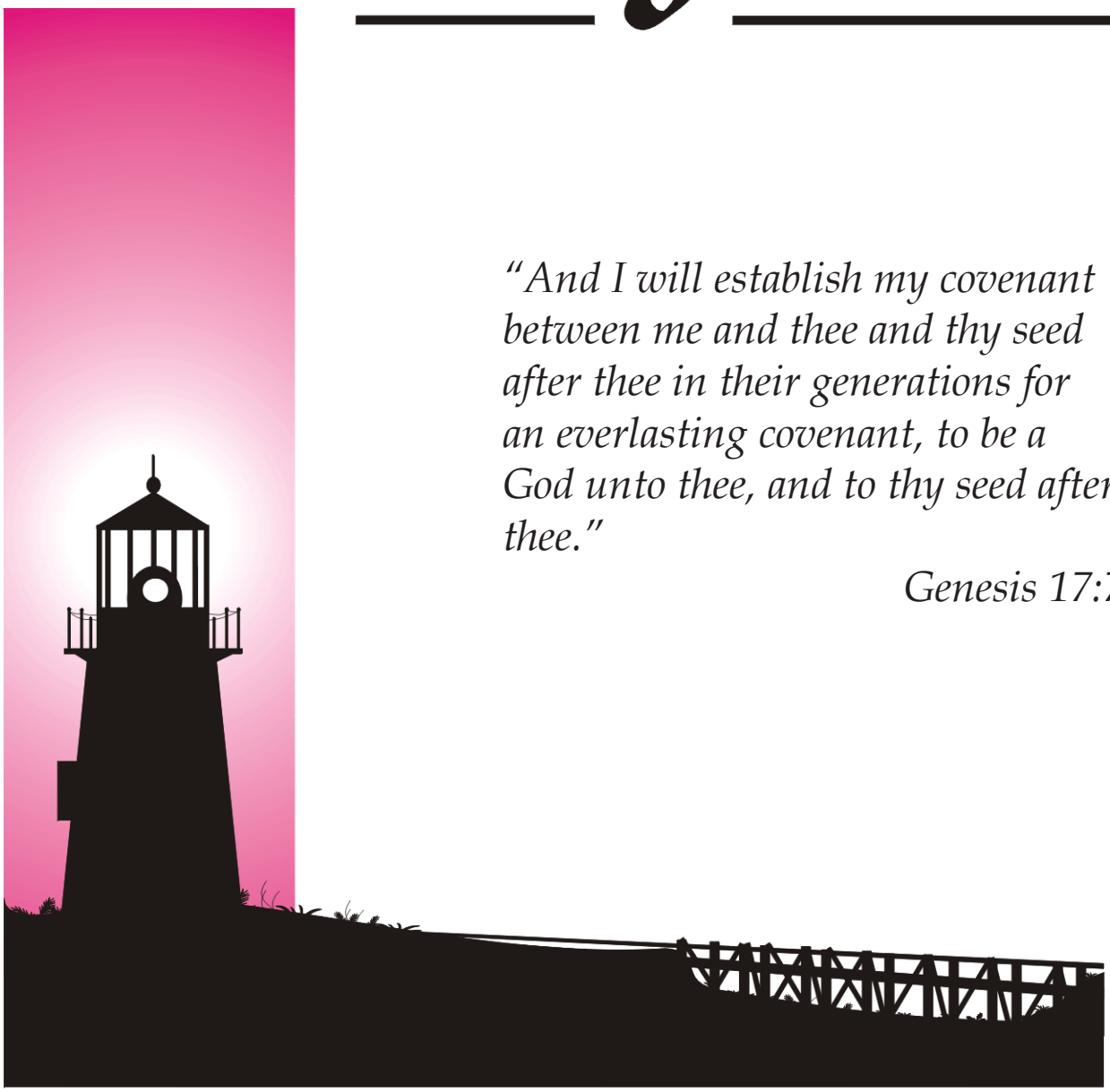
Beacon Lights

February
2008

Volume LXVII
Number 2



"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

Genesis 17:7

Table of Contents

Editorial
3 **What is the Federal Vision?**

Fruitful Branches
5 **Thirst for God**

From the Pastor's Study
7 **Scripture's Teaching Regarding Alcohol (1): A Good Gift from God**

Consider the Creation
9 **Adaptability**

Devotional
10 **Watching Daily At My Gates—February 5 – March 3**

Our Young People's Federation
15 **Greetings from the Federation Board**

Church Family
16 **Living According to God's Will: In Stewardship**

Memoir of Rev. C. Hanko
18 **Chapter 31: Bradenton, Florida and Other Travels**

Church News
22 **Church News**

Little Lights
23 **The Journey**

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

SECRETARY
Kim Doezema

CONTENTS COMMITTEE
John Huizenga
Tom Cammenga
Christiana DeJong
Trisha Haak
Kris Moelker

EXECUTIVE FEDERATION BOARD
Matt Overway (President)
Daniel Holstege (Vice-President)
Sara Huizinga (Secretary)
Jeffrey Van Uffelen (Treasurer)
Sarah Koole (Librarian)
Rachel Nagelkerke (Vice-Secretary)
Eric Gritters (Vice-Treasurer)
Greg Van Overloop (Youth Coordinator)
Rev. Ronald Van Overloop (Spiritual Advisor)
Rev. Rodney Kleyn (Spiritual Advisor)

PROMOTION COMMITTEE
Kim Doezema
Rachel Joostens

PRODUCTION COMMITTEE
Rachel Joostens

BUSINESS OFFICE
Beacon Lights
P.O. Box 144
Randolph, WI 53956
Phone: (920) 326-6186
Email: huizenga@powercom.net

BEACON LIGHTS ON TAPE
A free service to the legally blind. Contact
Sam Copple
659 Lincoln Avenue, NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Phone: (616) 774-4132
Email: SamCopple@email.msn.com

CHURCH NEWS ANNOUNCEMENTS
Melinda Bleyenberg
Email: darylmel@altelco.net.

BOOK SALES
Becky Kalsbeek

TYPESETTER
Robert Vermeer

PRINTER
James Huizinga

MAILERS
Bill & Fran Leep

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

What is the Federal Vision?

by John Huizenga

The Federal Vision is a theological position put forth by a group of men who believe that current Reformed churches for the most part have gotten off track and have lost the true vision of the Reformers. They claim that the churches of the Reformation lost sight of the Reformers' vision as the churches reacted to Western culture throughout its history. As a result, they believe that the church is wandering blindly, growing stagnant, and in need of a clear vision for guidance. As they rebuild this vision, they sift through some of the older theologians who they perceive have been insulated from the corrupting influence of Western culture, but for the most part claim to drive their theological piles into the bedrock of the Reformation.

As the name "Federal Vision" suggests, the vision is a covenant vision. The words "covenant" and "federal" are used to describe a relationship between parties. As Christians, these terms refer to the relationship between God and man. God describes the relationship he establishes with his people in terms of the most profound relationship that exists in our earthly life: a marriage. The men of the federal vision believe that the marriage has grown cold and dreary because the church has not been doing its part. The church needs to get active. The whole world is our home. The church is acting like a timid bride hiding in the closet. She needs to get out, engage whole heartedly in her calling, and make this world what God intends it to be. Thus, the federal vision is being developed to present a clear picture of what we must be doing as Christians to bring the church forward in its development.

The ideas of these federal vision men had been fermenting for years until January, 2002 when Auburn Avenue Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Monroe, Louisiana, hosted its annual pastors' conference. Four men who had been very busy working with the vision—writing books that applied and tested their thinking in a wide range of church life issues including practical family life and education—were asked to speak. The pastors Douglas Wilson, John Barach, Steve Wilkins, and Steve Schlissel spoke on "The Federal Vision: An Examination of Reformed Covenantalism." The Covenant Media Foundation had the following description for recordings of the conference that could be purchased: "The focus of this year's conference was to build on the Reformed confessional and historic emphasis on the Covenant—reclaiming some forgotten aspects and advancing further implications of the covenant. These lectures raise important questions and offer substantial insights for the continued theological development and understanding of the covenantal structure of God's relationship to his people." http://www.cmfnow.com

We as Protestant Reformed people are also very interested in the doctrine of the covenant. It is a truth of God's word that we find to be central to our understanding and enjoyment of our salvation. It is a doctrine in defense of which we have struggled, suffering wounds and earthly hardship. We have been blessed with the fruits of men in our midst who have unveiled further truths of the covenant and currently work to apply the covenant of God to our schools and families. God has given us the beautiful vision of walking with God as covenant friend-servants as the citizens of his kingdom. We have enjoyed spiritual growth under the lively preaching of God's word. As we plumb the depths of the gospel, we have ever increasing reason to live a life of thankful obedience to our God. We have been enabled to establish schools where we can train our children in the hope of the promise that God

gathers his church in the line of continued generations. We dig into the resources of the earth God has given to us, praise him for the wonders he has created in the earth, and subdue it for our use in raising our children and spreading the gospel to the ends of the world. With the vision before us of this life perfected in glory, we fight against every attack on covenant life in the home and church.

Is this the vision of the men of the "Federal Vision?"

The "Covenant Vision" that we as Protestant Reformed people have along with many other saints today, and along with saints throughout history, is quite different from the "Federal Vision." While we rejoice to send forth God's word to the ends of the world to gather his church from every nation, the federal vision men see not simply people from every nation, but rather a general turning of the nations themselves to Christ to establish a global Christendom. A core group of the federal vision men state in a document called "A Joint Federal Vision Statement"[1] the following: "We affirm that prior to the second coming of our Lord Jesus, the earth will be as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." And again, under the title "The Next Christendom" they state: "We affirm that Jesus Christ is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. We believe that the Church cannot be a faithful witness to his authority without calling all nations to submit themselves to him through baptism, accepting their responsibility to obediently learn all that he has commanded us. We affirm therefore that the Christian faith is a public faith, encompassing every realm of human endeavor. The fulfillment of the Great Commission therefore requires the establishment of a global Christendom."

Our vision of earthly life includes a clear antithesis between righteousness and wickedness. We see ourselves as pilgrims in the world of sin, having no part in the ungodly developments. Even so, we are called to subdue the creation for the sake of the kingdom of God. The men of the federal vision state, "We deny that neutrality is possible in any realm, and this includes the realm of "secular" politics. We believe that the lordship of Jesus Christ has authoritative ramifications for every aspect of human existence, and that growth up into a godly maturity requires us to discover what those ramifications are in order to implement them. Jesus Christ has established a new way of being human, and it is our responsibility to grow up into it." It would appear that the men of the federal vision are not content with the lordship of Jesus Christ as stated in Proverbs 21:1 "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." They are saying that we need to do more to discover a new way that involves the leaders of the world actively and willingly participating in the kingdom of God.

Our covenant vision is carefully framed by the creeds of the church in the past. We see the creeds as the work of our fathers to clearly define errors and state our understanding of God's word as God has led the church through history. We see God ruling sovereignly in all history so that he guides the church in her development of the great doctrines of salvation. The federal vision sees the creeds as crutches that were useful for the time, and having the potential to be useful, but to be set aside in favor of pure biblical language. They write, "We deny that it necessarily unprofitable to "translate" biblical language into more "philosophical" or "scholastic" languages in order to deal with certain problems and issues that arise in the history of the Church. At the same time, we do deny that such translations are superior to or equal to the rhetoric employed by the Spirit in the text, and we believe that the employment of such hyper-specialized terminology in the regular teaching and preaching of the Church has the unfortunate effect of confusing the saints and of estranging them from contact with the biblical use of the same language. For this reason we reject the tendency to privilege the confessional and/or scholastic use of words and phrases over the way the same words and phrases are used in the Bible itself." In other words, they recognize that there is a certain value in carefully defining words like "sanctification," "trinity," "predestination," etc. in creeds and confessions, but it is better to stick with words as they are used in the Bible, especially in the teaching and preaching to avoid bringing confusion to ordinary saints. Now this may sound good and pious, but it is inevitable that

these federal vision men will develop their own "scholastic" and "philosophical" language as a basis for their teaching. The terms that have been developed by the church have been given to us by means of the great struggles through which God has led the church. Confusion among the saints results when this history and catechism instruction is neglected.

At the heart of the federal vision is a particular view of the covenant and our children. God gives us salvation, and he gives us our children. For both we are willing to fight to the bitter end. A vision looks to the future, and it is our children who are the future. One's view of children and how they are included in the covenant is necessarily going to central to any covenant vision. One of the signers of the document quoted above, Rev. Leithart, writes in his blog, "The Federal Vision has been about a lot of things, but one of the central pastoral issues has to do with the status of our children, what we say to them, and how we say it. From one perspective, the Federal Vision is an effort to articulate a consistent paedobaptist theology. Doug Wilson said awhile ago that this is all about children; I agree. The pastoral import of the Federal Vision is that we can say to our children, without any mental reservation, 'God is your God. Trust him, and he will remain your God.'" June 15, 2007 http://www.leithart.com/archives/003076.php Certainly as parents we deeply desire to be able to say all our children without any mental reservation "God is your God." But we can't let our desires dictate what God says in his word. In an attempt to explain the dilemma that some children show themselves to be unbelievers, the federal vision men have put their trust in the notion of the conditional covenant that we battled against in our own church history.

Much has been said about the federal vision by men in many different denominations, and more needs to be said about this federal vision. While support is growing for this vision, many have rightly condemned it as heresy. Writers in the *Standard Bearer* have also been working hard to expose real, and spiritually dangerous details that develop out of this vision. As with every false doctrine that arises in history, God uses it to sharpen and bring into clearer focus beautiful truths of his word. May we seek prayerfully to sharpen our understanding of the covenant vision we hold dear. ❖

Endnote

[1] http://www.federal-vision.com/ Statement sketching the general "federal vision" perspective on Reformed Theology, signed by John Barach (minister, CREC), Randy Booth (minister, CREC), Tim Gallant (minister, CREC), Mark Horne (minister, PCA), Jim Jordan (minister ARC, Director of Biblical Horizons, member CREC), Peter Leithart (minister, PCA), Rich Lusk (minister, CREC), Jeff Meyers (minister, PCA), Ralph Smith (minister, CREC), Steve Wilkins (minister, PCA), Douglas Wilson (minister, CREC)

Fruitful Branches

Thirst for God

by Ryan Barnhill

Imagine a day in early August. A healthy deer runs through the wilderness. He may be escaping from a predator that seeks his life. We do not know the exact reason why this deer is running, but we do not need to know either. We do know that the deer of which we read of in Psalm 42:1 is a thirsty deer. He is a deer that is panting for something to drink, looking for water brooks where he can relieve his thirst. This is the kind of thirst that the Psalmist speaks of in Psalm 42:2. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"

Any living creature needs water to sustain daily life. Water is a popular example in Scripture to bridge a connection between the physical and the spiritual. We learn here that water is absolutely necessary for life. Without water, any living thing dies. Without spiritual water, the believer dies.

As previously mentioned, water is a popular analogy in Scripture. David speaks about his thirst for God in Psalm 143:6: "I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land." Jesus spoke of this water in John 4:13b, 14 as he talked with the Samarian woman by Jacob's well. "Whosoever drinketh of this water (referring to the water in Jacob's well) shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The prophet Isaiah speaks of living waters in Isaiah 55:1a. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters…" These are only a few of the many passages that speak about spiritual water in Scripture.

There is a problem in all of this. You and I do not thirst for God in and of ourselves. By nature we thirst for all kinds of worldly things. The lusts of our flesh turn our thirst away from God and his kingdom, and place it rather on sinful things. Indeed, it would be very sinful for us to claim that we thirst for God by ourselves. Only through regenerated hearts are we able to thirst for the true living waters. This is the only possible way that we can come to know God and thirst after him.

This thirst is shown in the life of the believer. It manifests itself in an eagerness to read the word of God, and in an excitement to hear that word preached from Sunday to Sunday. This thirst drives the child of God to love personal devotions, family devotions, and societies that he or she may attend. The regenerated child of God realizes that Monday through Saturday are not spiritual "days off", but that a thirst for God is something that consumes him or her day and night, seven days a week. Even though you and I are not perfect, but only have a beginning of that thirst, yet the life of the Christian is characterized by a striving to drink of the spiritual water, and a battle against the temptation to drink of worldly waters.

This thirst may become especially strong at certain times in our life. One of these instances may be a trial that God sends us. Another instance may be that we are in an environment that does not love God and his word. You may experience this in a godless workplace. As students at college, some of my friends and I have experienced the lack of Christian atmosphere at college. At a place where the homosexuals gather to sound forth their religion, or where some professors express their hate for Christianity, the child of God may have an increased thirst for the living waters of God. It was quite a shock for me to leave a godly high school atmosphere only to be greeted by the world, a desert land without the living waters of God and his word. David experienced this same isolation in Psalm 63:1 as he was hiding from his enemies in the wilderness of Judah. "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is."

We have observed so far that the living waters of God and his word are so vital for our spiritual lives. This water is so vital for our spiritual existence that God promises terrible punishment for those who do not thirst for spiritual things. In Amos 8:11, God speaks words of judgment against unfaithful Israel. God declares this judgment in verses 11 and 12. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." God declared in verse 13 that the fair virgins and young men would fail for thirst. What a terrible judgment upon the nation of Israel! We must be careful to thirst for things that are spiritual. The Israelites, like us, enjoyed a time of prosperity in that day, and it was easy for them (and is easy for us) to thirst for so many other things of this world.

By God's grace, David was able to set his focus on God, and was able to thirst for spiritual waters. David longed to appear before God in his sanctuary. At certain points in David's life, he was relentlessly pursued by his enemies, and was therefore unable to worship God in the sanctuary. It is no wonder that he then cries out "when shall I come and appear before God?" David speaks of those who scoff at him in his seemingly hopeless state in verse 3. "Where is thy God?" His tears are his meat day and night.

However, the victory of hope never fades in the child of God. The gloomy clouds of this Psalm break up in the presence of the glorious words that we read of in verse 5. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." Hope thou in God! David well knows his salvation in the coming Messiah. David is confessing here that his hope is not earthly, and his thirst is not quenched by the work of

men's hands. Amidst desert isolation, persecution, and scoffers, he has hope!

That same precious hope is ours! This is the same hope that drives every Christian to an excitement to know more about God's word and his promises. This is the same hope that puts a smile on the face of the dying saint who is ready to meet his Savior. A hope that tells us that our thirst will be perfectly satisfied in the courts of our God where there will be no sin and tears! This is the same hope that sheds bright light into the darkest regions of the saint suffering from a terminal illness, or the family trying to cope with the death of a loved one. This is the hope that Job speaks of in Job chapter 19: 25, 26. "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."

May God use his word in this Psalm to comfort our souls. God will preserve us until we reach that final resting place of which we read in Revelation 7:17. "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." All is well! What wonderful words for the weary pilgrim nearly failing for thirst in this desert wasteland! Our thirst will be perfectly satisfied! ❖

Ryan is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.

From the Pastor's Study

Scripture's Teaching Regarding Alcohol (1)
A Good Gift from God

by Rev. Douglas Kuiper

"He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
and herb for the service of man:
that he may bring forth food out of the earth;
And wine that maketh glad the heart of man,
and oil to make his face to shine,
and bread which strengtheneth man's heart."
Psalm 104:14-15

If Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey, the village of Randolph, Wisconsin, can be described as flowing with beer and wine. Especially beer. Entering Randolph, one is informed that it is home to 1869 people. Driving through the three blocks which make up downtown, the visitor might be left with the impression that all 1869 inhabitants drink alcohol copiously—for one passes three bars, a family style restaurant, and a gift store with a small lunch menu and espresso counter. All serve alcohol. The three bars thrive on serving alcohol. Liquor is sold at two of the three gas stations in town, and at the local grocery store. Coming into town from the south, you might notice the billboard which advertises a 12 pack of Miller Light as being significantly cheaper than the equivalent volume of bottled water. The wallet speaks: water is out; beer is the drink of choice. Drink Miller Light, and you live the "high life."

Randolph is a typical Wisconsin town. Wisconsin people like their beer. And Wisconsin, I think, is a typical state.

Everywhere we turn, society tells us that life without alcohol is simply unthinkable.

Is this to be the Christian's view of alcohol? Is this what Scripture teaches?

A study of what Scripture teaches regarding alcohol will reveal that God's view of alcohol and society's differ sharply. The Christian young person must align his view with God's. This is the first reason to know what

Scripture teaches regarding alcohol.

A second reason, for the Christian young person particularly, has to do with the inherent dangers in alcohol itself. Drink too much and you get drunk. Get drunk and you feel miserable. Become a habitual drunkard and you lose family, friends, and possessions. While society tells us that life without alcohol is unthinkable, social organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Mothers Against Drunk Driving remind us that life with too much alcohol is unbearable.

Let the Christian take this to heart. If the world is forced to admit that living too much of the high life leads to traffic deaths, bar brawls, divorce and broken homes, should not the Christian especially avoid this sort of "high life"? Should not the Christian young person know that such "high life" is not life at all?

Third, the Christian—also the Christian young person - must know what the Scriptures teach about alcohol because our goal in life is to glorify God in all that we do. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," the Holy Spirit exhorted the saints of Corinth through the inspired apostle Paul (I Corinthians 10:31). The pressing question in the heart of any godly young person is: what attitude does God require me to have toward alcohol, and how am I to use it, to his glory?

The answer will be found only in the Scriptures.

Let us take the time, then, to set forth in several articles Scripture's teaching - God's teaching - regarding alcohol.

* * * * *

By alcohol we refer to any drink able to cause intoxication. Wine, wine coolers, beer, whiskey and other hard liquors, are all alcoholic beverages.

Scripture refers to alcohol often. The word "wine" or a related word is used over 250 times in the Bible; 19 verses contain the phrase "strong drink." Some of these uses are figurative, such as when we read in Revelation 14:10 of the wine of the wrath of God which he will cause the wicked to drink. But many times the reference is to literal wine or strong drink.

The difference between wine and strong drink, as Scripture speaks of it, is the difference between wine and beer, or wine and other liquors, as we speak of them today. Both kinds of drinks can cause intoxication. But wine is the produce of fruits, usually grapes. Strong drink is the product of grains, such as barley.

God's Word, then, certainly addresses this issue. We are not setting out to find the teaching of Scripture on some subject which Scripture hardly ever addresses. The Scriptures tell us plenty about alcohol, and how we are to view and use it.

* * * * *

Do the Scriptures teach that no Christian may use alcohol? Are we to ban its use completely from all our homes? Ought we exclude from membership in our church those who use it?

Many Christians, particularly among some Baptist churches, would say "Yes" to all those questions.

Their argument has some weight to it. First, Scripture clearly condemns drunkenness, and a good way to prevent drunkenness is to ban alcohol completely. Second, Scripture calls God's people to be distinct and separate from the world. If we publicly oppose all use of alcohol, how clearly we will show that distinction!

But Scripture does not forbid the Christian to use alcohol. God permits the Christian to do so. God considers alcoholic beverages good, when used properly. He created them to be used properly.

Scripture teaches this in several places.

Psalm 104:15, quoted above, is one. It teaches that God gives man food and drink. He causes grass to grow, and vines, and grapes. He created the natural process by which fruits and grains become fermented.

God's purpose in this, according to Psalm 104:15, is not only to give man drink; water and milk serve that purpose too. But with wine, God's purpose is to supply man with a drink which "maketh glad the heart of man." Alcohol, used rightly and in moderation, helps a man relax and enjoy his life.

Another passage which, by implication, teaches that it is not wrong to drink alcohol is I Timothy 4:4-5: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." Paul writes this because he knows that some will tell us we may not eat certain foods. They are wrong; God created every creature for us to use rightly, and every kind of food for us to eat. The same applies, then, to drinks.

Earlier I quoted I Corinthians 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." When the apostle says "drink," he has in mind drinking any beverage, including wine—for he has spoken earlier in the chapter of the cup of blessing which is the communion of the blood of Christ.

Jesus drank wine, not only at the marriage feast of Cana (John 2) and at the institution of the Lord's Supper, but throughout his life, as his own words indicate: "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber" (Matthew

11:19). If Jesus drank it in his human nature, it cannot be wrong for us to do so in ours.

The apostle Paul commanded Timothy to drink some wine: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (I Timothy 5:23). Although this is personal advice, and does not mean we are all commanded to drink wine, this advice is found in Scripture by the inspiration of the Spirit. The apostle could not be commanding Timothy to sin. That Paul tells him to use a little wine indicates that wine is not wrong in itself.

* * * * *

We have noted enough passages to see that Scripture does not condemn all drinking of alcohol.

What Scripture does forbid is the improper use of alcohol. So the question becomes this: what is improper use of alcohol? And how does the Christian use alcohol properly, and to God's glory?

In the next two articles, God willing, we will answer this question.

But, young people, don't expect to be able to apply the answers immediately. We will have to remember that one uses alcohol improperly, who uses it in violation of the laws of the state. Clearer yet: it is sin to drink alcohol when you are not of legal age.

I'll explain this more next time.

But for now, pay attention to what is said so that, when you are of legal age, you know what it means to drink to God's glory! ❖

Rev. Kuiper is pastor of Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin.

Consider the Creation

When I In Awesome Wonder...

Michigan's Golden Coast

Adaptability

by Deanne Wassink

The story of the wildlife along the "Golden Coast" is one of constant adaptation to the changes in habitat brought about by man—whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Originally, back when the Indians were alone in this area, the shoreline wilderness was a mixture of old growth forests, swamps and sand dunes. The animals that lived here had very little hunting pressure. They were primarily woodland creatures: deer, turkey, raccoon, squirrel, wolverines, bear, opossum, fox, mice, rattlesnakes, mice, muskrat, beaver and wolves—to name a few. The birds included eagles, passenger pigeons, crows, ducks, geese, grouse, woodpeckers, woodcock and many more. Then, civilization came to the coast. Step by step—mostly from 1800 to 1900—the animals were trapped and hunted, the woods were cleared, farms were established, rivers were dredged for ports, and swamps were drained. Many of the animal populations crashed from loss of habitat and food supply along with hunting pressure. The wolves, rattlesnakes, eagles, beavers and turkeys disappeared from the area. The passenger pigeon became extinct.

My own little farm that was established by my ancestors around 1870 is an excellent example of the changes that took place. Originally the family farm was part of a large swamp that fed into Macatawa Lake next to the city of Holland and eventually into Lake Michigan. It was a breeding ground for wildlife and fish. As a side note, my father and uncles talk about gathering fish in the spring by the basketful using pitchforks instead of fishing poles. My great grandfather hand dug the first drain that was later widened and deepened using horses and scraper blades to gain control of the water and claim the land. It was rich farmland for crops like corn and wheat, but, also more unusual plants like fruit, flower bulbs, pickles, perennials and ornamental shrubs. The land was highly productive. However, when it was drained, many square miles of nesting, breeding and feeding area was lost. It was a necessary change, yes, and a real blessing for my family. Nevertheless, it was a destructive change from the point of view of the shoreline ecosystem. Of course, this story could be multiplied hundreds of times over as

the land along the shore was brought into cultivation.

Into this vacuum of the loss of native animal populations rushed a large number of "outsiders" better suited to life with the farms. Some species had "invaded" the East Coast and migrated throughout the country like sparrows, starlings and rats. Some were introduced like the ring neck pheasant. I mention this because there is a monument near my home that commemorates the release of the first pheasants in Ottawa County. The pheasant population exploded and then nearly disappeared in my lifetime. Many of the other non-native animals and birds have thrived.

Over time, a number of the native species began to adapt to the changes in habitat. Along with that adjustment, the use of the land began to change. Woodlands were planted where the farms played out and were abandoned. Agricultural land has been changed to residential. Along the shore of Lake Michigan so much woodland has grown around the cottages that it is a seldom hunted haven for many creatures.

In the present day many of the species that were almost eliminated have not only rebounded, but, have far surpassed their original populations. Once again we see eagles in the sky. The population of deer has grown to the point that constant thinning is needed to keep the herd healthy. One of my favorites, the wild turkey, has made such a comeback that we observe the flocks in the fields and woods around our farm almost on a daily basis. Recently, we counted one flock of over forty turkeys in the cornfield next door.

One thing seems certain, change will continue to take place in habitat and in the populations of wildlife that live along the Lakeshore.

It seems to me that the church must also adapt to meet the changes in society and culture if it is to preach the Gospel to each generation. No, I don't mean compromising the truth of the Scriptures in any way. I am referring to many of the external elements. For example, before I get myself in too much trouble, take a look at the changes that our worship has already gone through. Many of our forefathers thought we could only worship using the Dutch language and the "Staten Vertaling"—the official Dutch Bible. It was a major cultural change to worship in English and begin to use the "King James" version of the Bible. They had to do away with the old Dutch Psalter for singing, and instead adopted and customized a Presbyterian Psalter for their own worship services. The music in worship changed from no instruments to the old pump organ my dear grandmother played in church to modern piano and pipe or electric organs to lead the singing.

The means of spreading the Gospel have changed also. In days past there was only physical attendance at the worship service and the printed page. Now, we have in addition, radio, television, internet, cds and mp3 players. What a huge opportunity. We must adapt to the opportunities that we have to spread the Gospel. Even though the fundamentals of the truth of God's Word do not change we must continue to adapt. Each generation must learn how to bear witness for the Gospel in the culture in which it lives.

May God give us the wisdom to wisely adapt from generation to generation. ❖

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

Devotional

Watching Daily At My Gates

Meditations on Selected Scripture Passages (February 5-15 reprinted from April 2001)
by Cornelius Jonker

February 5 Read Daniel 3:13-18

Nebuchadnezzar, king of heathen Babylon and symbol of the power of this world issued an edict "Worship my golden image." Three young Jewish lads, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were faced with the choice to worship this image or be cast into a fiery furnace. Did they attempt to compromise a bit or look for some way to escape this horrible dilemma? Not at all, but stated "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter." They did not waver nor were they fatalists, but in childlike faith placed their trust in God even though it could mean physical death for them. We know that in this

case God miraculously delivered them. Perhaps we will never be faced with such a severe test, but Satan is always tempting us to deny our faith. Whether these trials are small or large, we must pray for grace to be steadfast as were the three young men who stood before the king. May we, by God's grace, pray for strength to resist the world and fight the good fight of faith. Sing Psalter 346:1, 2.

February 6 Read Habakkuk 3:14-19

We have here a wonderful confession of joy by the prophet Habakkuk at a time of impending trouble and destruction. In chapter one we read of the cruel Chaldeans whom the Lord would send against Judah because of their sins. Even though the prophet trembled at this prospect, yet he could "rest in the day of trouble". Then he exclaimed that though the entire land should become utterly desolate, yet he would rejoice in the God of his salvation. And not only would he submit, but bear it willingly and even leap for joy. What a lesson for us. It takes faith to utter these words, not an attitude of Stoicism in which one is unmoved by joy or grief, but a living faith wrought by God the object of our faith and author of our salvation. We may encounter bitter disappointments or suffer great loss, yet in all trials we must look at the present in the light of the future and praise God for his marvelous grace. Sing Psalter 20:1-3.

February 7 Read Malachi 3:16-18

The voice of revelation was silent for a period of four hundred years after these words of Malachi were written. At that time the exiles had returned from captivity, Jerusalem and the temple were restored, and a form of worship was restored. However, this formal worship was polluted. The priests profaned the holiness of God; the Sadducees, who denied the angel world and the resurrection, were in power as were the Pharisees, a proud, self-righteous sect who preached righteousness by the works of the law. In the midst of this was a remnant of true believers whom God reserved to himself. These sought each other's company and spoke to each other of the Lord Whom they loved. God heard them and remembered them in his book. Our situation is not so different today. Can those comforting words be said about us? Parents, do you love to speak about God with your fellow saints and set good examples for your children? Young people do you count it a privilege to attend societies so you may mutually edify each other? The Lord listens to those who fear him and counts them as his jewels. Sing Psalter 309:1-4.

February 8 Read Matthew 6:24-34

The central thought in this passage is an exhortation to seek first the kingdom of God, thereby making this a priority in our lives. We are citizens of that heavenly kingdom whose ruler is God through Christ. That means that each of us must desire to serve its God, obey its laws and to seek it as the fundamental principle of our lives. We seek it, children, when we walk in obedience. We seek it, young people, when we keep ourselves pure and when we search for a godly life mate. We seek it, adults, when we sacrifice all for it, when we love the truth and are willing to be despised for God's sake. Can we seek this kingdom in and of ourselves? No, it is the work of God in regeneration, giving us the new life of the kingdom in our hearts. In the way of putting that kingdom first in all of our thoughts, words and deeds, God promises that our earthly needs will be supplied. Let us thank, love and serve this sovereign and providential King. Sing Psalter 49:1-3.

February 9 Read Mark 9:17-27

We read here about doubt and trust, unbelief and belief. The distraught father of the demon possessed son sought Jesus' help after his disciples could not cast out the evil spirit. He said to Jesus, "If thou canst…". Jesus then answered, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible." In effect, Jesus forces him to look into his heart and examine his faith. By grace he then exclaims through tears of repentance, "I (do) believe; help thou my unbelief." What about your assurance of faith, dear reader? Do you sometimes doubt God's work of grace in your heart? We are not always living on the mountain top of faith, but when you sink into the valleys, hear God's word telling you, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" Phil. 1:6. Then we can also echo this confession, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." Sing Psalter 185:1-3.

February 10 Read John 6:58-69

After Jesus fed a great multitude with bread, he departed from them by ship across the Sea of Galilee, for this people were intent on making him their king. They would have a king that could deliver them from their enemies and fill them with food. When they found him on the morrow, Jesus rebuked them and proclaimed that he was the bread of life which came down from heaven. This kind of king and this kind of bread they despised and soon all left him. Jesus turned to his disciples and said "Will ye also go away?" How true this is yet today. People want a social gospel, one that exalts man. They do not want a righteous and holy God Who loves truth and justice. They do not want to hear about sin and depravity, particular grace and judgment to come. By God's undeserved grace we can humbly answer Jesus' question and say, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." People of God, may we indeed count it a privilege to feed on that Word from week to week. Sing Psalter 333.

February 11 Read Acts 5:17-29

There are many passages in Scripture that command us to be subject to the civil magistrates for they are powers ordained of God. As a rule, most of their laws are reasonable and the child of God has no problem to obey them. The only time we may and must refuse to obey is when we are commanded to do something contrary to God's Word. Peter and the apostles, in obedience to Christ's command to be his witnesses, publicly proclaimed his gospel. They were imprisoned and beaten as a result. Perhaps we may not be faced with such severe demands, but our calling is the same nevertheless. Will we refuse to work on Sunday or refuse to join a godless labor union even if it costs us our jobs? These are two examples, but let them serve to guide us in this important principle. May we heed the words of Christ in Luke 16:10 "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much". Sing Psalter 161:1-3

February 12 Read Romans 8:24-28

We have a most blessed confession in verse 28: "We know that all things work together for good…" This is an amazing statement which only the child of God can possible make. All things! Can you imagine that? Not just the things that we would call pleasant, but also the trials, the heartaches, sicknesses, loss of material possessions, and even death itself. How can that be? The answer is that it is good to those who love God. And who are those who love God? They are those whom God loves, for we read in I John 4:19, "We love him because he first loved us". All things that happen to us are sovereignly appointed in love for our salvation, and in that confidence we can declare, "For we know." Then face today, tomorrow, and all the rest of our days which God is pleased to give us in that blessed assurance. Sing Psalter 191:1, 6, 7

February 13 Read II Cor. 6:14-18

God saw fit to place his church in the world surrounded by unbelievers. He created enmity between the children of God and the children of the world at the very beginning of the human race. In all events of history, God leads his church unto salvation, and uses the world of unbelief in spite of themselves to accomplish this purpose. The world is the tares among the wheat and the scaffolding in the building of his temple. As God's children, young and old alike, we are called to live in the world but not to be a part of that world. Our passage today tells us that we must not enter into their activities or have close fellowship with them. This is especially true for you, young people. Even though higher education or job seeking puts you in contact with that world, remember your holy calling is to not compromise your principles. Especially as you seek friends and your life's mate, pray for guidance that you may truly agree in faith, hope and doctrine. Sing Psalter 328:1, 2, 4.

February 14 Read Eph. 6:10-17

You have many different names as members of God's church in the world. Some examples are sheep, branches, living stones, and we could name many others. Today we fit the description of soldiers, called to put on the whole armour of God. Five parts of this armour are for defense and one for offense. The Roman soldier at the time in which this epistle was written was well equipped to repel the arrows and swords of the enemy. Today we are called to put on the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith and helmet of salvation as a sure defense against the attacks of Satan. This is spiritual armour, most necessary to overcome our spiritual enemies. The weapon of offense is the sword of the Spirit, namely the Word of God. Feast on that Word today as you hear it proclaimed, and by faith put on the entire armour so that you may be a well equipped soldier in the army of God. Sing Psalter 352:1-4.

February 15 Read III John 1-4

The last verse of our passage today can be echoed with great fervor by many people, but especially pastors, elders and parents. To hear that their children walk in the truth is indeed a cause for rejoicing. What is truth? Truth is a virtue of God; it belongs to his eternal unchangeableness. Truth is revealed in Scripture and there is no truth apart from Holy Scripture. When children walk in the truth, they walk in obedience to that Word and that brings joy. When the spiritual children of the pastor and elders walk in the truth, there is harmony and growth in knowledge and faith. When parents see their children walk in truth, then love, peace, and covenant fellowship abounds. On the contrary, when children or young people do not walk in truth, but rather in rebellion and disobedience, great sorrow is the result. Pastors and elders labor then in heaviness and sorrow, and parents with grief and tears. Children and young people, pray for grace to walk in the truth and you will reap rich harvests of joy. Sing Psalter 213:1-3.

February 16

"The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel" (Genesis 49:23, 24). We have in these verses a metaphor that pictures a lonely bowman surrounded by fierce enemies who hate him and aim their arrows at his very heart. These words, uttered by Jacob as he lay a-dying, were directed at Joseph. We all know the history of Joseph when his cruel brothers sold him as a slave, and the resultant unjust persecution he had to endure. We can compare this picture with the nation of Israel when we follow their history. And think of Jesus Christ himself who was reviled, forsaken by all and even put to death. And how true is this today of the church and its members. But all through history, and even now, the battle is not ours, but the Lord's. The stone of Israel by his mighty hands will give his people the power to fight the warfare of faith with victory assured. All praise to the Captain of our salvation. Psalter 207

February 17

"The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1). We do not know for certain what the occasion was or the circumstances of David when he composed this psalm, but we know he had many enemies and faced many dangers. Our lives may be relatively calm in comparison but these words are timely to take upon our own lips every day. Even as David expresses confidence in the God of his salvation as his only hope, so we also must realize that our strength is really nothing compared to our enemies that assail us. The world hates us and seeks our ruin; the devil strives to undermine our assurance of salvation, and our own flesh faints with fear and weakness. Though the night may be dark, God is our light. Though the evil that threatens us may be great, God is our salvation. Though our enemies may be numerous and strong, they shall stumble and fall for God is our strength. Take courage, people of God, and go forward without fear, for the victory is certain through faith. Psalter 163.

February 18

"Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Hebrews 4:4). What a welcome prospect is a time of rest after many hours of toil and labor. This of course is a picture, however imperfect, of the rest of which our text is speaking. We read in Genesis 2:2 that God "rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." Adam, the first man, was called to labor that he might enter into God's rest, but he failed through unbelief. God as a Shepherd throughout history led his people eventually into Canaan, which was a symbol of the heavenly rest. But this rest was not final. There is a blessed and eternal rest for the people of God, a heavenly and glorious City. We are called to enter into that rest. Oh, the realization of that rest cannot possibly depend on our labor, but only on the amazing work of our Savior, the true Rest-giver, who suffered and died for us. Nevertheless, we are admonished to labor for that rest. This means that all things that we do must be subservient to the heavenly. We cannot love the things above and the things of this world at the same time. By grace we willingly sacrifice all things for the attainment of that final rest. In that glorious rest we shall enjoy pleasures forevermore. Psalter 363.

February 19

"Come behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Psalm 46:8, 10, 11). Who among us has not seen the desolations that God has recently brought in the earth? Most of us have not seen these personally, but surely through the means of television and newspaper, we can behold it before our very eyes. Who can forget the destruction, loss of life, and utter hopelessness caused by a tsunami, earthquakes and

hurricanes? Beside all that, wars continue to rage in various places. Shall we echo the world's sentiment that surely a loving God would never cause all this? Shall we join in their foolish reasoning that Mother Nature is very capricious? On the contrary, we see that God speaks in judgment and we are very still. God will be exalted despite the raised fists in rebellion against him. The Lord of hosts is very powerful. He is powerful to cause utter destruction by a single word. He is also powerful to be our refuge unto all eternity. Let us humble ourselves, before his majesty, and exalt his Holy name. Psalter 124.

February 20

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Ephesians 5:1, 2). This word of God addresses us with an admonition to be followers of God that is demonstrated by a godly walk. A person's walk is his way of life and it soon becomes apparent whom they follow or imitate. Many people follow the popular idols of this world as worthy examples to emulate, but that way leads to destruction. Dear reader, let us not be followers of the devil and his allurements, but rather follow the pattern of God himself. Then by his enabling grace we walk in love to him and our neighbor, which is the bond of perfectness, because Christ has first loved us and because he loved us, he gave himself for us on the cross, a perfect and sweet smelling sacrifice to God. To be followers of God often means we will be despised and ridiculed by the world. But even then we must walk in love and pray for them that despitefully use us. In that way we are imitators of God and blessed by him. Psalter 20.

February 21

"There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:26, 27a). What a beautiful picture of love and security is given in the face of fearful anxiety and danger. Picture for example a little child who is hurting or is afraid. What does he do? He runs to the arms of his father and feels safe in his loving embrace. So it is for us who are the Jeshurun that God loves. Individually, and as the little flock, the church, we have many enemies that assail and threaten us. But listen! There is none like our God who rides upon the heavens above and bears us up from underneath. Although everything around us is temporary and unstable, yet those everlasting arms hold us tightly and cause us to persevere unto the end. What a glorious God and Savior is this God of Jeshurun! Psalter 126.

February 22

"The hope of the righteous shall be gladness, but the expectation of the wicked shall perish" (Proverbs 10:28). As is so common in the book of Proverbs, the antithesis is set forth in this verse and presents a contrast between the righteous and the wicked. The righteous have hope and that hope is gladness. We may define hope as faith reaching out into the future, as assurance and longing. They even have that gladness now although they may suffer for the cause of God's kingdom. The wicked on the other hand has his expectations, but they are expectations based on everything worldly. They seek the pleasures, fame, and riches of this life, but scorn the law of God and despise his precepts. All these things that they seek after will perish, and therefore their expectation must also perish in outer darkness. Not so with the righteous, who long for God's fellowship now and who by his grace claim the righteousness of Christ as their only hope and salvation. That hope will never be put to shame. That hope is gladness and joy unspeakable realized unto all eternity. Psalter 363.

February 23

"Then he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27). The travelers to Emmaus, who were saddened in their souls by the events of the past few days, were unexpectedly met by a perfect stranger. In response to his question, they had unburdened their hearts. Their anguish concerned the death of the One whom they trusted to be the redeemer of Israel. Jesus answered by addressing them, "O fools and slow of heart." They were touched but not offended as Jesus reveals to them the only way possible how that the Christ could not attain the promised glory any other way than the Scripture revealed way of suffering and death. What a wonderful sermon Jesus expounded to them. Their eyes were opened, their hearts burned and they understood. People of God, we are privileged to hear similar sermons every Lord's day how that the Christ ought to have suffered, died, and rose again. The Old and the New Testaments agree with perfect unity regarding the plan of salvation. Believe this gospel with all your heart, and by grace cling to this Christ who brought us salvation. Psalter 58.

February 24

"For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11b). Have you learned this lesson, dear reader? That lesson is to be content no matter what your circumstances are in life. The grace of contentment is a wonderful and blessed state. By nature we tend to be discontented. It is so easy to become dissatisfied with various aspects of our lives. Perhaps you wish you could afford nicer clothes or a bigger house; maybe a better job or a prettier or more handsome face. And the list goes on and on. When the apostle Paul wrote these words he was in prison, nevertheless he was content. This is because contentment is a matter of the heart. It is a spiritual ability to conform our inner state to our outward conditions. Paul had to learn this when he prayed that God would remove the thorn in his flesh. The answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee". This is something we must learn also. We learn it by prayer and fellowship with God. When God is for us, nothing can be against us, for he beholds us in Christ and all things are ours for his sake. Psalter 100.

February 25

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). The disciples had just heard a wonderful confession by Peter that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus then revealed to them the path of suffering and death that awaited him, to which Peter said, "Be it far from thee Lord." Jesus rebuked him and then gave his disciples the threefold requirement for his followers. These requirements certainly conflicted with their illusions about Jesus. Instead of earthly glory and fame, one must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Jesus. To deny oneself means to be willing to become nothing and to lose everything for the sake of Christ. To take up one's cross means that you bear the hated of the world even as it revealed itself in its ultimate expression of hatred when they nailed the Savior to his cross. And as you bear

that cross, you follow the leading of the Lord, submissively and willingly, renouncing your own will. To walk this way takes grace. Pray for that grace to persevere in following Christ, and the reward, also of grace, is great beyond comprehension. Psalter 81.

February 26

"O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise" (Psalm 51:15). You will notice that this is a very personal prayer. The psalmist in the preceding verses had poured out his heart in deep confession and contrition for his terrible sins. Following the assurance of forgiveness, he asks God to open his lips in order to utter words of praise. This is a prayer that each of us personally must take on our own lips. But in order to do this, we must realize the implications of such a prayer. We read in Matthew 12:34, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." And so when we pray that our lips may be opened, we of necessity include that our hearts may be opened and cleansed by grace. Only then can we break forth in praise to God. He only is worthy of praise for he is the very essence of goodness. He is righteousness, holiness, truth, Creator and Redeemer. And these are only a few of his glorious virtues. Let us show forth his praises with open lips in word and song, and may our entire lives testify of his grace and goodness. Psalter 141.

February 27

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). Dear reader, as you hear the word of God preached to you, do you realize what you are experiencing? That word is described as quick and powerful. This means it is a living and mightily active word and not only that, but it is sharper than a two-edged sword. Any soldier going into battle will make certain that his sword is extremely sharp for his life may depend upon it. A sharp blade will easily penetrate a person's body. But the word of God is sharper than that sword for it penetrates into your deepest existence, your thoughts, aspirations, motives, and into your heart itself. It judges those thoughts and intents of the heart. It exposes us as we truly are. That word condemns us when it finds sin and hatred within. But it also reproves, and is a savor of life unto life to those in Christ from all eternity. Pray that that word may enter your heart as seed upon well-prepared soil and bring forth fruits of thankfulness and holiness. Psalter 334.

February 28

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" (Hebrews 4:14). We are called to do two things in this passage, namely, to see and to hold fast. The epistle to the Hebrews was designed to set before the Jews the claims of Christianity. No more were the animal sacrifices by an earthly priest required, for the great High Priest, Jesus Christ, offered up himself once for all and has passed into the heavens. The Hebrew believers were instructed that the types and shadows of the old dispensation had passed away and now they must see with eyes of faith that this great High Priest is exalted in glory. He is the author of their salvation. He is their Savior and Lord. This is our calling too as church of the new dispensation. We either profess Christ or we deny him. Let us hold fast therefore, by grace, to our Lord who as our High Priest, has sacrificed himself for us, makes continual intercession for us and who will one day come again to take us unto himself. Psalter 303.

March 1

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh" (Ecclesiastes 11:9, 10a). You will notice that Scripture addresses covenant youth in the masculine form, but the young women are included as well. One is not necessarily more spiritual than the other, nor more sinful. The very nature of young people is to be active. The young man has energy and stamina and the young woman is at the peak of her beauty. They are called to rejoice and walk in the ways of their heart and in the sight of their eyes. Young people, this certainly does not mean that you may do as you please, ignoring the fifth commandment and conducting yourselves according to your sinful natures and desires. There is a holy God who will bring you into judgment for those things. You are called to walk according to your regenerated heart and spiritually enlightened eyes by putting away all sorts of evil. Pray earnestly for grace to walk in a holy manner before God to whom you are accountable. Psalter 385.

March 2

"Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Psalm 19:12). The psalmist has exclaimed in the earlier verses of this psalm that the law of the Lord is perfect. His statutes are right and his judgments are true and righteous. In the keeping of them is great reward. Then he looks at himself inwardly as he examines the depths of his heart and realizes that often he has sinned unknowingly, not realizing at the time that what happened was indeed sinful. This type of sin is not only peculiar to the psalmist but to each of us as well. Perhaps because of a lack of spiritual discernment, we have sinned unknowingly and inadvertently, but they were sins nevertheless. We are called to discern our inmost thoughts and look at ourselves in the perfect light of God's law. We discover that we are guilty of secret faults. What must we do? By grace turn to God for understanding of these errors and pray for cleansing and forgiveness based on the redemptive work of Christ our Savior. Psalter 40.

March 3

"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" (Psalm 19:13). The psalmist has just prayed for understanding and cleansing from his secret sins. Now he asks to be kept back from presumptuous sins. What does this word mean? In this instance it refers to willful and deliberate sins. This is a great evil in the sight of God. Who among us can say that he is not guilty of this type of sin? There are times when we succumb to the lure of the devil, the world, or our own sinful flesh, and sin deliberately even though our conscience accuses us of wrongdoing. We must earnestly pray for deliverance from these sins that they may not have control over us. A similar motivation for deliverance is found in Psalm 119:133, "Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." Every step of our lives must be directed by the speech of God. Listen to that speech of God in the Scriptures. Study them, live in constant contact with them, carry them in your heart and be assured of forgiveness and pardon in the way of repentance. Psalter 38.

Greetings from the Federation Board

In light of several recent events, the Federation Board has recognized that we may not be as visible in our operations as we would like. As elected representatives of the young people in our churches, we feel the need to ensure that they are aware of what we are doing. And not only the young people, but also their parents and any other member of the church—we are beneficiaries of your support in many ways: encouraging the young people in their volunteering (and often being the ones to drive them around), attending their fundraisers, or volunteering to help or chaperone at conventions. You too are a very active part of what we are trying to accomplish at the Federation Board, and we would like you to understand what you are supporting.

The current members of the Fed Board are Karl Dykstra (President), Joel Bodbyl (Vice-president), Bennett Meyer (Treasurer), Jon Pastoor (Vice-treasurer), Leah Koole (Secretary), Emily Dykstra (Vice-secretary), Lauren Kraker (Librarian), Justin Koole (Youth Coordinator), Rev. Garry Eriks (Spiritual Advisor), and Rev. William Langerak (Spiritual Advisor).

Much of our schedule is spent completing the annual duties of the Fed Board—planning our various Mass Meetings and Singspirations, overseeing the Scholarship Committee and the *Beacon Lights*, and keeping track of and aiding the progress of the upcoming conventions. We are constantly trying to ensure that these events and institutions are both beneficial and interesting to the young people of our churches.

In addition to these annual duties, another major concern of the Federation Board is finances. We often deal with large sums of money, handling money from fundraisers and young people's dues. In respect to this we have undertaken a major project that will solidify the legal standing of the Federation Board in the eyes of the IRS, a standing that was somewhat gray before. We are in the process of becoming 501C3 certified—which will register us as a non-profit agency, allow tax-exempt donations, and clear up any potential confusion that may have arisen.

Also, there have been several questions as to the Federation Board's disbursement of funds for various projects. In the past, the balance of the Fed Board varied greatly, and the Board had to be very careful in its financial dealings. We have been blessed recently with a large increase of funds, and while good financial stewardship is still our major concern, we have re-evaluated our practices and decided that we should have more

Back Left to Right: Joel Bodbyl, Rev. Eriks, Rev. W. Langerak, Ben Meyer, Jon Pastoor, and Justin Koole.
Front Left to Right: Lauren Kraker, Emily Dykstra, Leah Koole and Karl Dykstra

freedom in our funding. After all, our goal is not to build up a large balance, but to serve as an intermediary for the young people, providing funding when necessary and prudent.

As we said before, we are the representatives of the young people. As such, we desire the prayers and considerations of the church as we set out to complete the work that is before us. In all we do, we strive to be good stewards of the resources we have been given, to represent the young people well, and to set a godly example by our actions, events, and attitudes.

In Christ,
Karl Dykstra, President ❖

Karl is a member of Trinity Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.

Church Family

Living According to God's Will: In Stewardship

by Vicki Cnossen

Now that we've briefly discussed the will of God, we can more effectively apply it to specific areas of our lives. In this article we will look at how we are to live according to God's will in regards to stewardship.

Exactly what is stewardship? Stewardship is knowing that all that you are, and all that you have belongs to the LORD. Stewardship is using the means God has entrusted to you to his glory and the good of his kingdom. (Ephesians 2:10) Just as you confess with joy the truths of Lord's Day 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism, so also you must apply this beautiful truth to your daily life with all that you are, and all that God has given you.

If we are to understand our stewardship, we must believe that God must first be served. (I Cor. 10:31) This is the extreme opposite of what you hear and read and see in the evil world in which you live. The devil wants nothing more than for you to believe the lie, that you have the right to anything and everything that you desire; the lie that you have the right to do whatever you want with the things you have. But you, dear precious child of God, are his. You are not your own, but you belong to God. He has bought you with the price of the death of his own Son, giving you the victory over sin. He has put the new life of Christ in you, and has called you to do his will. As found in Matthew 6:33, his will is for you to seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. Your confession must be that of which you sing: "All that I am I owe to Thee." (Psalter #383) To better understand how you can live according to this command of God, let's look a little closer at three areas of stewardship: time, talents, and possessions.

Your time, talents, and possessions belong to God. They are his, just as you are his. He has, in his perfect, sovereign will, given you a certain amount of time, talents, and possessions. These gifts God has entrusted to you differ from anyone else. God has given you exactly the amount that is enough for you. And with these gifts comes the command to use them to his glory and the benefit of the body of Christ. (I Peter 4:10) You are to use not just some of them, not just some of the time, but all of your gifts, all of the time. This requires diligence; constant and earnest effort. The opposite of diligence is slothfulness and laziness. (Prov. 6:6-11, and Prov. 24:30-34)

Consider for a moment the amount of time God has entrusted to you. Do you put him *first* with your time? Does your time of prayer to your maker, the study of his Word, and the serving of others in the body of Christ take priority over the time you spend engrossed in TV, sports, video games, working, and sleeping? How easy it is to simply say, "I just don't have enough time." What? Not enough time? God has given you just the exact amount of time that is good for you. Would he not give you enough time to serve him? "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." You may tell yourself that you're young, and you have plenty of time for more serious study of God's word in years to come. Is this the will of

God, the command of God to you? Play hard now, relax as much as possible now, seek first the pleasures of this world, and wait until you're older to use your time (His time) to serve and honor him? No. You are called to redeem the time. (Eph. 5:15-17) Do you strive to "find" time to study his Word and prepare for catechism just as heartily as you "find" time to get yourself ready for school or a date? Do you make as much time for prayer as you do for sports or time on the computer chatting with friends? Obviously, taking care of your physical body, participating in sports, and talking with friends is not wrong. God gives us time (and all earthly gifts) to enjoy. (I Tim. 6:17-19) But enjoyment is not to be the primary way in which your time is to be spent. As found in verse 19 of I Timothy 6, your time must consist of preparing yourself for your eternal home.

Consider also the talents, or abilities, that God has entrusted to you. Again, these are God-given, and while he has entrusted them to you, he still owns them, and calls you to use them to his glory. Just as with time, the abilities that God has given to you are different from anyone else. (Romans 12:1-9) Whether your ability is music or speaking, intelligence or creativity, you must use your abilities *first* to serve God and his church. This means work—diligence—not laziness. This means striving to do your best. (Romans 12:11) Do you consider this when you are completing a homework assignment? When you are playing an instrument, or singing? When you are playing sports? When you are working? (Remember, health and strength are gifts from God, and may not be taken for granted.) Along with doing your best, the command is also to do your best, putting God first. Do you rush through it just to get it finished? When you are playing an instrument, do you keep in the front of your mind that you must play for the glory of God, rather than the recognition of your peers? Are you using your intelligence to acquire the best-paying job so as to have all the money you'll ever need to live a more-than-comfortable life; or are you always considering how you can use this gift to God's honor and the welfare of his church? Doing this requires humility and self-denial. (Romans 12:3, 16) No matter which abilities, or how many, you do not have the right to do what you wish with them. God owns you and the gifts he has given to you, and commands you to seek *first* his kingdom and his righteousness. Pray earnestly for the desire to do so, and be thankful to God for the gifts he has blessed you with.

And, finally, a brief consideration of the possessions God has given you. At the risk of being repetitive, the possessions God has entrusted to you are *his*. Not yours to do with as you wish. Young child of God, you live in a very prosperous time, characterized by extreme materialism. You are bombarded with the message, "What you want, you should have. What you have, you should use it however you wish. And if you don't have it, do whatever it takes to get it. Use a credit card. And the debt? Ah, don't worry about it—everyone has debt. Work more hours to get it. Give less to the causes of the Kingdom. Do whatever you can do to get it, because everyone else has it, and you deserve it, and you will not have happiness without it." Oh, but that's not what the Word of God tells you. You are not told in Scripture to do whatever it takes to have the best of everything—clothes, accessories, car, home, toys. (Luke 12:15-21) God's will (command) is that you pray for your daily bread, and be content with what God gives you, (I Tim. 6:6-8) trusting that God will provide your needs. (Matt. 6:31,32) Give to the causes of his kingdom. Rev. Carl Haak states in *The Standard Bearer*, Vol. 68, Issue 11: "The way of giving is the way of blessing. Greed, stinginess, covetousness result in spiritual barrenness. We are not made poor by liberal giving to God's church and kingdom. Much rather, we shall experience blessedness. The promise of God is twofold. He says, "I will return unto you," (Malachi 3:7) that is, in the way of a sincere stewardship we are given to enjoy the lovingkindness of God. God also says that he will richly supply our earthly needs, often beyond our imaginations. (Malachi 3:10b)

With the warning of desiring earthly wealth and possessions also comes the warning of being wasteful, careless, and sloppy. (Prov. 10:4, Prov. 18:9) God forbids, in the eighth commandment, all abuse and waste of his gifts. (Lord's Day 42 of the Heidelberg Catechism) Be resourceful. Take special care of the earthly possessions God has given to you. Strive to use his gifts according to his commands.

Precious child of God, pray for the desire to seek and live a spiritual life. Pray for the humility needed to do so. Pray that he will teach you to live according to this command, and search the Word of God so you will know what his will is for you. You are God's precious child, and you belong to God, body and soul, time, talents, and possessions. Hold fast to his promise of your eternal reward. Matt. 16:27: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." ❖

Vicki is a member of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church in Byron Center, Michigan.

Rev. C. Hanko

Chapter 31

Bradenton, Florida and Other Travels

edited by Karen Van Baren

Editor's Notes: Rev. Hanko worked in Bradenton, Florida for over a decade. He always hoped to get a church established there and to that end, for a few years, did stay year round, rather than going for just the winter. Toward the end of his work there, the Domestic Mission Committee took over the work and the group moved its services to Venice. It was in the year 1992 that the DMC decided to close the field.

For a few years I enjoyed teaching Dutch in the seminary. Allie worked in Hudsonville Public Library and also for Vern Klamer on his celery farm.[1] But there were also opportunities to do a bit of traveling and church visiting for the classis.

In 1980, Allie and I started going to Florida. I preached at services for PR snowbirds in Bradenton. At first we went there for a very short time, only a month or two, but this was gradually increased so that by 1989 we stayed the whole year, except for a visit to Michigan in the spring and in the fall.

For the first winters, we stayed in an apartment on 20th Street east of the city. We first held services in the hotel in downtown Bradenton. Later, we met in the Christian school on 16th Street.

During one year in Bradenton, we stayed with Pete and Fannie Lubbers in a cottage on the Anna Maria Island about eleven miles from the church.[2] Because of the Sunday traffic, if often took us an hour to get home and another hour to get back to church. Since we had a 3 o'clock service in the afternoon, we had time only for a hasty lunch. It was nice to be within walking distance of the gulf, but the wind howling under the house at night made the floors very cold. Often we kept our socks on when we went to bed at night.

In later years, we stayed in a trailer in the K&K Trailer Court on 14th Street in Bradenton. We often traveled to and from Florida with Owen and Irene Peterson, Bertha Dusselje and Nell Reitsma.[3]

As time went on, we did not continue to have services in the Christian school, but moved to the Academy near Blake Hospital. At the Academy, children, whose parents evidently did not want to send them to the local public schools, were taught. This was a suitable meeting place for us. Our attendance was very good, even including couples from various parts of the US and Canada. If nothing else, we were a small voice in the Reformed church world presenting Reformed preaching.

After one winter in Bradenton, we returned to Michigan briefly and then shortly thereafter, Owen Petersen, Allie and I started out for Ripon, California to work there toward possible organization of a congregation. I had received a request to work there for four or five months. The trip through Wyoming was a bit strenuous because of the strong head wind. We held the accelerator down to the floor, yet could make only fifty miles an hour. The gas ran through the car like water. Toward sunset, we arrived in Salt Lake City. Since the wind had calmed down and the weather was good we decided to go on another hundred miles to California. The next morning there was a layer of snow on the ground, which made the mountain passes very slippery.

That night we stayed in Sacramento and informed Mr. Roorda of our coming. The next day, we drove to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Roorda in Ripon. We soon made their acquaintance. It became clear to us that one of the men of the group had in mind a church in which he could have complete control. Since this man was the one who sent the invitation to the mission committee, we had to work with him for awhile.

That night Owen and I slept in Roorda's motor home, while Allie slept in the house. The next day we took Owen to the San Francisco airport, from which he left to return home.

A few hours later Rev. Houck came by plane. He

worked with me for a short time. After a day or two, Mr. Roorda and I went to rent some furniture and Allie and I moved into a cottage in the rear of Meindert Roorda's home. Meindert, a son of Mr. Roorda, was friendly, but his wife was the daughter of a CRC minister, and neither one was interested in leaving their church.

On Sunday I attended a Congregational church of which Rev. Miller was minister. Upon his request, I preached for him in the morning service of April 17. The same afternoon we started our own services in the Congregational church.

During our stay in Ripon, Allie and I made a trip to Redlands. We spent a week there, and I preached twice on Sunday. On our way back to Ripon, we visited Sequoia National Park. As we were coming out of the park, the right wheel of our car hit a large boulder that had fallen on the road. While I put on the spare tire, Allie signaled a warning to the traffic coming around the corner. The next morning our car was ready to go again, so we went to King's Canyon, and then headed back to Ripon.

During the early years of my retirement, I was able to help out our congregation in Lynden a number of times. On one of our visits, we stayed for six weeks. We left early in the morning and arrived in Vancouver by way of Minneapolis, Portland and Seattle. Since Lynden was vacant, I took over all the work in the congregation, including catechisms, societies, consistory meetings, and daily visits either at the parsonage or among the members of the church.

While I was in Lynden, two young men of the congregation came to the consistory to make public confession of their faith. The consistory asked me to question them. I was a bit hesitant to do this, because I did not know the young men and they did not know me. But I was amazed at the wonderful account they gave of their knowledge of the truth and of their own conviction. The public confession took place a few weeks later. I was also able to marry a young couple while there.

During my stay in Lynden, I had an infection in my toe. This became so painful and swollen that I could not wear a shoe for a few days. Finally, after repeated soaking, the infection cleared up.

Also during our time there, I went to Calgary by plane to meet Rev. Tom Miersma, then minister in our Edmonton congregation. We spent two days visiting with a family who were connected with the churches that separated from the Gereformeerde Gemeenten (Reformed Congregations) in the Netherlands in 1953. This group left with Rev. Steenblok who had a view of God's covenant similar to ours.[4] We could agree on many things, but the strong mystical tendency in that family stood between us. We were well received, sat up late talking, and were treated like royalty. The threat of a blizzard cut our visit a bit short. Rev. Miersma brought me to the plane to return to Vancouver and Lynden. Shortly thereafter, Allie and I returned to our home in Hudsonville.

On another preaching trip to Lynden, I stayed for three months. Again, I had a bit of trouble with the cataracts developing on my eyes. This time I could not see very well. Our biggest problems were the narrow roads, the stop signs and stop lights. But Allie assisted me as co-pilot, just in case I should fail to see the signs. We once more enjoyed our stay there, especially because it was during the summer months and the long days of the year. Various members of the congregation took us out to see the places of interest in the area.

We took a boat trip among various islands with Henry and Cathy Vander Meulen, and Mrs. Ralph Vander Meulen.[5] We were supposed to get off at one of the islands and wait for a boat to take us back, but Henry and I were so deeply wrapped in conversation that the boat was already pulling away from the port when we decided we had to get off. As a result we rode all the way to Vancouver Island, where we passed through customs and returned to the boat. The rest of the party had gotten off and wondered what happened to us. They took their boat back and waited for us on one of the islands where our boat would stop. So we all got together again, but we were a bit shaken up.

As soon as we were back in Michigan, Allie went to work at Klamers, but had to take a day off for a check up in Ann Arbor. Herm accompanied us on this trip, leaving about 4 o'clock in the morning. Around this time, I submitted to an operation for the removal of one of the cataracts.

I might remark in passing, that about this time, my sister, Corrie Vander Woude, felt that she could no longer be alone and decided to join her husband in the Christian Rest Home.

During the summer months of 1986, Southeast Church was vacant, so I taught a Bible Class there for young adults. I had my second eye surgery late in the summer and the Bible Class sent me fruit at the time of my surgery.

I had another request to come to Modesto, California, because Rev. Houck, our missionary there, needed back surgery. I was met at the airport by Ted and Jean Westra. Ted and Jean were originally from Randolph, Wisconsin. I stayed with them for a week and then went to stay in the home of Bart Vander Wal. His wife was visiting the

Netherlands, and he wanted a bit of company.

I was at the hospital at the time of Rev. Houck's surgery. His wife was also there. During those few hours, I learned to know her and admire her spirituality. I also spent some time in the Houck home. They had a nice family and the children felt free to come and talk to me. But I was especially impressed by the training they received at the close of the meal, when the Bible passage that was read was also discussed.

Upon my return, Rev. Heys and I went on church visitation to Wyckoff, New Jersey. My grandson, Steve, picked us up at the airport and we stayed with him and his family.

Some time later, Allie and I left for Redlands. While Rev. Koole was at Synod we were invited to Redlands so that I could preach for them. Everett Van Voorthuysen picked us up at the international airport in Los Angeles.[6] It took him four hours to get there, and it took us longer to get back.

It was a pleasant experience to preach in their new church. It was also interesting to see the demolishing of the old garage of Rev. Koole and the building of a new one. We visited many families of the congregation and made a few trips with Hal and Punky Sansom, also members of our church in Redlands. One unforgettable trip was along the coast of the Pacific. We also took a trip to Big Bear with Thys and Jeanette Feenstra and Everett and Audrey.

Allie wanted to leave early so that she could work in the celery, so Hal and Punky took us two hours along the speedway to the International Airport. I left for Modesto to accompany Rev. Houck for a few weeks.

For ten days, I stayed with the Vander Wals in Modesto. For the last few days, I went to stay with the Ted Westras. That day we unintentionally upset every one in the group. Bart Vander Wal took me for a ride over the mountains to Virginia City. We seemed to have plenty of time, until about three o'clock in the afternoon we realized that we were still far from home. At 7 PM we were still no where near our destination, so Bart tried to call, but somehow could not get through. We had supper and continued on our way, but did not arrive at the Westras until 11 o'clock. By that time the Westras pictured us lying dead along the brink of some forsaken canyon. You can imagine their joy at seeing us, and the hasty calling from the Westras that all was well. Bart's wife said that she actually was planning his funeral.

After a few weeks, Mrs. Westra took me to Modesto to go by plane to San Francisco on my way home. This plane was so small and so heavily packed that Mrs. Westra was deeply concerned that it would never make San Francisco. But it did, and I arrived safely in Michigan once more. It is really quite amazing that with all the traveling that not only I, but all our ministers have done, there has been no fatality. The Lord has kept us in the palm of his hand, under his watchful eye.

Soon after, we were back in the trailer in Florida and we noticed an obnoxious odor of a dead animal. So I asked John Wigger and George Joostens to investigate.[7] The odor was by this time so bad that when Marf came up the driveway she was inclined to turn back.[8] With a bit of effort, John and George discovered a dead opossum next to the rear wheel, and gently hauled it away.

One Saturday morning, I was quite short of breath. At first I ascribed it to the heat, since the weather had turned quite warm. But it continued so that on Sunday I preached, but did cut the services a bit shorter. On Monday, Allie and I went to the trailer of George Yonker, where they had air conditioning, thinking that this might give relief. But after another miserable night, we went to a doctor. He said my pulse was not only fast, but that my heart was fibrillating, and sent me directly to the hospital. Allie called the Joostens, who were deeply concerned, and virtually hovered over us as long as I was in the hospital. In the meantime, Tom Heyboer supervised while Owen put an air conditioner in the trailer.[9] Tuesday I went into the hospital and on Friday, I came home. Herm came to preach for me and to take us back to Michigan for a brief respite. Rich, Elaine and Bob later took us back to Florida.

We had been holding services in the home of Lester De Jonge for a number of months. This was very sociable, since we had lunch together after the Sunday evening services. But we soon found it necessary to hold services in a hall that we rented on Shamrock Drive in Venice. The men put forth a lot of effort to prepare this hall for our services. The platform and pulpit were brought in. The partition was moved, making space for a small kitchen. Part of the floor was carpeted. Some eighty chairs were purchased for the overflow crowd in the winter. All in all, we had a very suitable place for worship.

While in Florida, I got up each week day morning while it was still dark, in order to bike at the crack of dawn until sunrise. I went to the mall, where the whole parking area was open for biking.

Since Venice was now under the supervision of the mission committee, supply was sent on a regular basis. Usually a minister came for two Sundays, and I took the third Sunday. But special arrangements were made when I went to Michigan, as I did when we received word that

my granddaughter, Ellen Dick, had died. At times like this, one wants nothing more than to be with family.

Some of the saints in Florida whom we grew to know and love suffered trials. Julia Korhorn fell and was taken to the hospital and from there to a nursing home. Her husband, Bert, was brought there also.[10] He later was taken to the hospital for a heart attack, where he died. This was only the second death we had during the years we were in Bradenton. The first was Gary Korhorn's wife.[11]

Sometimes, Rich and Elaine and some of their children would come to visit us over Christmas. During one of their visits, we went together to Epcot Center and enjoyed it, even though there were throngs of people everywhere. Our advantage was that we had a wheel chair to let us in ahead of the crowds.[12] We also went to Myaka Park.

I always enjoyed our time in Bradenton, but my health was starting to deteriorate. On one visit to Michigan, I tripped and fell as I went out of church. I did not hurt myself, but from that time on, I felt safer on crutches. Soon, I was entirely dependent on them. It was also necessary that if I preached, I had to sit on a stool to do so. I could no longer stand for that length of time.

I did visit the doctor about my increasing difficulties with walking. He took a number of X-rays and spent about two hours with us. The conclusion of the matter was, that, if anything were to be done, both hip and knee and femur would need replacement. This is a big job and a dangerous one, especially with a view to bleeding. So we were advised to go on as long as possible with the crutches.

In July of 1992, I came down with a blood clot in my lung. George Yonker and Owen took me to Blake Hospital, where I spent a week.[13] Allie also was experiencing various health problems at this time.

A short time later, I developed a pain in my chest, which proved to be bronchitis. I lost considerable weight during my illness, and tried to regain some of it. But with all our health problems it was decided that we should return to Michigan in the near future, and take all our belongings back with us. Owen and Menno Smits took care of selling the trailer.[14]

On March 15, 1993, Herm, Fred, Elaine and Rich came with the van. On Sunday, I preached my last sermon and bid the folk of Venice goodbye. They gave me a present of over a thousand dollars. Herm preached for me at night. And so, my work in Florida came to an end. I now considered myself officially retired and took up the work of writing this memoir. ❖

Endnotes

[1] Vern Klamer is a member of Hope PRC, Grand Rapids, and was a celery farmer in Byron Center. He kindly employed Allie on the farm for many years.

[2] Pete and Fannie Lubbers were members of Hudsonville PRC. Pete was a brother to Rev. George Lubbers.

[3] Bertha Dusselje was a member of Kalamazoo PRC who frequently traveled to and from Bradenton with Rev. Hanko and the Petersens. Owen Petersen was a long time friend of the family. His children include Rich, Jim and Andy Petersen, and Lois Richards.

[4] Rev. Steenblok was also opposed to the well-meant offer of the gospel and it was over this issue that he left the Reformed Congregations.

[5] Henry and Cathy VanderMeulen are still members of Lynden PRC. Mrs. Ralph Vander Meulen was Henry's mother.

[6] Everett is a long time member of Hope PRC in Redlands. Rev. Hanko knew him from the time he pastored Hope PRC.

[7] John Wigger is the father of Ben Wigger of Hudsonville PRC. George Joostens was the father of Bill Joostens of Grandville PRC. His wife Epke attends Hudsonville PRC.

[8] Marf refers to Martha De Zeuw, a sister-in-law of Rev. Hanko.

[9] Tom Heyboer was married to a niece of Rev. Hanko, Ardyth Griffioen.

[10] Bert and Julia were long time members of First PRC.

[11] Gary Korhorn was a long time member of Hope PRC, Grand Rapids.

[12] By this time in his life, due to his Paget's disease, Rev. Hanko used a wheel chair when the circumstances required a great deal of walking.

[13] George Yonker was a member of Hudsonville PRC, a friend of Rev. Hanko.

[14] Menno and Sadie Smits were members of South Holland PRC.

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

Church News

BAPTISMS

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

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Sadie Elisabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jim Knott—Byron Center, MI

Izaak Bradley, son of Mr. & Mrs. James Boorsma—Byron Center, MI

Maya Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy Driesen—Doon, IA

Luke Andrew, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kent Deemter—Faith, MI

Alivia Mae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Eric Doezema—Faith, MI

Treyton Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jim VanBaren—Faith, MI

Jacob Steven, son of Mr. & Mrs. Geoff Penna—Georgetown, MI

Levi David, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jon Mahtani—Georgetown, MI

Brooklyn Hope, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy Meulenberg—Grace, MI

Julia Rose, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tim Kleyn—Grace, MI

Carter Emko, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jon Regnerus—Randolph, WI

Brayden Clay, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brian Buteyn—Randolph, WI

Seth David, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Brands—Loveland, CO

Bailey Jaeann, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. John Tolsma—Loveland, CO

Joseph Ryan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Shaun Karsemeyer—Redlands, CA

Adrianne Olivia, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dale Lenting—South Holland, IL

Noah, son of Mrs. Kelli Gurevich—Southwest, MI/Pittsburgh PA

Jackson Carl, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tim Bleyenberg—Trinity, MI

Lawrence John, son of Mr. & Mrs. Phil Steenwyk—Trinity, MI

Annelise Joan, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jim Siertsema—Wingham, CAN

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6

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

Tamara Wierenga—Edmonton, CAN

Jeff Bouwkamp—Faith, MI

Tom VanderSchaaf—Faith, MI

Emily TerAverst—Georgetown, MI

Stephanie TerAverst—Georgetown, MI

Josh Engelsma—Hope, MI

Matthew Rutgers—Hope, MI

Dana Kuiper—Southeast, MI

MARRIAGES

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

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. David Mahtani and Miss Madri VanDerWalt—Bethel, IL

Mr. Chad Furrow and Miss Dawn Young—First, MI

Mr. Ernest Medema and Mrs. Helen Hop—Hope, MI

Mr. Nick Hopkins and Miss Sarah DeBoer—Hudsonville, MI

Mr. Ted Hoekstra and Mrs. Harriet VanLeeuwen—Hull, IA

Mr. Matthew Dykstra and Miss Stephanie Tolsma—Loveland, CO

The Journey

Men were talking;
some were laughing
in mockery.
We paid them no heed.
We were trotting,
sometimes leaping,
always moving
to arrive without delay.
Food was plenty on the way:
leaves of every sort and flavor,
dew refreshed to drink each day.
Alone we followed the lead.

Men were talking
and still laughing,
though strange beasts
still journeyed past.
Others stayed
and munched on grass.
Of my family and kind,
only I and my mate would find
the haven shared with goats and pigs,
and lions and bears,
and more
that were there.

Men were talking,
but no shameful laughing
rang inside the holy ark.
A window kept
away the dark,
and Someone
shut the door.
Our world
would be no more.

Then the pounding,
rushing, crushing
waters swirling, mounting waved—
destroyed all else,
and all us saved.

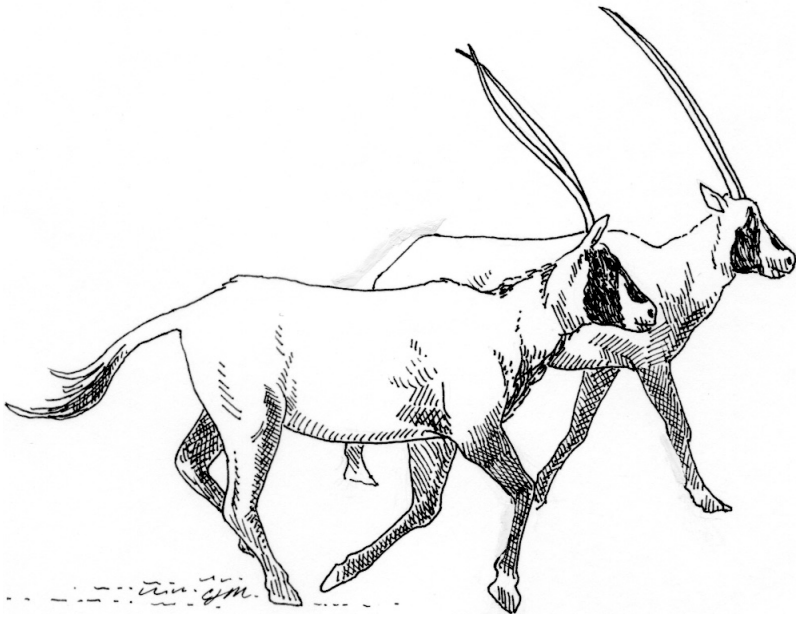
"LITTLE LIGHTS"

. . . let it shine !

by Connie Meyer

"They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in" (Genesis 7:14-16).

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



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

BEACON LIGHTS

P.O. BOX 144
Randolph, WI 53956

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

Join us and all your friends at

Covenant Hills Camp on

the east side of the great state of Michigan

July 14 through 18, 2008

hosted by Byron Center PRC

Registration deadline is May 1, 2008

Check out the web-site at

www.prcconvention.com