the fathers of the doctrine—the GKN—physically, as well as spiritually. They are no more. Openness to the ungodly world and the fatal weakening of the antithesis, along with the rejection of predestination (in which Berkouwer played the leading role especially with his book, Divine Election [1956]), brought the GKN, inevitably, into the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PKN). This is a denomination without the Reformed creedal basis, welcoming of syncretism and open unbelief, and constitutionally committed to approving homosexual acts and relations.

The GKN chose for the ungodly world. God has given those churches the world they wanted, as once in his wrath he gave Israel the quails they sinfully desired—so that they choke on the object of their lust.

More urgently and often did Hoeksema warn the Christian Reformed Church of the dire consequences of their dear theory of common grace. Listen to him during the controversy of the early 1920s.

> This doctrine [of common grace], if it is not opposed, will weaken nearly all real Christian action and send a tidal wave of world-conformity through our churches…This theory [of common grace] increasingly controls life in our circles. The result of it is world-conformity. The idea of being a stranger and pilgrim on the earth gives way to world-citizenship. They [the proponents of common grace in the Christian Reformed Church] envision that by common grace everyone can live a good life in this world before the face of God, and they say it is our obligation to raise that general human world-life as high as possible. In our opinion this view can only lead to the theory of world-conformity, which is already widely evident in our daily practice (Of Sin and Grace, published in Dutch in 1923; the quotation is from the English translation by C. Hanko and published as Sin and Grace by the RFPA in 2003).

Although they rejected the warning of their prophet (as departing churches invariably do), nevertheless, the warning made the Christian Reformed Church nervous. In 1928, the synod of the Christian Reformed Church sent a grave warning against worldliness to all the congregations. It was too little, too late. Only rescission of the common grace decision of 1924 and repentance for the common grace mentality that produced the decision would have saved them. They had sowed the wind; they must reap the whirlwind. Steadily over the years, the Christian Reformed Church succumbed, with great celebrations of their progressiveness and modernity marking every stage of the apostasy, to the world's thinking and the world's ways. The world's thinking about origins; the world's thinking about the inspiration and historical reliability of the opening chapters of Genesis; the world's ways regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage; the world's thinking about the authoritative headship of the husband in marriage; the world's thinking about the "full equality" of women with specific application to church office; the world's ways regarding amusement, for example, movies and dancing; the world's ways on the Sabbath Day; the world's thinking concerning toleration of all churches (witness the recent repudiation of the Heidelberg Catechism's condemnation of the Roman Catholic Church in Question and Answer 80)—all these and more have ruined the once glorious Christian Reformed Church as a Reformed Church of Christ.

Accompanying the ever more enthusiastic embrace of common grace was the corresponding rejection of particular grace. The denial of sovereign, particular grace implicit in the "well-meant offer" of the first point of common grace of 1924 worked itself out in the explicit denial of limited atonement by Prof. Harold Dekker in the 1960s and in the explicit denial of the double predestination of the first head of the Canons of Dordt by Dr. Harry Boer in the 1980s. Synods of the Christian Reformed Church treated these issues. They approved the gross heresies regarding salvation by grace alone. They approved them by not condemning them and disciplining the heretics. They approved them by carefully couching their minutes so that the errors and errorists would be tolerated. Significantly, both Dekker and Boer appealed to the doctrine of common grace in support of their false doctrines.

At the present time, the Christian Reformed Church openly acknowledges that it is no longer Reformed by freeing its officebearers from (full) subscription to the Reformed confessions. Thus a once Reformed church abandons its Reformed foundation. Thus it advertises that it is not, and does not care to be, indeed, refuses to be, Reformed.

As Herman Hoeksema had foretold.

So unbearable did the symptoms of the doctrine and mentality of common grace become in the Christian Reformed Church that finally, in the 1990s, a number left that Church to form the United Reformed Churches. But they merely reacted to the symptoms, especially the feminism of women in church office; they did not repudiate the cause. They remain fully committed to the Christian Reformed doctrine of common grace with its distinctive worldview. It is understandable then that they did not join the Protestant Reformed Churches, which certainly presented themselves as true churches of Jesus Christ, faithful to the Reformed confessions and free of all the evils that offended these people in the Christian Reformed Church, but formed yet another denomination of Reformed churches in North America.

How committed the members of the United Reformed Churches are to common grace was brought home to me soon after the formation of that denomination. An old layman, prominent in those churches, informed me that he and others in Western Michigan were concerned about the high school education of their young people.

"We looked into Covenant Christian High School [the high school of the Protestant Reformed people]," he said. "But we want the common grace worldview. So we will build our own high school."

Evidently, they have learned nothing from their bitter experience in the Christian Reformed Church and schools. History will prove the truth of Hoeksema's prophecy, and the reality of his warning, concerning common grace in their case also.. ❖

(to be continued)

Prof. Engelsma is professor emeritus of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary.

Church News

BAPTISMS

"He is the LORD our God: ...He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations." Psalm 105:7, 8

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Chloe Kate, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Chad Mingerink—Byron Center, MI

Dakota John, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tim Boverhof—Byron Center, MI

Marie Eve, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin Mowery—Doon, IA

Thavin Herman, son of Mr. & Mrs. George Barendregt—Edmonton, AB, Canada

Simon Nicholas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Michael Klaassens—Edmonton, AB, Canada

Kirk Theodore, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dan van den Berg—Edmonton, AB, Canada

Graeson Teague, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Decker—Faith, MI

Paige Elizabeth, daughter of Dr. & Mrs. Brian Decker—Faith, MI

Madalyn Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Troy Karsemeyer—Faith, MI

Simon Gilbert, son of Mr. & Mrs. Erin Windemuller—First, MI

Eric Barry, son of Mr. & Mrs. Eric Phelps—First, MI

Eli Todd, son of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dykstra—First, MI

Laura Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Aaron Cleveland—Hope, MI

Alexander Jonathan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Peterson—Hudsonville, MI

Avery Len, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mitch Zuverink—Hudsonville, MI

Cody Richard, son of Mr. & Mrs. Keith Feenstra—Hudsonville, MI

Abigail Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Craig Coleman—Hudsonville, MI

Jori Renee, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jordan Kamps—Loveland, CO

Levi Howard, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Koole—Loveland, CO

Ava Nicole, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Stephan DeJong—Peace, IL

Erika Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Matt DeJong—Peace, IL

Gavin Matthew, son of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Kuiper—Southwest, MI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end." Psalm 119:33

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

Tyson Boeke—Holland, MI

Rebecca Koole—Hope, MI

Lindsey Terpstra—Hope, MI

Amy Poortinga—South Holland, IL

Michael Terpstra—South Holland, IL

Elizabeth VanEgdom—Souix Falls, SD/Edgerton, MN

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. Brett Zandstra and Miss Denise Kooienga—Faith, MI

Mr. Josh DeGram and Miss Kerri Lanning—Hudsonville, MI

Mr. Caleb Kamps and Miss Kristin Ophoff—Southeast, MI

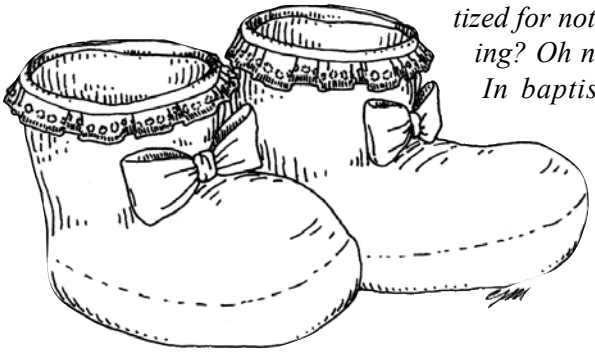
The Day You Were Baptized— A Thanksgiving Prayer

Dear Child,

You were but a little babe when the water was sprinkled on your head and you were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. You don't remember that day. But we do. We dressed you in finest white and hoped you wouldn't cry when the water dropped onto your forehead. You didn't. But we did. Inside, we cried in thanksgiving for joy, and for grace to be able to properly lead you, guide you, and teach you. You were such a tiny, helpless creature lying there in our arms. How could we ever fulfill this calling alone? Really, we were no less helpless than you. It's true. Baptism seals and confirms to us that both we and you are adopted children of God. We held a wonder in our arms. And wonder of wonders, he holds you and us in his.

You didn't know anything about the water being dropped on your forehead. Maybe you didn't even notice. That doesn't matter. It was without our knowledge, and much less without our help, that God cleansed and justified us in Jesus Christ from all eternity. We didn't even know we were sinners. We didn't know evil from good. We weren't born yet. But God knew us. He knew us in Christ before time began. He knew our Redeemer would suffer and die and rise again to save us from all our sins. That was the real baptism. And we were there—in Christ. It didn't matter at all that we knew nothing of it until now. It was all his work alone, as only an eternal covenant of grace can ever be.

So now we have things to do, too. Not for salvation; that's finished. But we have praise and thanksgiving to live and to sing, truths to better understand and to learn, and spiritual battles to be fought and won. Were we baptized for nothing? Oh no! In baptism God separated us out from the world to live as dear children of his very own. Our calling is to increase and grow up in the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as a plant must be watered and weeds pulled away, so too must we tend to this spiritual growth inside you. But just as we can't really make a seed grow, so too must the Holy Spirit cause this growth to happen in you and in us. That's his work alone, too, by grace.



We know not every child who receives the sign of baptism is saved. The picture doesn't cause what's real. But the picture surely shows us what is! And salvation is real for all God's elect children by grace. As real as the water you see.

We pray for grace for you, and for us. We pray for wisdom, patience, and power, for strength to do what the Lord has called us to. We pray in thanksgiving that our God and Father has forgiven us and you all our sins and received us to be members of his only begotten Son, to eternally praise and magnify the one only true God forever. Oh truly, we give thanks for these things! And we thank him for giving you to us, too.

He saved us. It's all of grace. An eternal covenant of grace. That's what baptism is all about.

In love, in thanks, in our Lord Jesus Christ,
your parents,
and all those who witnessed that day

"LITTLE LIGHTS" . . . let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

Find the prayer of thanksgiving in the Form for the Administration of Baptism (infant, the 2nd prayer) in the back of the Psalter. Count the words, starting with "Almighty" as the first word. According to the number of each word below each line in the puzzle, write the first letter of that number of word. What does it spell?

	R						
80th	32nd	46th	131st	157th	140th	99th	72nd

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

BEACON LIGHTS

621 Williams Street
Randolph, WI 53956

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

2009 Young People's Convention

The Universal Church

Hosted by Trinity PRC

Aug. 17-21, 2009

Lake Williamson, IL

Speakers: Rev. Rodney Kleyn, Rev. Jai Mahtani, and Rev. Angus Stewart

www.prcconvention.org