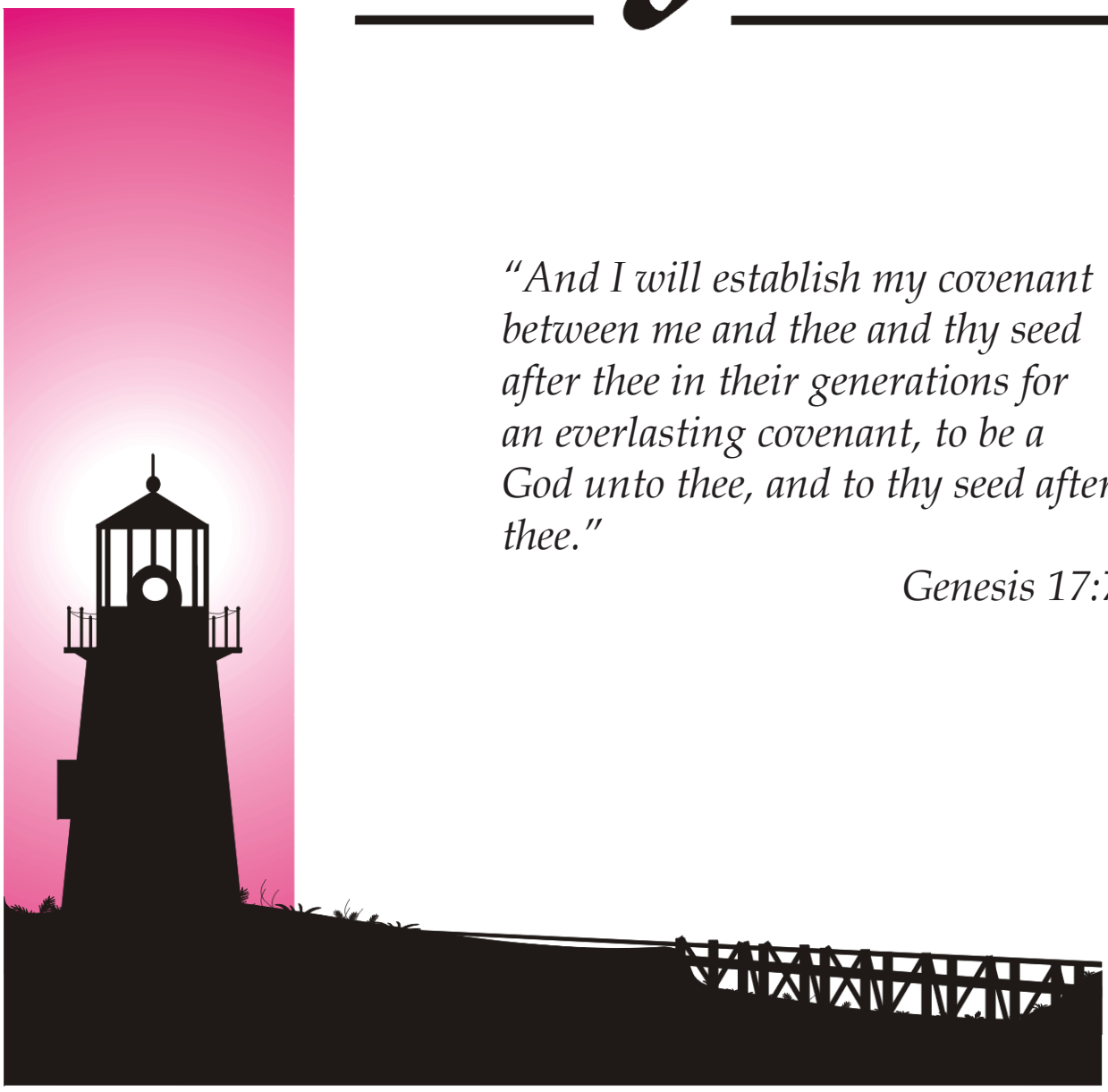
Beacon Lights

March
2008

Volume LXVII
Number 3



"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

Fruitful Branches
3 **Waiting Upon the Lord**

Church Family
4 **Living According to God's Will: In Entertainment**
6 **Memory Book Continued**

Where We Stand
8 **The Work of Children in the Church**

From the Pastor's Study
11 **Scripture's Teaching Regarding Alcohol (2): Proper Occasions for its Use**

Devotional
13 **Watching Daily At My Gates— February 16 – March 17**

Story Time
19 **The Gift (8)**

Gem of the Month
21 **The Foot Washing**

Memoir of Rev. C. Hanko
22 **Chapter 32: Trip to Northern Ireland—1993**

Church News
26 **Church News**

Little Lights
27 **Two Times (Part 1)**

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.

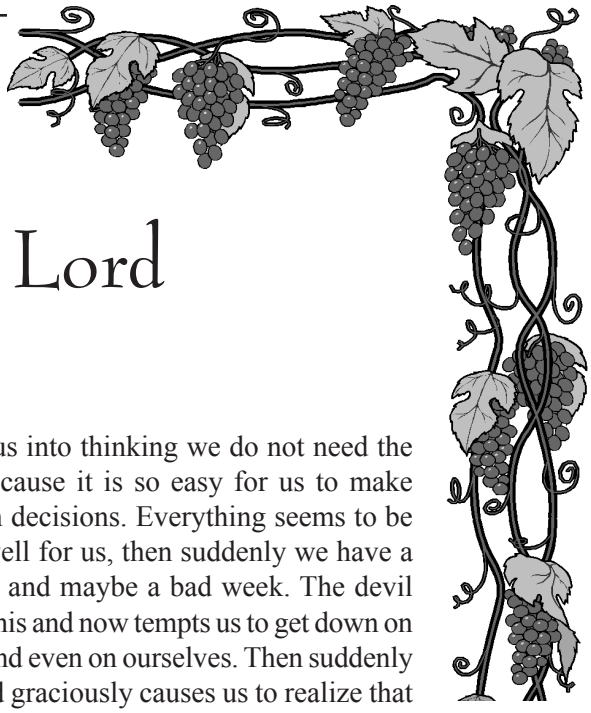
BOOK SALES
Becky Kalsbeek

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.



Waiting Upon the Lord

by Kris Moelker

On the second Wednesday of this month, the consistories call to worship the members of the Protestant Reformed Churches in observance of Prayer Day. At this special worship service, we are reminded of our complete dependence upon the Lord and ask him to bless our labors. Soon the farmers will prepare their fields and will plant their crops. Then they will have to wait on the Lord as he, according to his sovereign will, causes the seeds to grow and bring forth fruit.

Often in Scripture, we are reminded of our calling to wait upon the Lord. The devil is well aware how difficult waiting on the Lord can be for us as children of God. Our sinful flesh wants everything now. We do not want to wait. If our sinful flesh dominates our life, we easily become distressed, afraid, anxious and restless. When this happens, we must ask God for the strength necessary to resist the devil and remind ourselves that we can and must wait on the Lord.

Our life in this world is characterized by waiting. From our earliest days, our parents have taught us the importance of waiting patiently. Whether it was waiting for our fathers to return home from work, for visitors to arrive, a birthday or another special day, we had to be taught to wait patiently. This lesson was probably difficult for us to learn as toddlers and preschool age children. As soon as we started school, we quickly learned the importance of waiting patiently in the classroom and on the playground. We had to learn to be patient while we waited for our assignments and tests to be graded. We had to learn to take turns while we were playing with our fellow students. In junior high, high school and college we, as young people, must constantly wait on the Lord for direction in our decisions in regards to our future education and our employment. We must wait on the Lord as we look for a mate or seek to serve him in single life.

Remember, the Lord directs the paths of our lives. Since this is true, we must make a conscious effort to wait on him as he continually guides us down the paths he has chosen for each of us to walk. We all need to be reminded of this again and again. The devil so quickly tempts us into thinking we do not need the Lord because it is so easy for us to make our own decisions. Everything seems to be going well for us, then suddenly we have a bad day and maybe a bad week. The devil knows this and now tempts us to get down on others and even on ourselves. Then suddenly the Lord graciously causes us to realize that we are not continually depending upon him for his guidance.

When we go to God, asking for forgiveness for our failures in waiting on him, we are assured of his grace toward us. Our troubles might not automatically disappear, but he reminds us that he is close to us and will never leave us. We must wait on him as he leads us through good times as well as the difficult times. The Holy Spirit inspired David to remind us twice in Psalm 27:14 of our calling to wait on the Lord; “Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” In this Psalm, David confesses his complete trust in the Lord as his Light and his Salvation. Even though a host which is a huge army should encamp against him and go to war against him (verse 3); if his father and mother forsook him (verse 10); David believed the Lord would still be with him and be good to him. Cruel enemies were pursuing David, but he continued to trust the Lord’s leading him down a plain path.

As children of God, we must constantly ask him for the strength to wait patiently on him. How often do we forget to do this? Our personal prayers are rightfully filled with petitions to bless our loved ones, to bless the causes of the kingdom and to forgive our sins. Our prayers should not lack the request for the strength to wait upon the Lord. Each day we have to put forth a conscious effort to make this request. Then we ought to thank him for the grace we have been given in the past to trust in him alone.

In the way of confessing our trust in God alone, we will be made more aware of our complete dependence upon our God and Father. Committing ourselves to the

Lord in all of the circumstances of our life, we will experience a greater enjoyment of the Lord's blessing. Isaiah 40:31 speaks of this blessedness: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." We know we are unable do this in our own strength. The Holy Spirit must continue to give us this strength.

Depending on our Father, we experience a joy which cannot be taken away from us. As he speaks of the power of God in the salvation of his people, Isaiah testifies of this joy in Isaiah 25:9: "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." This salvation is graciously ours and nothing is able to take it away from us. We may be experiencing great difficulties in our lives. We may be facing great temptations, but we know God is in control. What a comfort this is for us and this gives us a joy which will never be taken away from us. ❖

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

Church Family

Living According to God's Will: In Entertainment

by Vicki Cnossen

Young reader, as God's child, what do you seek in the way of entertainment? What amuses you in your leisure time? Let's briefly consider what type of entertainment you should seek as you desire to live according to God's will.

When you ask your parents' permission to do something or go somewhere, and their answer is "No," your response might be "Why not?" or "What's wrong about it?" As we take a closer look at your choices of entertainment, instead of asking defensively, "What's wrong with it?" ask instead, "Will this be pleasing and honoring to God?" As children of God seeking to do his will, keep that in the front of your mind when making a decision regarding the type of entertainment you choose. "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (Col. 4:5).

Perhaps you enjoy reading in your leisure time. What motivates your decision when you pick up a new book or magazine? Ephesians 4:23 tells us: "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." If you are tempted to read the filth of the world, ask yourself how this would be pleasing to God. When you are tempted to say in defense, "Well, it's only a book, it's not as bad as what's on TV or in the movies;" remind yourself of this passage: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (I Thess. 4:7), and "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1).

When you make weekend plans with your friends, what is your purpose, your goal? Is it to go out and have as much fun as you can, fulfilling your earthly lusts and desires? Is it your happiness? Or, dear regenerated, sanctified child of God, is it your holiness? Your parents may not be with you, watching you, but don't ever forget that your Father in heaven never takes his eyes off you. God has commanded you to live antithetically. Have you made plans to go drinking and dancing? Remember what God's word says in Psalm 101:2: "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way;" and in Ephesians 5:18: "And be ye not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Does being entertained by the murders, fornication, the taking of God's name in vain, the desecration of the Sabbath day, disrespect of those in authority, stealing, lying, and covetousness on the television and in the movies and in the video games entice you? Consider the words of Proverbs 14:9: "Fools make a mock at sin; but among the righteous there is favor;" and Psalm 101:3: "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; is shall not cleave to me;" also, I Thessalonians 4:3: "For this is the will of God, even your

sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication". There are still more: Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord," and finally, Romans 1:18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

What about the dirty, filthy, rotten music that the world produces? Is that what you enjoy listening to and singing along with? What does God's Word tell us about that? Look at II Corinthians 6:14: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" Look up Ephesians 5:1-20, and read it well. I ask you to take the music of the world, considering the lyrics, the beat, the performer, and prove (test) it with these passages from God's Holy Word. Here's two more to consider; Proverbs 18:7: "A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul", and Proverbs 15:2: "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness."

Dear young reader, do not fill your ears and eyes with the works of fools. Fill yourself with the Word of God. You have been freed from the bondage of sin; "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1), and "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). There is no "in-between." There is no "I'm know that I'm a Christian, but I'm just having a little fun before I'm an adult." It's black and white: you either do God's will (the truth), or you do the works of the devil (the lie). "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).

To walk in the spirit is a constant battle, as verse 17 of Galatians 5 tells us: "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these things are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Verses 19-21 speak of the works of the flesh, and verses 22-23 are the familiar passages describing the fruit of the spirit. Then, in verses 24-25 we read: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit." These teachings continue on into chapter 6 of Galatians, where in verses 7 and 8 we read: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."

The works of entertainment that the world produces are works of lust sown to the flesh. Their very purpose is to satisfy the lusts of the flesh. As God's child, you may have NO part of being entertained by such works. The entertainment of this world is destructive to your very soul. God's will—God's command—is that you flee from the temptations of the worldly entertainment, and seek after that which edifies and profits your body, mind, and soul. I John Chapters 1 and 2 instruct us in how we are to walk in the light, keeping God's commands. Then we get to verse 17 of chapter 2 and read: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." In the very next verse we have the warning that "it is the last time." The time of the antichrist is fast approaching. I ask you: when the day of persecution comes, what words will fill your mind and soul? What memorized words will you recall to give you the strength and courage to confess the name of Christ? Let it be the word of God. Fill yourself with the promise and comfort of his Word, and the songs that declare his Word. Fill your mind and soul with the words of Ephesians chapters 4 and 5. If you keep these words in your mind you will know what God's will is for you when you consider your entertainment. Make that your earnest desire. Pray that God will give you this desire by the work of the Holy Spirit. God has already equipped you with the tools you need to fight the battle. Ephesians 6:10-11: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." The next seven verses are probably ones you have studied and memorized. Study them again. Memorize them again. Keep them in your heart, and in the front of your mind when you consider what should be entertaining to you as God's child.

God's word gives you the clear, final answer to your questions of entertainment: II Corinthians 6:17, 18, and II Corinthians 7:1: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." ❖

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

Memory Book Continued

by Ruth Ann De Boer

Thanks to Tom Cammenga for the inspiring article with his memories from our Psalter.

How interesting that in some instances his memories parallel mine! This is due, in part, to our common heritage in our primary and secondary education at Hope Protestant Reformed School and Covenant Christian High School.

How true it is that what we learn in our youth stays with us the rest of our life.

The appreciation of music is one of the great benefits of a biblically based, Reformed education. A biblical basis is taught in the area of music at all age levels. We have a rich heritage in our Psalter and the memorization of these psalms brings even richer meaning and comfort as we progress on our pilgrim's journey.

The blessing of these songs we have learned pick at our heartstrings as we hear them in church and home, programs, weddings and funerals. Words cannot express the life-long blessing of learning good Reformed music in the home and school.

The Christian soldier is built up through the means of *soul food*. The music of the world doesn't have this effect—it serves to arouse the sensual and worldly—however, Christian music feeds the soul and lifts us up to our heavenly Father on the wings of song. The theme of preaching and teaching is that it must have God and his Word as the center. In the larger sphere of school and home we are not limited to the Psalms because there is much music based on God's Word. For example, did you know that the *Messiah* contains over 50 direct quotes from the Bible? Many hymns are based on scripture passages and are Reformed and scriptural. We need wisdom to pick and chose and have a responsibility to instruct our children to make wise choices in these areas.

However, "Psalm singing is a Reformed heritage, rooted in the desire to be faithful to the Holy Scriptures." (*Psalm Singing* by Rev. J. Kortering) The following is a quote from John Calvin in defense of exclusive psalmody in divine worship:

"Wherefore, although we look far and wide and search on every hand, we shall not find better songs nor songs better suited to that end than the Psalms of David which the Holy Spirit made and uttered through him. And for this reason, when we sing them we may be certain that God puts the words, in our mouths as if himself sang in us to exalt his glory."

Here are a few of my own personal memories from our beloved "Psalm" book.

#10 Is special to me because it was the first Psalter my piano teacher had me learn to play. Later in life, I learned to appreciate the beautiful message of God's grace to his people.

#32 The association with this Psalter is mainly from the funerals of loved ones. We sang it at the funeral of my sister, brother, father and mother. The last verse is so meaningful. As we stand at the graveside and know that one day we will see his glorious face and view the glories that our loved ones are experiencing right now.

#67 The Psalter has several renditions of Psalm 25. They are all beautiful; however, this is my personal favorite. God's promises are sure—"Grace and truth shall mark the way where the Lord his own will lead…" We cling to that promise in the hills and valleys of our life.

#73 The title of this Psalter "The Confidence of Faith" tells us this is an encouraging song to sing in times of discouragement. "Be strong, nor be thy heart dismayed…Yea *trust and never fear*."

#83 Confession of sin is an essential part of our walk with the Lord. This Psalter is a paraphrase of Psalm 32 written by David. How blest are we when we know our sin is covered before Jehovah God because of the blood of the Lamb. Indeed, it thrills our heart to glorify our God with songs of salvation.

#100 If my memory serves me correctly, this was a favorite of my childhood pastor, Rev. Gerrit Vos. The title is the secret of tranquility—resting in the Lord with quiet trust.

#134 This Psalter speaks to me of the Sabbath and how we honor it. As a picture of the eternal Sabbath we go to God's house and are fed from the green pastures of his Word.

An important element of that is also our fellowship with believers of like faith. We will do this is perfection in heaven—of which the Sabbath is a picture.

#75 Another "Sunday Psalter" that I love. It's appropriate for all seven days to bless our God who "Holds our soul in life and upholds us in the strife." How we need this reassurance in the church service on Sunday

and every day as we carry out our life's calling.

#187 This is an all-time favorite tune—it's also the tune to a favorite hymn "Abide With Me." The melody has a beautiful tenor and high tenor line that is gorgeous. The words speak of God's attributes of lovingkindness and tender mercy. These attributes should be our also through the Holy Spirit that lives in our heart. The mark of a believer is that he demonstrates these attributes of his heavenly Father.

#200 is a favorite from my youngest years. In my mind's eye I see my mother going up and down the keyboard when she played it and I wanted to learn how to do that! School children love to sing and march around the room to this tune. Also the tune to Onward Christian Soldiers, we are reminded of how we are soldiers in the Lord's army and our Lord has dominion over all and is the King of kings. Our Psalter version is written a little "high" for many voices; this is easily remedied by playing the tune from a hymn book where it's usually found in E-flat major which brings it down a half step and makes it easier to sing.

#204 Another personal favorite—the tune is beautiful and the words speak of God's goodness. We have such comfort knowing that God holds our hand and is our refuge.

#222 The Psalms of praise and worship are favorites as well. The title is "Summons to Joyful Worship" and is a favorite to use in the prelude before the service.

#248 This was a favorite of our class as a young student. It speaks of God as our abode. What a beautiful picture that God covers us with his wings. This song is a good one to memorize so its words will come easily to us in times of trouble or persecution.

#263 The comment is made that the Psalter is lacking Christmas songs. This rendition of Psalm 98 is about our Redeemer. It doesn't mention a babe in a manger but a Savior who has brought salvation. These are glad tidings indeed! And that's the story of Christmas.

#306 The music is grand—the message even grander! We stand before the grandeur of a mighty God who reigns over all and on whom we rely every hour and every minute of every day of our lives. Recently, an arrangement of this Psalter has been a popular postlude after a wedding ceremony. The message is very appropriate as a couple starts down life's pathway together.

#311 This psalm is fitting for offertory and worship—reminding us that all we have belongs to God and we are but stewards. As saints, our very lives are living sacrifices to God.

#345 In my youth, we sang this song in the Hudsonville PR Church when a serviceman would be leaving for deployment at wartime. It was and is a poignant reminder that God is our unsleeping guardian. What a timeless message that he will keep us safe whatever the future holds.

#349 Here we have another beautiful song to begin a prelude or a worship service. It speaks again of our love for the Lord's house and to pray for Zion's peace. To have peace in the church we need to walk humbly with our God and esteem others higher than ourselves. This is only possible through God's own grace.

#359 My 3rd grade teacher taught us this song speaking of covenant blessings found in the children that God is pleased to give. How true that there is no greater joy than to see your children and grandchildren stalwart in the faith and walking in his truth.

#383 My apologies to Tom for duplicating one of his favorites. This is very special to me because my handicapped sister loved to sing it. I remember her singing "My life in all it's perfect plan was ordered ere my days began." That was her life's testimony. She is now singing in glory. It taught me that all of God's covenant children have a very special place in the hearts and homes of their loved ones.

#384 Several of our Psalter numbers have two tunes. This one is distinctive because both tunes are so beautiful and appropriate for the words. Who of us hasn't felt God's hand lead us to the right way when in the path of sin we stray? "Search me O Lord, and know my heart" is our prayer.

#406 This is another "Christmas" Psalter! The tune is *Christmas* and it is written by George Frederick Handel. The reference to various instruments reminds us to cultivate musical talents in our young children. The best time to develop talent is when one is young; and this skill will last a life-time. Parents and children be diligent in developing music talents.

#411 This doxology is beautiful. Psalm 150 again speaks of our praise to God through song and instruments. Clearly, music "plays" an important role in our life of thanksgiving.

#426 This Dutch Psalm was rendered at an all-school program given by Hope Protestant Reformed School. Once a year, we would make our annual trek downtown to practice in the *big* First PR Church. This was a highlight of the year and the teachers worked long and hard to teach us the songs and verses. The church would be almost full to capacity. There would be friends and loved ones looking from three sides from the balcony and the auditorium. We would be admonished to stand quietly

when we stood up from the folding seats. This was a lesson in dignity that was expected in the Lord's house. We would wait expectantly in the basement to take our turn and then for the Grand Finale the entire school would sing together. This song of love to God from Psalm 116 was sung whole-heartedly and brought tears to the eyes of many. It was a little picture of the beauty of heaven. I am filled with gratitude for all these precious songs that were committed to memory in my youth.

To God be all the glory. ❖

Ruth Ann is a member of Grandville Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.

Where We Stand

The Work of Children in the Church

by Lisa Kalsbeek

"Children have an important work to do in the church. It is not reserved for when they make confession of faith someday in the future when the they get to be 16, 17, or 18. However, the work of the children in the church is now, and that important work is this: to obey all those who are in authority over you, especially obey your parents."

This word of God was preached by Professor Gritters in a sermon at Peace Church August 22, 2007 entitled "Honoring Those in Authority." The text was from Proverbs 13-26. I found this sermon to be especially suitable for our younger readers, and have quoted extensively and adapted many of the concepts for use in this article.

In Lord's Day 39 we read, "What doth God require in the fifth commandment? That I show all honor, love, and fidelity to my father and mother and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; and also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities since it pleases God to govern us by their hand."

This commandment is this first under the section of the law to love your neighbor. We have learned from the previous four commandments that God is God that deserves all love honor, and fidelity. He is a God of holiness. A God who cannot be represented by images. A God who is jealous of his holy name. A God who sanctified a day to revere his holy name. Then God demands specifically that children are to honor their father and mother. By mentioning them immediately in the second table of the law, it shows that children definitely do have an honorable calling in the church.

Professor Gritters continued in the sermon: "How do we show this obedience to our parents? This command starts with the word *honor*. Honor means that you respect them, reverence them, fear them. Hold them up in high esteem. That you look at them the right way without rolling your eyes or casting a blank stare, and listen to them in the right way. Honor doesn't mean fear, that you are afraid of them. If any of us parents raise our children in such a way that our children are afraid of us and terrified of us, we need to rethink fundamentally how we rear our children. They must not have a terror of us. Not only must we rethink the rearing of our children,… But we must repent so that our children fear us and respect us and are not terrified."

This is where the world does not give us any help, and that's where churches are falling apart at the seams. Children must reverence. What do we learn from worldly music, television programs? Blatant disrespect. Biting sarcasm. Parents must do everything in their power to see that their children respect them. Even if that means throwing away your child's CDs or DVDs. Even if it calls for you throwing away the TV.

Children are to *love* their parents. That comes out from the summary of the law. Love God and love your neighbor. By obeying his first four commandments, you are loving God. This is not just an earthly love: that they feed you, provide your clothing, and a place to live. You love them as brothers as sisters in Christ. You pray for them.

You are also to exercise *fidelity* or faithfulness to them. "Like the relationship of husband and wife, there is a bond of friendship between a parent and child. Though there are differences between the spousal relationship

and the child/parent relationship—they are tied together by God in friendship. Just as a man can be unfaithful to the covenant bond of marriage, so also children can be unfaithful to the bond with their parents. Children are called not to break that bond. The next time, children, you think about what you are going to do, and you know your parents will be very displeased, then you need to think about this is these terms. Will this dishonor my parents? Is this a disrespect of them? Am I breaking faith with them? Am I being unfaithful to them in the bond that God created between me and them? What I am doing to that relationship?

> Submission means that I willingly, and consciously put myself under their authority.

"Now it's one thing to say that I honor my parents, and another thing to show that. The Lord's Day states 'And submit myself to their good instruction and correction….' Submission means that I willingly, and consciously put myself under their authority. I see them as a God-given authority, and give myself to that authority. And I want to do that as well. That is submission. In the heart and mind, realizing the place I have in the family and realizing the place that God has given them in authority over me. God knows our inner motivations, and can see if we do not have a true submissive spirit."

The catechism says that we are to submit to their instruction and correction with due obedience. "Obedience, young people of God, means that we are to physically carry out this instruction and correction and refrain from doing it again." It means that we carry out your parent's rules, even if it is unpopular amongst your friends.

Even before your profession of faith, you lead your lives as examples for others. Your younger siblings definitely pay close attention to you in what you listen to, in what types of clothes you wear. Your siblings especially notice what kind of respect you have toward your mom and dad. They often are spectators in the home if there is an argument. Take heed, therefore, that you watch your tongue, and obey as God has commanded you.

"Do you love God? If you say yes then, do you love your parents? If you don't love your parents, then you really don't love God. The relationship between first and second tables of the law—all of those commandments are proof that you love God (in commandments 1-4) and your neighbor (5-10). The evidence that we love God is that we also love our neighbor."

"All in authority over me…." This part of the question and answer broadens the commandment to reach beyond the scope of the child/parent relationship. In all the other scripture passages that deal with this commandment, it also deals with the other areas of authority. Ephesians 6 talks about the parent/child relationship but then extends it also to servants and their masters. The end of Ephesians 5 speaks about the relationship between the husband and wife. Colossians 3 (a parallel passage of Ephesians) also speaks about those relationships. I Peter 2-3 are chapters that deal with all the spheres of authority which grow out of the parent/child relationship including the role of government in the lives of its citizens, employees in a business and such like. God ordained it in a way that all mankind is subject to one another through these different spheres of authority.

Children are subject to the direct authority of their father and mother. Most of us know what the Bible requires of their children in obedience to their father. This relationship should imitate the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. God the Father commanded, and it stood fast—especially in regards to creation and establishing the law. God the Son (Christ) obeyed by drinking the cup of humiliation, drinking death unto himself for his people. Though children rarely have to suffer that kind of sacrifice in their lives, yet their "cross to bear" while they are yet children is the obedience to their parents.

> (S)ometimes children respect their father, but not their mother. Sometimes it goes the other way too.

"It is important to say that because sometimes children respect their father, but not their mother. Sometimes it goes the other way too. They are willing to listen to their dad's commands. Maybe that's because their dad has a firmer hand. The word of God says to obey both their father and mother. Do you listen to her good instruction and correction?

"Secondly, this authority over children is given to the teachers in the school. God has placed teachers in the place of the parents as a substitute. Young people, your attitude in regards to your teachers should be this: that God placed them over me, and I must consciously

obey their authority, and never rolls my eyes or whisper behind my hand about them. I shall see them as an authority over me.

"When you children learn how to respect your parents first and then your teachers, then that will put you in good standing as how to obey your employers that you should have Lord willing in the future." You are called to respect him or her too. Even when he says to do this, or don't do this…. You *will* obey. If you do not obey, you will have a hard time maintaining a job, apart from the fact you are disobeying God.

Young women, living in our feministic culture today, the last thing a woman would want to hear is that she is in subjection to her husband. This too, is something that is quite unpopular and shunned as narrow-mindedness by the media. Ephesians 5:24 is especially strong in explaining that "[even] as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in *every thing*." Husbands, in response, must love their wives as themselves. Instead of an idea that each spouse gives half, wives are to respect and husbands are to love wholeheartedly, one-hundred percent; thus, living in and through each other as one.

"This idea of obedience also applies to the government. Young people, you are to obey the policemen, president, governor, and judges. You honor and respect them." You don't ignore those laws set up by the rulers of our land, even if they seem unfair. Pay your taxes. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17). We may never forget the connection between our obedience to the laws of the land and the laws of God revealed to us in Romans 13:2 "whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." That includes those who resist the call of the draft or ignore IRS regulations, and such like.

We are also called to submit to our elders in the church. When you make profession of faith, you submit to the government of the church. Before you make this profession, you still are under the authority of the church. The entire congregation is subject to their rule. They are tending the flock of God.

What if those in authority command something that I may not do? Here is where the due obedience part of the catechism comes in. "With due obedience" qualifies how, when, and why obedience should be administered. If I am commanded to disobey God, then I may refrain. If the government requires of us to disobey God by worshipping in his house on the Lord's Day, we cannot obey that requirement. If your parents, children and young people, command you to lie to your teachers at school, you must not.

Acts 5:29 states that "we ought to obey God rather than men." Despite the fact that Peter and other apostles in the early church would go to prison for preaching Christ crucified, they realized where their respect should be. We must obey God rather than man. There are things that are required of us that are hard to obey. Even though there may be unfair requirements of government and unjust treatment from employers, we must obey them as God has given them as authority figures over us. Only when we are called to disobey a command of God are we to disobey with a *humble, submissive* spirit. We are not to sue them for pain and humiliation. God is my authority over me.

"It is hard to do because our parents have weaknesses. That is why the catechism says that our children must bear with us patiently." Elders aren't sinless, neither are ministers of the word. We all have been conceived and born in sin. That's what makes this command so difficult. Because we see the sin of those over us, we think that is some sort of justification for disobedience. However, God commands us to obey. Christ in obeying God, Christ obeyed completely righteous, holy God.

How can we do this? Only by the grace of God are we given the ability to obey. God gave you that husband. God gave you that teacher. God gave us these elders. God gave you that mother. It pleases God to govern us by their hand. All authority is God's—every bit of it. See Christ in your teachers and your husbands. See Christ in your parents and employers. Though they may be full of sin, Christ put them over you.

What is our reward? "For thy days may be long in the land which to LORD thy God giveth thee." Not an extended earthly life, but a heavenly reward with him in glory.

"For thou art my hope, O Lord God; thou art my trust from my youth. By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee" (Psalm 71:5-6).

"The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice; and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice" (Proverbs 23:24). ❖

Lisa is a member of Peace Protestant Reformed Church in Lansing, Illinois.

Scripture's Teaching Regarding Alcohol (2) Proper Occasions for its Use

by Rev. Douglas Kuiper

Drink no longer water, but use a little wine
for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.
I Timothy 5:23

In our last article, we saw that God permits the use of alcoholic beverages. But what constitutes the proper use of alcohol?

This is an important question. He who is concerned to ask it, and answers it rightly, guards against sin in his use of alcohol. You and I ought to be concerned with knowing what the proper use of alcohol is.

In this article we begin answering the question by examining the proper occasions for using alcohol, and the proper purposes for using it.

* * * * *

Scripture allows for the use of alcohol in certain instances.

One is on occasion of sickness; we may use alcohol for medicinal reasons, for the purpose of improving our health.

The pastor Timothy had stomach problems, which were caused by, or at least aggravated by, his drinking water exclusively. To address his stomach ailments, Paul tells him to drink a little wine. Paul was not prescribing one dose of wine; but Timothy was to use a little wine, regularly. Literally, Paul told him, "continually use a little wine."

Another is on occasion of joy; we may use alcohol to contribute to a joyful outlook on life, especially when we have reasons for true joy. "A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry," we read in Ecclesiastes 10:19. Is Solomon merely stating that this is why wicked men have feasts with wine? No; even in Israel, God ordained certain feasts, at which wine was permitted. And remember that God gives "wine which maketh glad the heart" (Psalm 104:15). The purpose here is to promote joy.

The Lord's Supper is a particular instance of such an occasion. Commemorating the death of Christ and its benefits for us, the believer partakes with true joy in his heart. To give us a picture of that joy, and to strengthen our faith that God does give us true joy (for we might not always feel truly joyful), Christ commanded us to drink wine. At that sacramental feast, wine is drunk to point us to the true joy that we have in Christ. The purpose of using wine in this instance is to point us to Christ, to enjoy the true joy we have in him.

But any feast, even if not that of the Lord's Supper, is a time of joy; and wine or strong drink is not forbidden at such.

If wine contributes to joy, may we drink it when we are discouraged? The wise Christian may. It takes wisdom to know how much - but we read in Proverbs 31:6: "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts." Some think that Lemuel's mother is being sarcastic here; but not so. In the first part of the verse she certainly is not sarcastic; strong drink serves a medicinal purpose for one ready to die (it relieves their pain) and a calming purpose (it relaxes them and calms their fears). If she is not sarcastic in the first part of the verse, she cannot suddenly be so in the second part. Because wine, properly used, cheers one up, the child of God may drink wine when discouraged. A little wine! Then one's purpose is that one be put in a better frame of mind to serve God with joy.

While these instances are specifically mentioned in Scripture, the Christian is free to use alcohol properly in any instance in which Scripture does not forbid him to do so.

* * * * *

So when may the Christian not drink alcohol?

FIRST, in certain company we may not drink alcohol.

We may not drink it in company of drunkards. "Be not among winebibbers," Proverbs 23:20 tells us; we must avoid wine whenever we are around those who cannot use it within the proper limit—for two reasons.

First, if they cannot drink within the proper limit, they will encourage us also to drink past our limit. Second, we are to manifest the antithesis by not keeping company with the wicked; and drunkards are those who will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 5:11, I Cor. 6:10).

We may not drink it in company of fellow Christians who fight against the sin of drunkenness. Romans 14:21says, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." We do not want to be an occasion for our brother to drink to his condemnation.

We ought not drink it in company of fellow Christians who exercise their liberty by avoiding alcohol, and particularly those whose conscience would accuse them of sin if they did drink it. For one to do what he thinks is sin, is sin—he is not then living to God's glory. Romans 14:21 applies to this too. So we should not drink in such instances.

SECOND, in situations when we need to be able to make good judgments and wise choices we ought not drink alcohol. Kings and princes should not drink, because it might lead them to forget the law and pervert judgment (Proverbs 31:4-5). We should not drink when we are about to drive, to go to work, or busy doing the work of the Lord. One drinks alcohol for relaxation at the end of the day, not for nourishment at the beginning. Ecclesiastes 10:16-17 make a similar point.

THIRD, the Christian may not drink alcohol in any situation in which the civil government forbids it.

That we are free to use alcohol properly does not mean that the government may not place restrictions on our use of alcohol. It may. And when it does, we are required to obey it. Remember that the fifth commandment requires us to honor our father and mother, which, our Heidelberg Catechism says, includes "all in authority over me." And remember that God created civil government to serve him (Romans 13:1ff).

Therefore alcohol may not properly be used in any way which violates the laws of the state.

This means, of course, that alcohol may not properly be used by anyone under the legal drinking age, which in most if not all states is 21. An exception to this is the use of the wine in the Lord's Supper. I quote from Chapter 125.07 (1) (a) of the Wisconsin Statutes:

> 1. No person may procure for, sell, dispense, or give away any alcohol beverages to any underage person not accompanied by his or her parent, guardian or spouse who has attained the legal drinking age.
>
> 3. No adult may knowingly permit or fail to take action to prevent the illegal consumption of alcohol beverages by an underage person on premises owned by the adult or under the adult's control. This subdivision does not apply to alcohol beverages used exclusively as part of a religious service.[1]

Chapter 125.02 (8m) of the same statutes defines the legal drinking age: "21 years of age."

These are the statutes of the state of Wisconsin. You should find out the statutes in your own state, and can easily do that online. But what this quote clearly did is 1) show that, at least in the state of Wisconsin, young adults under 21 may not possess alcoholic beverages if not accompanied by a parent over the legal age; and that the wine of the Lord's Supper is a legal, state approved exception to this rule. The church is not in violation of the law for serving wine to those under legal drinking age.

* * * * *

The great purpose for drinking wine, which purpose covers every situation, is stated in I Corinthians 10:31: "do all to the glory of God." All—even drinking.

To drink so that I can feel good and forget all my sorrows, thereby not dealing with my problems in a godly way, is sin.

To drink to God's glory is to remember that God gave wine and strong drink to be used in his service. To drink for my health, so that I can serve me, is sin; to drink for my health, so that I can better serve God, is proper. To drink so that I can feel good and forget all my sorrows, thereby not dealing with my problems in a godly way, is sin; to drink so that I, being cheered up, can better serve God, is proper. To drink so that I can relax at the end of the day, and prepare my body for rest, so that awaking I can serve God again, is proper.

When do you choose to drink? And why?

God will give wisdom to his children to know how to use alcohol to his glory! ❖

Endnote

[1] Found online by browsing the statutes located at http://nxt.legis.state.wi.us/nxt/gateway.dll/?f=templates$fn=default.htm.

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

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Cornelius Jonker

February 16 **Read Exodus 19:1-6**

The Israelites traveled from Rephidim to the wilderness of Sinai, a distance of about one hundred fifty miles and encamped at the foot of the mountain. Moses ascends the mount to receive instructions from God regarding the preparations for receiving the Law of God. The people must realize their relation to God as a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation, which was proved by their deliverance from Egypt and having been borne on eagles' wings. Therefore in the way of hearing his voice and keeping his covenant, the true, elect Israel would experience this blessing, and as priests, would be consecrated to him in loving service. Moses must convey these words to the people. We too, as organically united with Israel of old, are God's peculiar treasure. This is not due to any merit on our part, but solely on the perfect merits of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, who fully paid for all our sins. Let us, by his grace, consecrate our lives unto him. Psalter 313:1, 2, 4.

February 17 **Read Exodus 19:7-9**

In response to God's command, Moses laid before the elders of Israel all the words that God spoke to him on the mount. In essence, these words were "obey my voice and keep my covenant." The elders in turn informed the people who together answered, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." This was a response of faith even though they might not have understood all the implications of their confession. But we know from subsequent history, that this response was not true of the carnal element in Israel. Time and time again they were disobedient and were covenant breakers. Young people, this same word comes to us. Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 12:1, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," and concludes with, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Psalter 1:1-3.

February 18 **Read Exodus 19:10-13**

Here we have another aspect of the people's preparation to receive the Law of God. They must wash their clothes and refrain from all contacts that might defile them in order to be sanctified for this great event. Also they had strict warnings that when they drew near to the mount, they were forbidden to touch it upon penalty of certain death. Israel was about to be placed under the law and had to be mindful of their sinfulness. These ceremonial actions pointed to the fact that they were unworthy of entering into covenant relationship with God. God is holy and just and cannot have communion with unholy sinners. But God in his mercy beheld his covenant seed in their posterity, namely the one who would perfectly satisfy the required justice. Praise God for that perfect mediator, Jesus Christ, who reconciled us to God. We can come freely to the heavenly Mount Zion for he accomplished what the law could never do. Psalter 265:1, 3.

February 19 **Read Exodus 19:14-25**

An awesome spectacle occurred before the eyes of the Israelites and filled them with fear and terror. The signs of lightning, thunder, earthquakes, smoke, fire, and trumpet's sound testified to the people that God comes as a consuming fire to the wicked. God again warned the people through Moses to keep their distance from the mount, and in this setting he spoke the words of the law. Hebrews Chapter 12 comments on this event that "so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." This same passage contrasts mount Sinai with mount Sion. Sinai signifies the grace of God under the law; Sion is grace without the law. Israel and the church of the old dispensation worshipped as it were, afar off. But Christ put an end to the law by his sacrifice. Thanks be to God that by his grace we "are come unto mount Sion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22). Psalter 207:1, 3, 4.

February 20 **Read Exodus 20:1-17**

Through the fearsome wonders that were displayed at Sinai, God introduces himself to his people Israel with these words: "I am Jehovah thy God which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." With these words God reveals his covenant relationship to his people, the church. They are his peculiar treasure and he is their Redeemer who delivers them from sin and death. In this relationship he comes with his law

as a schoolmaster to bring them and us unto Christ and to exhort us to keep our part of the covenant, namely to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. We must also see that the prohibitive form of the law points to us as sinners and to our incapability to keep the law outside of Christ and his benefits. As we treat these commandments in following meditations, may we be reminded and encouraged to love the Lord our God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves. Psalter 40:1, 2, 3, 6.

February 21 **Read Exodus 20:1-3; Deut. 6:4-15**

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This first commandment is short and precise, but is basic in relation to those which follow. God declares that he is one. He is God alone and there is no God beside him. This commandment is antithetical and to the point, leaving room for only two alternatives: worship God or serve idols. Fallen man serves many idols such as nature, beasts and images of various sorts. In our modern society, money, sports, entertainment and the like are worshipped. But listen, dear reader, and take to heart these words from our Heidelberg Catechism: "That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my own soul, avoid and flee from all idolatry, sorcery, soothsaying, superstition, invocation of saints, or any other creatures; and learn rightly to know the only true God; trust in him alone, with humility and patience submit to him; expect all good things from him only; love, fear, and glorify him with my whole heart: so that I renounce and forsake all creatures, rather than commit even the least thing contrary to his will" (L.D. 34). Psalter 259:1, 3, 4.

February 22 **Read Exodus 20:4-6**

This second commandment of the Decalogue is closely related to the first. The first commandment refers to idolatry whereas the second of image worship. Because our God is a transcendent God, he is infinitely exalted above the world. He is a Spirit and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. He may never be represented by any figment of man's imagination. We are told in this commandment that God is a jealous God which means he will not allow the creature to trample his infinite glory under foot by giving glory to something else. The creedal position of our churches regarding this commandment is briefly stated as follows: "That we in no wise represent God by images, nor worship him in any other way than he has commanded in his word" (Heid. Cat. L.D. 35). This is known as the regulative principle of worship, and our services are marked by solemnity and spirituality with active congregational participation. Hold to this biblical principle, young people, and resist any clamor to replace it with innovations and change. Psalter 255:1-3

February 23 **Read Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 24:10-16**

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." God is a holy God, the standard and implication of all perfection. And because he is holy, his name is likewise holy, different and above all other names. God has revealed himself to us by his names and demands that his name be used only with fear and reverence. Our Heidelberg Catechism teaches us to do just that and also tells that there is no sin more provoking to God than the profaning of his name and therefore he has commanded that this sin be punished with death. Young people, guard your hearts and lips from this sin which is so prevalent in the world around us. Do not be partakers of this sin in others by your silence either. Pray daily to your heavenly Father whose name is hallowed. Approach him through Jesus Christ whose name means Jehovah Salvation and who has been given a name which is above every name. (Phil. 2:9). Psalter 195:2-4.

February 24 **Read Exodus 20:8-11**

In the deepest sense of the word, the Sabbath is the rest of God. The beginning of the Sabbath occurred after God finished his creation of the heavens and the earth. We read in this commandment that after this creative work was finished, God rested and sanctified the seventh day. We too, as God's people, are commanded to rest after six days of labor. We must not make the mistake of confusing rest with mere idleness. God is never idle and he has prepared a rest for his people in Christ, a reflection of his own perfect covenant life. We are told in Hebrews Chapter 4 to give diligence to enter into that rest. So we desist from our daily toil and fill that day with spiritual activities. The world as always, perverts this day, and uses it for its own sinful pleasures and purposes. Let us, by God's grace, count it a privilege to properly observe the Sabbath day in obedience to God's command as a foretaste of that eternal Sabbath awaiting his people. Psalter 318:1, 3, 4.

February 25 **Read Exodus 20:12**

The fifth commandment introduces the second table of the law and deals with our relationship to our neighbor. We must love our neighbor in the love of God. The commandment begins with the words: "Honor thy father and thy mother." To honor them means to acknowledge their parental authority, an authority bestowed upon them by God. It implies that we hearken and obey and love them for God's sake. And this commandment applies

not only to the home, but equally to every relationship of authority in human society as we are instructed in Romans 13. There we are enjoined to be subject to the higher powers since these powers are ordained by God. God, as supreme authority, has vested all right and power in Christ who was the symbol of perfect obedience. He is the sovereign ruler over all things. Let us willingly submit to his rule, and experience true peace and happiness. Psalter 321:1-3.

February 26 Read Exodus 20:13; I John 3:14-16

"Thou shalt not kill" are the words of this sixth commandment. Surely this cannot apply to me, we are quick to respond. We would never take away a person's life, would we? The answer to that is, most likely not, but the keeping of this commandment involves more than refraining from that violent act. Scripture and our Heidelberg Catechism very plainly teach that sinful hatred against the neighbor, envy, anger, or any desire of revenge is tantamount to murder. Who of us can claim complete innocence in this regard? Only by grace can we even begin to keep this sixth commandment. Only by the power of grace and according to that principle of new obedience in our hearts can we love the neighbor, seek his good and prevent his hurt as much as possible. Then we will also properly care for our bodies, never using substances that would harm or damage them, nor willfully exposing ourselves to danger. May God be pleased to help us keep this commandment. Psalter 369:1-3.

February 27 Read Exodus 20:14; I Thess. 4:3-7

In this commandment, God reveals himself as the faithful One who never breaks his covenant with his people. It follows then that his people must be likewise faithful in regard to the marriage bond, the most beautiful reflection of the covenant relation. We realize that our creeds do not directly discuss this aspect of the commandment, but rather stress chastity and purity. We certainly must be warned that faithfulness be upheld in our marriages and that purity be maintained in single life. Who among us can boast that he or she is free from this sin? "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 1:10). Young people, especially, be not unequally yoked with unbelievers. Avoid all situations that would lead you and entice you to sin against your body which is the temple of God. Pray daily as the publican: "God be merciful to me a sinner." and for faithfulness to keep this commandment. Psalter 140:1-4.

February 28 Read Exodus 20:15; Psalm 50:7-17

The basic premise of this commandment is that we love our neighbor for God's sake with regard to his earthly possessions. Because God is the creator of the heavens and the earth, he is the absolute proprietor of all things. Man, because of sin takes God's good gifts and uses them for his own sinful ends, claiming they are his, and can do with them as he pleases. In actuality, unregenerate man is a thief in respect to God and also a thief in relation to his neighbor. God's people, by virtue of their new birth are called to be Christian stewards of all that God is pleased to give them. These possessions are to be used to his glory and the advantage of the neighbor. This commandment also implies contentment in the way God leads us in respect to our earthly goods, for the cause of contentment lies not in things, but in our hearts. Pray that we may be faithful stewards, loving our neighbor for God's sake and promoting his advantage to the best of our ability. Psalter 7:1-3.

February 29 Read Exodus 20:16; Psalm 15

The sin that this commandment forbids is that of lying. The positive implication therefore requires us to love the neighbor in his name and speak the truth to him and about him in love for God's sake. When we tell a lie, we willfully misrepresent the truth. The Heidelberg Catechism rightly calls lying the very work of the devil. That is a serious indictment and one that the child of God must avoid and abhor with all his heart. Backbiting and slander are also condemned. Backbiting is spreading an evil report about the neighbor that is true or partly true, whereas slander is always the lie. Both are to be condemned for whatever the motive may be. We are called by God to promote and defend the good name and character of the neighbor. Who is my neighbor? Anyone whom God places in my path. Loving the neighbor can take many forms, but basically it means seeking his good and salvation even though that may require a loving rebuke at times. May God give us grace to walk in obedience to this command. Psalter 24:1-3.

March 1 Read Exodus 20:17; Romans 7:14-25

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods. To covet means to earnestly desire something. The word "covet" can be used in a good or bad sense, and Scripture often uses the term in both ways. In this concluding commandment of the Decalogue we are told to refrain from desiring selfishly that which rightfully belongs to our neighbor. This commandment deals with our inner life, our thoughts and desires of our hearts. All the other commandments, as to form, point to our lives in the outward sense. No one knows when we covet something wrongfully. But that is a sinful desire and implies that we set our hearts on things of this world; on things that God does not want

us to have. The Heidelberg Catechism in L.D. 44 really gets to the deepest meaning when it requires of us "that even the smallest inclination or thought contrary to any of God's commandments never rise in our hearts." May the Holy Spirit so work in our hearts that we sincerely desire to keep the law of God. Psalter 336: 1, 2.

March 2 Read Exodus 20:18-26

The giving of the law at Sinai accompanied by awesome signs, instilled in the Israelites such a fear that they trembled and fled away from the mountain. They were beginning to realize what God was demanding of them and how impossible it would be to satisfy these demands of the law. They had heard the voice of God and could not stand in his presence. They felt the need of a mediator and pleaded with Moses saying, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Moses answered with comforting words, "Fear not…." Moses then goes alone to the smoking mount and dark cloud and receives from the Lord all the instructions, commandments, and promises prescribed for their lives. We too need a mediator to stand between God and us. This has been provided in the person of Jesus Christ who made perfect satisfaction for our sins before the tribunal of God. Thanks be to him for his mercy and grace. Psalter 211:1-3.

March 3 Read Exodus 24:1-8

We have a series of events recorded in this passage beginning with the Lord's command to Moses to ascend the mount with Aaron and his sons plus seventy elders of Israel. All these should worship at a distance from the mount while Moses alone must go up further to draw near to the Lord. Before they actually left, Moses repeats to the people all the words of the Lord in great detail, and the people still awed by earlier revelations respond that they will obey. Moses wrote all the words of the law in the book of the covenant and next built an altar for burnt and peace offerings. He then reads the book of the covenant to the people who again promise obedience and Moses sprinkles the blood of the covenant upon them. We must note the beautiful symbolism of this event. Even though the people promised obedience, that did not make them worthy of God's favor. Atonement must be made by burnt offering and sprinkling of blood, and Moses as a typical mediator was demonstrating to the people the Gospel of the true and perfect mediator to come. Psalter 144:4-6.

March 4 Read Exodus 24:9-18

After the covenant was ratified by the sprinkling of the blood, Moses and Aaron together with Nadab and Abihu and seventy elders of Israel go part way up the mount. There they ate and drank together in the presence of God. Exactly what kind of vision they beheld we do not know, but this revelation was unlike the fearsome one with dark cloud and fire. Rather it symbolized the blessedness of life in the friendship of God's covenant of grace. The next episode shows Aaron and the seventy elders back in the camp and Moses and Joshua called to ascend the mount. After six days of waiting and preparation, Moses was called by God out of the midst of the cloud which appeared to Israel like devouring fire on the top of the mount. Moses remained on the mount forty days and forty nights and received two tables of stone upon which were engraved the ten "words" of the law "written with the finger of God." He also receives instructions for the tabernacle and the designation of two men divinely appointed and equipped for that work. How wondrous are the ways of God, unfathomed and unknown. Psalter 318:1-3.

March 5 Read Exodus 32:1-6

A significant but sorry event occurred in the camp of Israel toward the end of Moses' forty day stay in the mount. The effects of the awe and fear they experienced earlier had subsided and the carnal element of the nation, who opposed Moses and the holy cause he stood for, roused the people to action. These were the ones who grew up in Egypt, and most likely took part in, or were willing spectators of idol worship with its accompanying sensual pleasures. These men approached Aaron and demanded that he make gods for them. Without Moses to strengthen him, he tells them to furnish the gold needed for this idol, most likely expecting that the price would be more than they would be willing to pay. But the gold appeared, the calf was made, and their so called religious feast turned into an orgy of drunken revelry. We see in the church world today, glimpses of the golden calf in their worship services. How quickly they can be corrupted and turned into entertainment with drums, dance, rock bands, and the like. Let us be vigilant lest Satan and his hosts tempt us to deviate from the proper worship of God. Psalter 6:2, 4, 5.

March 6 Read Exodus 32:7-10

For forty days God communed with Moses on Mt. Sinai and gave him detailed instructions for the erection of the tabernacle. All its furnishings were described in detail as was the duties of the priests, the offerings to be required, and how the Sabbath was to be observed. This tabernacle would be God's holy dwelling place and it betokened spiritual blessings for Israel and glorious communion with Jehovah their covenant God. Now, with surprising

abruptness, the manner of God's revelation to Moses changed. He said to Moses: "Go get thee down…. for thy people have corrupted themselves." He further calls them a stiffnecked or stubborn people and threatens to consume them in his hot anger. God is a just God and is stirred to righteous wrath against sin. If it were not for his great mercy, we too would be consumed, but he has punished our sins and the sins of all his elect children in Christ. What a wonderful redemption and what an incentive for us to pray, "Lead me Lord, lead me in thy righteousness." Psalter 61:1-4.

March 7 Read Exodus 32:11-14

In response to the Lord's statement that he will destroy the people and make a great multitude of Moses instead, Moses entreats the Lord not to carry this out for the sake of God's name and the covenant promises he swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Then we read, "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." God's repentance is a difficult concept to understand since two apparently contradictory attitudes of God are depicted in this chapter. Briefly we would state that God's eternal counsel is unchangeable. With man, repentance means to change one's mind and reverse one's purpose. Does God change his mind? To ask this question is to answer it. It was never God's intention to destroy the nation as a whole at this time, but he speaks to us in human terms. All God's works are eternal. He loves eternally, hates eternally and repents eternally. Therefore when we read in Scripture of God repenting we must always bear in mind that, which on our part is called repentance, is on the part of God but a means to an end, namely the realization of his eternal purpose. Psalter 137:1-3.

March 8 Read Exodus 32:14-24

After Moses made his intercession to God, he descended from the mount with the two stone tables of the law in his hands accompanied by Joshua. The noise of the people's revelry reached their ears and Joshua, not being a party to God's conversation to Moses earlier, imagines that it is a noise of war. Moses, who knew better, exclaims that it was the sounds of singing and feasting. As they come upon the scene of the golden calf and the dancing, Moses was greatly angered. He broke the stone tables, signifying that they broke the covenant, burnt the golden calf, ground it to powder and spread it in their drinking water. He takes Aaron to task for his leading part in this debacle, who in turn offers as a poor excuse that the people are to blame, and that the formation of the golden calf came by accident. Is this typical of you and me and our children, dear reader, to try and excuse our sins by placing the blame elsewhere? It is all too common a reaction when we are accused of a fault. If we are to blame, let us admit it, confess it, and seek forgiveness at the foot of the cross. Psalter 110:1-3.

March 9 Read Exodus 32:25-29

Judgment is about to fall upon Israel. The people persisted in their debauchery and naked dancing even after Moses appeared in their midst. We read in verse 29 that he called upon the people to consecrate themselves to the Lord. Then he stands at a distance from them at the gate of the camp and issues the call, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me." This call implied that by separating himself from the people, that person was sincere in his resolve to stand for the honor of God's name and was opposed to the wicked idolaters. The sons of Levi respond to Moses' call and they are given a severe mission to carry out. God himself demands the death penalty as the only way to get rid of the offense. They go throughout the camp slaying the wicked element who persisted in their evil conduct and about three thousand men fell. People of God, do you also hear the call, "Who is on the Lord's side?" This comes to us each day. Already in Paradise the Lord put enmity between the church and world and we are called to live antithetical lives in this sinful world. Do so without fear for God is faithful and not one of his children is ever lost. Psalter 128:1-3.

March 10 Read Exodus 32:30-35

A new day dawned after yesterday's judgment and a somber and subdued people stood before Moses. He tells them that their sin was great and that he will attempt to make atonement for them. Soon Moses stood on the mount once more before the Lord and said, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin….yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin___;" his words faltered and broke. He couldn't finish this by saying that from now on the people would abide by God's law as a basis for forgiveness, for he knew that would not happen. His only other option was, "and if not blot me out of thy book." This was a touching and beautiful prayer, but this could not be the basis for forgiveness. Moses was a mere man and could not make atonement for the sins of others. God answered him, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." Forgiveness could only be possible by a perfect and sinless Mediator who could satisfy all the demands of God's justice. That came in the person of Jesus Christ and thanks be to God, we too may be assured of our forgiveness in him. Psalter 140:1, 2, 4.

March 11 Read Exodus 33:1-6

The consequences of the golden calf worship soon became evident to the Israelites. The Lord declared that when they depart on their journey to the promised land he would send an angel before them, but he himself would not be in their midst. Further, they are castigated as a stiffnecked people and told to strip themselves of all ornaments as a symbol of mourning and repentance. Sin always has consequences. The nation of Israel as a nation eventually falls away. Their sin of unbelief follows them throughout their history. They die in the desert, serve gods of heathen nations, enter into captivity, and finally crucify the Messiah. Even though the nation is rejected, there is a remnant according to election that is saved. God will not and can not reject his elect covenant seed. This remnant heeded Moses' words and humbled themselves under God's chastening. When we ourselves are chastened, we humbly submit in repentance for we know from Hebrews 12:6 that, "whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth," but, "afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11). Psalter 12:1, 2, 4.

March 12 Read Exodus 33:7-11

At the same time that the people were humbled and stripped of their ornaments, Moses removed the tabernacle, or tent of meeting (for the final tabernacle was not made as yet) afar off from the camp. This action was in accord with the word of the Lord that he would not go up in the midst of the people. The people were most attentive to this event and watched closely from their tent doors when Moses entered the tabernacle and the cloudy pillar descended upon it. This further motivated the people to repentance, for we read that they worshipped at their tent doors. But Moses and the people are far from being at ease for as yet no assurance had been given that their great sin was pardoned. Had not he said that he would consume them? Yet, they had a ray of hope when the cloudy pillar descends and the Lord talks face to face with Moses. We also read, "that everyone that sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle. To seek the Lord means that we fall prostrate at his feet, confess our sins, and make supplication for forgiveness. The same Spirit that worked repentance in the hearts of the penitent Israelites works in our hearts as well. Thanks be to God for his abundant mercy. Psalter 72:1, 2, 4.

March 13 Read Exodus 33:12-17

Moses still has no rest. He is called to lead this multitude on their way, but must first have the assurance that God will go up with them. He pleads on the basis that because he has found grace in the eyes of the Lord that the Lord will also be gracious to Israel and lead them on their way with his favor. If God would not go with them, how could they ever be brought to the blessings of the promised land? God answered and said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." What a blessed promise this was to Moses and what a precious promise this is to us as churches and individuals today. We too are pilgrims and strangers on the earth making our journey through the wilderness of this world seeking a better country. So readily we cling to the things of this world with temptations facing us on every side. We cannot make this journey alone. Let us earnestly pray that God's presence and favor accompany us until we reach that promised land. Psalter 323:1, 2, 4.

March 14 Read Exodus 33:18-23

Encouraged by the assurance of God's presence to guide the nation, Moses found the boldness to pray, "shew me thy glory." The Lord answers that he will indeed reveal his goodness manifested in his grace and mercy. But his face will not be seen. No man on this earth with his sinful and corrupt nature can possibly behold the face of God which is infinitely glorious. That must wait until we enter heaven with new and changed natures. Then we will behold the face of God in the glorified Christ. Now we only have an indirect revelation of God's glory as his face looks away from us, but its radiation is seen as it were, from behind. And when God states that he will show mercy on whom he will and be gracious to whom he will, he proclaims his absolute sovereignty. His goodness is always particular and this is a great comfort for you and me and the church of all ages. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom. 9:16). Psalter 378:1-3.

March 15 Read Exodus 34:1-3

The first two tables of stone on which were written the law of the covenant were broken to pieces by Moses as he descended Mount Sinai and beheld the terrible sins of the multitude. Now, after the intercession by Moses, God instructs him to hew two tables of stone to replace the original ones and to come up alone into the presence of the Lord at the top of the mount. And as before, no one might be seen near the mount including their flocks and herds. This was a very comforting and reassuring sign to Moses that the Lord would heal the breach and again maintain his covenant with his people. We see in this how God is longsuffering with his people and for the sake of his elect remnant will never leave them nor forsake them. But for those who harden themselves in the way of sin, God will visit those sins even unto the third

and fourth generation of their reprobate seed. May we with humility and reverence worship the Lord and cling by faith to his covenant promises. Psalter 398:1-3.

March 16 Read Exodus 34:4-10

Moses stood on the top of the mountain and the Lord descended in a cloud. Hiding Moses in the cleft of the rock, the Lord passed by, covering Moses' eyes and proclaimed the name of the Lord. It was a significant and awe-inspiring event. The name given was The LORD, The LORD God, which emphasized his might and glory. It also revealed that his grace and mercy was eternally sure. He will keep that mercy for thousands by forgiving iniquity, but by no means clearing the guilty. Is not this a paradox? All men are guilty. However, there is perfect harmony between God's justice and his righteousness. God's elect are justified by the removal of their guilt through the atonement of Christ. God is a consuming fire to the wicked and their sins are visited in their generations. In response to this revelation Moses worshipped and acknowledged that the Israelites were a stiffnecked people. He asked God to pardon them and go with them and take them for his inheritance. People of God, let this same prayer arise from our hearts as we travel on our pilgrimage here below. Psalter 415:1, 2, 6.

March 17 Read Exodus 34:29-35

A phenomenon occurred while Moses spent forty days on the top of the mount. A reflection of the Lord's beauty on Moses' face caused it to shine. He descended the mount with the two tables of the law in his hands and immediately Aaron and the people observed that his face shown so brightly that they were afraid to come near him. Moses was unaware of this until he perceived their reaction and as a result had to cover his face with a veil when he spoke with them. This brightness could be nothing else than the glory of God as revealed in Christ. The reaction of the people was fear. They saw nothing but the law which condemned them. They could not fully behold Christ who is the end of the law. But now Christ has come, the law is fulfilled and the glory remains. That glory we behold in the scriptures. We read in II Cor. 3:18, "But we all with open (unveiled) face beholding as in a glass (mirror) the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Let us then not cover our faces or close the scriptures, but read them diligently for they are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16). Psalter 41:1, 2, 4.

Story Time

The Gift (8)

by Tom Cammenga

As far as doctors' offices went this was nothing like she had ever seen. Well, actually it was because she had been here only a few days before but that had been the first time. The family doctor to whom they had gone their entire married life had recently moved his office to a brand new building that had been built only about five minutes from where they now lived. As far as convenience went it was nice but she certainly hoped that she would not become a regular customer.

Her first real thought after letting one of the office girls know they had arrived and after sitting down was that if she didn't know better she would never have guessed this was a doctor's office. From the outside the building appeared very modern but once through the entrance it felt as though she were on vacation to a retreat in the woods or perhaps a lodge deep in the mountains. Although the offices and examining rooms were decorated normally and equipped with the most up to date medical equipment the patient waiting room was designed to look and feel like the inside of a large log cabin right down to the log walls. There was even a large stone gas fireplace in the middle of the room that lent a warm and quiet ambiance to the whole room. In the far corner there was a small play area with a number of toys for the smaller children to play with and even a small sandbox. Opposite that corner and off to the side

there were four televisions, two hooked up to Xboxes and two hooked up to PlayStation 2's. Other than this modern technology the remainder of the room was very simple and yet very relaxing. The seating consisted strictly of log rocking chairs, regular chairs, and couches.

In her last visit here a few days ago Janet had asked the doctor about it and he said that in part it was simply that he loved log cabins and thought it would be fun to work in one. The more practical side of it, however, was that they hoped it had a calming effect on the people who came in for office visits. They wanted the atmosphere to be peaceful and relaxing and so far in the two months they had been in the new building they were seeing success. She had to admit that it seemed to work for her too.

She had, of course called Jack at work after the doctor had phoned and he had come home early in order to come to the appointment with her. Now he sat next to her on a couch that was positioned in such a way that they could watch the flames in the fireplace dance along the logs that lay in the hearth. She could tell that Jack was nervous and to be honest, so was she. It was clear that there was something wrong. Were that not the case they would have simply been told the results of the tests over the phone and that would have been that. That was the logical thought but she kept hoping that maybe this was just how they treated all of these types of cases.

When they had arrived and before they got out of the car Jack had said a short prayer in which he prayed for good news but especially for the grace to be content and accept God's will, whatever it was. The request he had made that God make it so that no matter what his plan was that he be glorified went through her mind over and over. Not necessarily because she couldn't forget it, but more accurately because she knew she may not forget it. That had been her testimony to Mr. Michealson that very morning. The words had come so easily, almost without thinking. Now, however, facing the reality of the situation seemed a completely different story. Suddenly the doubts and the fears became so real that even the calming atmosphere that surrounded her failed to ease them. Reaching over she took her husband's hand in her own.

A few minutes later the doctor came into the waiting room and after seeing them, came to where they were sitting.

"Jack and Janet, thanks a lot for coming," he said as they stood up and he shook each of their hands. "Why don't we head back into one of the consulting rooms."

They followed the doctor all the way down the hallway to a room at the end on the left. This room, though not decorated in the log style of the waiting room, was warm and personable. Along one wall there was a couch to which the doctor directed them. He moved one of the chairs in front of the couch and sat down in it after they had seated themselves.

"Well, first of all, I am really glad both of you were able to come. I am sure you have been a bit apprehensive so I am going to get right to the test results," he said as he opened a small folder that he had carried with him.

"The X-ray that we did a couple of days ago showed what appears to be a tumor high up on Ruth's left leg." He took an X-ray film out of the folder and after standing up, slid the film into the receptacle on the wall. "You can see it right here," he said as he pointed at and then circled the mass with his index finger.

He sat down again and after looking both in the eye he continued, "So, right now you're probably asking yourselves if this could be true and whether I am sure about this. Well, I always consult in cases like this and unfortunately the doc that I talked to agreed with what I see." He gave them a minute then to take in and attempt to comprehend what he had just told them.

Jack was the first one to speak.

"Janet and I talked about this and I thought we had a pretty good handle on it but I have to tell you, I am not so sure anymore," he said, the last few words coming out with a slight flutter as his emotions took hold.

The doctor folded his hands and looked first at Jack and then at Janet with sympathy in his eyes.

"I know when you were here earlier this week I told you that it was possible this could be something serious and I am sure you have thought about it since then but I am sure too that this is still a bit of a shock. It is going to take a little time for this to sink in." Scooting to the edge of his chair in order to get a little closer to them he went on, "But I want you to know that I think we have caught this thing in time and the odds of getting on top of it and getting rid of it are pretty good."

Jack and Janet looked at each other then and tightened their grip on each other's hands.

"But, this is still serious, right?" Janet said as she felt a tear forming in the corner of her eye. She had told herself that she wouldn't cry, no matter what the news was but she just couldn't quite hold it all back.

"Yes," he said as he nodded his head slowly. Then, with a slight smile he said, "Serious but do-able."

"So where to we go from here?" asked Jack.

"Well," the doctor began, happy that they had taken it so well up to this point and eager to move on to some more positive information, "to begin with I would like her to see an orthopaedic specialist, actually he is the doc

I consulted. His name is Dr. Kearny and he is one of the best in the state at what he does."

They talked for a while longer about tests that Dr. Kearny would probably want to do and why, and a bit about what treatments he may order and then after a hug for both they said their good-byes.

As they walked out of the office they both felt as if they were in a daze, the world around them moving along as normal but for them everything suddenly slowing down to what seemed a crawl. After getting in the car without having said a word to each other since leaving the consulting room, they embraced and the tears they had both held back while in the office now flowed freely for both. Unbeknownst to them the doctor stood by a window that overlooked the parking lot and watched as they embraced, his own tears slowly running down his cheeks. He just never got used to things like this. He was happy however to see Jack and Janet now embracing and crying. They had both showed very little emotion and as they had left he was afraid that either they had not fully comprehended what he had said or were simply in denial.

He walked back to his office, closed the door behind him, and knelt beside his desk in the same spot that only a little while ago he had asked God for strength to bring the news. Now however he knelt to pray for strength for this family to which he had just given this life changing news and for Ruth too. You see, Ruth was not only his patient but she and her family were members of the same church he and his family attended. His youngest son was the same age as Ruth and both were in the same class in school, in the same catechism class at church. Before he began to pray he thought a moment how helpless he felt. Even with all his education and the great advancements in medicine, when it really came down to it, there was nothing he or anyone else could do. It was all in the hands of God. So, to the Great Physician he went. ❖

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

The Foot Washing

Peter was offended that
His Lord Whom he adored
Abased Himself to wash their feet.
And he to Christ implored:
Never shalt Thou wash my feet–
That is a servant's task!
Thou art our Lord and Master.
Omit me, Lord, I ask.

Christ's answer silenced Peter:
If I don't wash your feet
You cannot be forgiven;
I'm doing what is meet.
Impulsive Peter then said:
In that case, Jesus. Purge
My hands, my head, my body.
Oh, make me clean, I urge!

Again our Lord corrected
His loving, eager friend;
This is a symbol, Peter,
You're clean unto the end.
If I your Lord and Master
Have humbled myself so,
Should you not then do likewise.
To let your brethren know

That he who loves, so serveth
His neighbor for God's sake.
Humility's a virtue
Of which you must partake.
As Peter was instructed
May we remember too
That we must first serve others
As Jesus taught us to.

Thelma Westra

Rev. C. Hanko

Chapter 32

Trip to Northern Ireland—1993

edited by Karen Van Baren

Editor's Notes—The PRC first had contact with Rev. George Hutton and the Bible Presbyterian Church in Larne in 1983. This church rather suddenly broke off relations with the PRC in 1987, and joined the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Some of the members of Rev. Hutton's group refused to join the Free Presbyterians, believing that those churches were not doctrinally pure. Our churches continued to work with this group, and sent Rev. Ron Hanko to be their missionary. It was during Rev. Ron Hanko's tenure that Rev. C. Hanko went to visit Northern Ireland. These Northern Ireland saints suffered another setback when some dissatisfied members disbanded the church in 2002. Again, God preserved a remnant. Since then, the group has reorganized as the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church of Northern Ireland, and has established sister church relations with us. Rev. Angus Stewart currently serves as their pastor.

In March of 1993, Ron, Nancy and family moved to Ireland to take up mission work amongst the Covenant Reformed Fellowship there. On the 19th of May, Herm, Wilm, Allie and I left on a trip to visit Ron. We drove to Detroit airport where we left our car. British Airways took us by way of Montreal to London, where we changed planes. From London we went to Belfast, where Ron was waiting to meet us.

For the first time in our lives Allie and I were on the soil of Northern Ireland. The cities, the small towns, the houses, the verdant fields with their stone walls covered with vegetation and their flocks of sheep on the hillsides, all appealed to us.

Soon, we were at the gate that marks the entrance to the manse or parsonage. The manse was large with four bedrooms, a study, two bathrooms, a large kitchen and dining area, as well as a large living room. This house is set on a large lot bordered by beautiful rhododendrons, azaleas and other flowers, and surrounded by shrubbery and trees.

It was a pleasure to meet the family once again. When Ron was minister in Wyckoff, New Jersey, I had the privilege of visiting there from time to time, but after they moved to Houston I had not been to their home.

We made up quite a family with four extra guests. There were fourteen of us at meal times. It was a pleasant time as we were all gathered around the table. Jessica usually sat next to me. At the end of the meal we ended our devotions with singing from the Scottish Psalter they used in their worship services.

The day after our arrival we went for supper to the Reids.[1] While we were there, Mrs. Reid, Nancy and Allie took a walk to a nearby church. Later we joined them taking a walk through the cemetery and along the stream and bridge on the side of the church.

On May 22 we took a ride to the Belfast Lough. Here we walked around the tower that was built as a memorial for the soldiers who died in the war for freedom from Catholic control. These men were led by William of Orange of the Netherlands. It was a raw, windy day, so we did not stay long.

At home we settled in the living room. It should be added that the three older girls took a great delight in teasing their grandpa and getting him to jostle with them. Without fail they got the worst of the deal, but always came back for more. In our more quiet sessions, the girls joined me in working crossword puzzles.

On Saturday, May 23, we rode along the Irish Sea. Particularly Allie and I had to get accustomed once more to riding on the left side of the road. We stopped at a rest

[1] Ivan and Lily Reid have been with the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland since its earliest history. Ivan currently serves as deacon there.

area to allow the kids to expend some of their energy by climbing over huge boulders. At noon we went to a park near the beach just outside of a small town of Carnlough to have our lunch. A number of boats were docked in the harbor on the other side of the road.

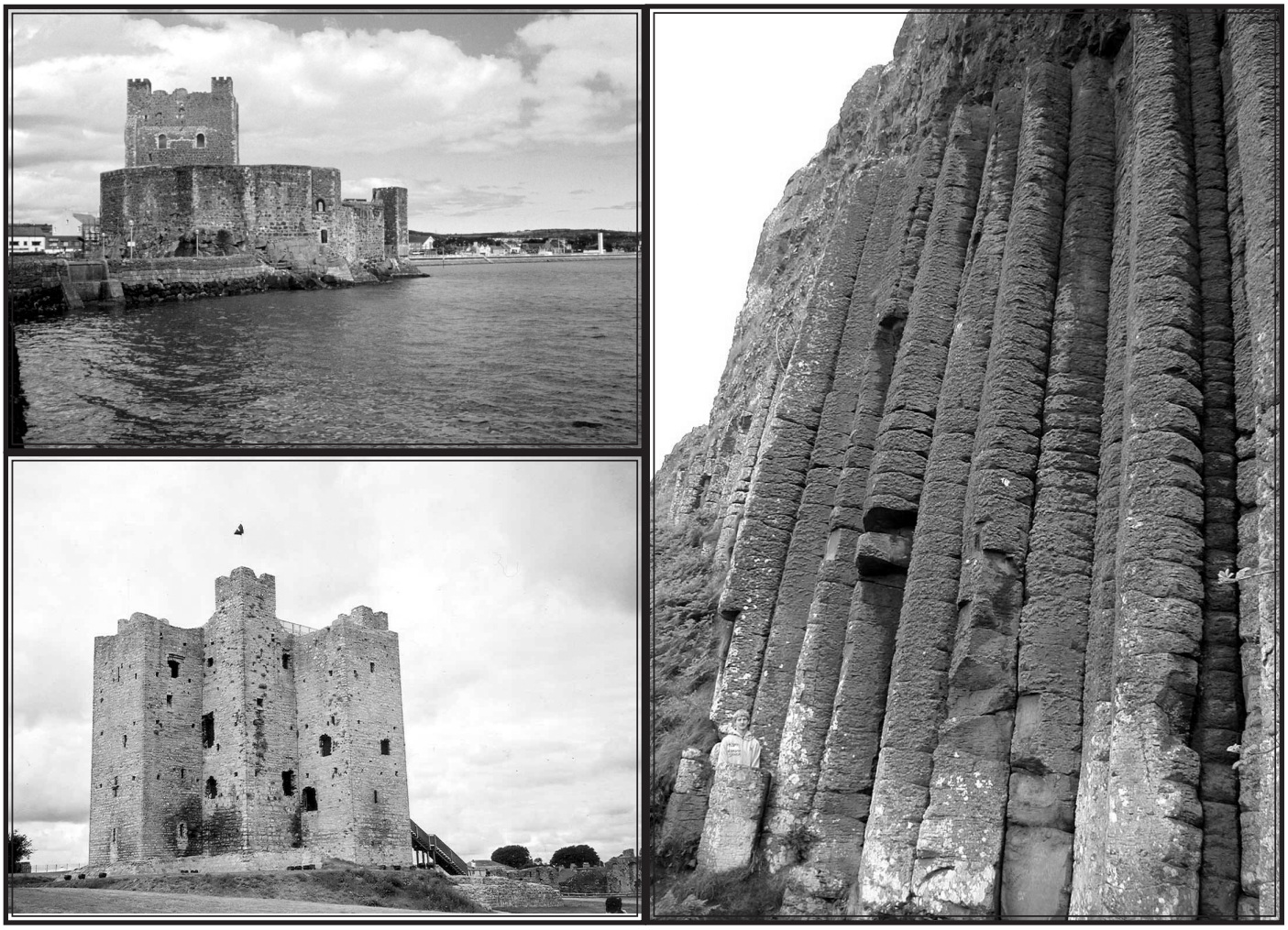
On Sunday, we went to church in Ballymena. The meetings were held in a second floor hall. To get there we went through a gateway and an alley to a back door. We ascended a flight of narrow stairs and thus entered the hall. Nancy, Allie and I sat on chairs. The others sat on benches. Mr. Callendar was a very capable precentor or foresinger, who led us in singing from the Scottish Psalter.[2] Herm preached both in the morning and in the evening.

On Monday, May 24, we went to Carrickfergus Castle by the sea. On the way we stopped at the home where Herm and Wilm stayed on their previous visit. Carrickfergus Castle is large, having numerous rooms and lined with fortifications. It was given to William of Orange as a gift for gaining the victory over the Catholics at the Battle of the Boyne. It has a large harbor open to the sea. While the rest of our party explored the castle, Wilm and I sat in the coffee shop and entertained ourselves there. The kids had a good time climbing around on the lookouts and viewing the many rooms.

The next day we went to Giant's Causeway. As we traveled the countryside, we saw the fields of yellow flowers, more sheep and cattle, and everything that makes the countryside interesting. We did stop at a foot suspension bridge at Carrick-a-Rede and spent a little time there. The sway of such a bridge always gives a bit of a thrill to those who venture across. As you can imagine, I did not try it.

Arriving at the Causeway, a number of our party

[2] Desmond and Mabel Callendar are charter members of CPRC in Northern Ireland.



Left, top and bottom: Carrickfergus Castle. Right: Giant's Causeway.

started down to the sea on foot. A few of us took the bus. The bus driver was extremely accommodating, putting my wheel chair in the back of the bus. As soon as we reached our destination, Neal was out on the rocks, climbing as high as he could. Soon the others followed, that is, as many as were interested in clambering over the rocks like mountain goats. Giant's Causeway extends under the sea all the way to Scotland. The scenery is very interesting, so that we spent some time walking around there.

Since two of Ron's children, Rose and Herman, had to go to school that day, they missed out on the ride, but we did pick them up on the way home. It was cute, seeing them in their neat uniforms, book pack in hand, coming out of the school and ready to go. Occasionally, Herm and I would ride along with Ron in the morning to bring them to school, or in the afternoon to fetch them home.

On May 27, we went to John and Marlene Clarke for supper. They have six children, two boys and four girls. Upon our return to the manse, we gathered in Ron's dining room to celebrate Herm and Wilm's 40th wedding anniversary with some delicious refreshments.

Taking full advantage of our short stay, on May 28 we went to the Antrim seacoast. On a rather long, winding narrow road we came to Murdock Cove, a most scenic spot and a nice place just to enjoy the broad expanse of the sea.

That evening we were invited by the Fellowship to come to the college in Ballymena, where the cafeteria was reserved by John Clarke for our use for the evening. The purpose of this get together was to celebrate Herm and Wilm's 40th anniversary. Tables were set up for groups of four to eight. Everyone enjoyed the delicious food that was so lavishly spread out before us. Then came the cake cutting. Margaret McAuley had made the cake. Of particular interest was the fact that Neal had set himself right next to Herm, eyeing the cake with extreme interest. Suddenly his finger shot out to take a lick of the frosting, but as suddenly, Ron, who was on the watch said, "Neal." As quickly as that, the finger drew back. Afterward, a beautiful vase with the inscription, "40th anniversary" was presented and Herm made a thank-you speech that was quite fitting for the occasion. When the celebration had come to an end, the women had the responsibility of cleaning up the place. Men helped move the tables about, but for some time the women were engaged in washing dishes in the kitchen.

We also spent a day in Belfast. Let it be known that, although Belfast has a reputation for riots, Chicago is said to be ten times more dangerous than Belfast. The women went shopping and Ron, Herm and I visited some bookstores. One dealer had his business in his home. In one room on the first floor he had some very valuable books. Other parts of the first floor were also used for books, but the main display was on the second floor. This man formerly had a warehouse, but it was burned by the IRA.[3] Now he has his business in his home and seems to do very well.

Sunday, May 30, we went to church twice in Ballymena. I had the privilege of preaching for them in the morning on Isaiah 43:1-4, some of which reads, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when though walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Herm preached in the evening to a very attentive audience. Allie took some pictures of the various families present.

On May 31, we went to the sea, going through Belfast. At noon we stopped at a park to eat our lunch. It was very cold with a cold wind sweeping in from the sea. I wore two jackets. But we enjoyed the lunch and the kids enjoyed running around. Ryan caught a crab that he carried around to show us. Later we took a ferry at Portaferry and enjoyed the ride.

On the evening of June 1, we went for dinner to Brian and Edna Crossett.[4] They have two children, David and Cherith. Brian played the flute for us. Edna had a brother there who spent a bit of time with us discussing various doctrinal problems that seemed to bother him. We had quite an interesting and friendly discussion.

On June 2, since it was our last day with Ron's family, we stayed home and enjoyed the warm sunshine.

In the evening we went to the Bible class, as we had done the week before. Again we met and had fellowship with the group, but this was for the last time. After the meeting we all went to the Salvation Army Hall and looked around it, because the Fellowship was hoping to buy it. All too soon the time came that we must bid them good-bye. We had enjoyed being with them, but now we parted ways.

Back at Ron's house, we sat together for awhile. There was an atmosphere of sadness in the room, for the

[3] The IRA refers to the Irish Republican Army, a paramilitary group, which sought to unite the Republic of Ireland in the south and Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom.

[4] Brian and Edna Crossett have been with CPRC through all of its history. Brian now serves as elder in CPRC.

time had come to bid each other farewell. We gathered in the dining room, had a lunch and sang from their book of Psalms.

In the morning of June 3, Ron took us to the Belfast airport, where we made our final farewell. We took the plane to London; there we transferred to another part of the airport and got the plane there that took us by way of Montreal back to Detroit. We arrived in Detroit about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and arrived home about 7:30 at night, thankful for a safe and pleasant trip.

In the fall of 1994 my eyes began to fail me. The right eye never was very good, but now fluid was collecting in the cornea of the left eye. It became increasingly difficult to read, since everything was blurred. I had a number of preaching appointments scheduled yet for the end of the year, but decided to cancel them. When the time came to renew the insurance on my car I decided also to give up driving, even though it was very handy for Allie and me to drive in the vicinity of our home.

In May of 1995 I had undergone surgery for cornea transplant. Three weeks later I still could see very little with that eye, since it was still officially blind. But my sight gradually improved. Reading ordinary print was still difficult, but for awhile, I had sufficient sight in that eye to be able to read the church papers and other writings with the aid of a magnifying glass.

In June of 1995, Allie and I accompanied Rich and Elaine to Loveland for grandson Bob's wedding. We had opportunity to go out for a day with Gise and Clara Van Baren to Rocky Mountain National Park, where I spent a few enjoyable hours at Bear Lake while the others hiked.

It was a real pleasure to attend church in Loveland, to hear our former minister once again and to meet the many people we knew from earlier contacts. Way back in the 50s, Rev. Lubbers and I had paid a visit to Loveland to talk to folk who had heard about us and were unhappy with the situation in their church. At that time they belonged to the German Reformed Church, a small group that hired a Lutheran preacher. This minister preached for the Lutherans in the morning and for this German Reformed group in the afternoon. Occasionally he got his lines mixed and introduced the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation. Clara Sur complained of this to the consistory.[5] This resulted in their seeking contact with us, since they had heard of us through Rev. Mensch.[6]

We were there with them for five days. In fact, I stayed over Sunday and preached for them. The result was that the group that requested us to come were banished from the church and requested the mission committee to have Rev. Lubbers labor there. Later a church was organized. Today, this is a healthy, growing congregation.

Later in July, Herm and Wilm took us to South Holland, Illinois to witness the marriage of granddaughter Karen to Philip Van Baren. At the reception I again met former friends from that congregation. Both trips were enjoyable, not only being present at the weddings, but also the trips themselves.

Even these trips were becoming overwhelming for me. And so our life became quite routine. Occasionally, I was still able to preach, though I had to do so from a stool, because my bad leg did not allow me to stand for long. I preached a bit for the group that is now Grace Church, but soon, due to failing eyesight, had to give that up.

And so, I am about to write finis. Years ago, the Dutch men's society of First Church held an annual banquet. On that auspicious occasion there were three essays of great length read by members of the society. Coffee, lunch and cigars were served between the essays. When an essayist finished his lengthy discussion, he would sometimes remark, " I could have said much more." I could say the same of these memoirs.

I have always considered Rev. Hoeksema to be my spiritual father, since he taught me from the time that I was fourteen years of age. His favorite Psalm and mine was Psalm 89:17-18, "For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favor our horn shall be exalted. For the Lord is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king."

Here I raise my EBENEZER with the inscription: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." ❖

[5] Clara Sur was one of the members of Loveland PRC at its founding.

[6] Rev. Mensch was minister for a while in the Reformed Church of the US. He later resigned from the ministry and joined Hope Church of Walker, MI.

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:

Jacob Aaron, son of Mr. & Mrs. Doug Kaiser—Byron Center, MI

Miriam Doris, daughter of Rev. & Mrs. John Marcus—Edmonton, Alberta, CAN

Tyler Jeffrey, son of Mr. & Mrs. Russ DeVries—Edmonton, Alberta, CAN

Danae Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joel VanBaren—Faith (daughter), MI

Hannah Liz, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joe Kleyn—Faith (daughter), MI

Zoe Lanyushi, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tom Newhof—First, MI

Sarah Corrine Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. John Kuiper—Georgetown, MI

Ian Henry, son of Mr. & Mrs. John Cleveland, Jr.—Hope, MI

Madison Rose, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brad Schwarz—Hope, MI

Tyler Logan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Curt Gritters—Hudsonville, MI

Seth Nathan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Dykstra—Hudsonville, MI

Braelen David, son of Mr. & Mrs. Greg Kalsbeek—Hudsonville, MI

Melanie Dena, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ed Ophoff, Jr.—Southeast, MI

Rafe Emko, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Medema—South Holland, MI

Caden Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brian TenBrock—Southwest, MI

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:

Ellen Van Den Top—Doon, IA

Ben Tolsma—Edmonton, Alberta, CAN

Jessica Tolsma—Edmonton, Alberta, CAN

Jacob Wesorick—Grace, MI

Derek VanUffelen—Loveland, CO

Mark Kooienga—Loveland, CO

Paula Kooienga—Loveland, CO

Hannah Verberg—Peace, IL

Derek Holstege—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. Tim Wigger and Miss Shealagh Wierenga—Georgetown, MI

Mr. Tom Buiter and Miss Nancy Hafer—Southwest, MI

The Protestant Reformed Scholarship Committee is offering scholarship awards to prospective Protestant Reformed teachers and ministers. If you are interested in receiving a packet, please contact Melinda Bleyenberg at 616-453-8898 or e-mail darylmel@altelco.net by April 1, 2008.

Two Times (Part 1)

"Grandfather, grandfather—what is happening?" the boy rushed towards his grandfather as the older man shut the gate of the sheepfold. "In the city—" he panted, "it's, it's total confusion!"

"Calm down, my son," the grandfather answered. But he, too, felt a quiver of fear ripple through his aged body as he began to discern a faint uproar in the distance. Indeed, something very strange was happening.

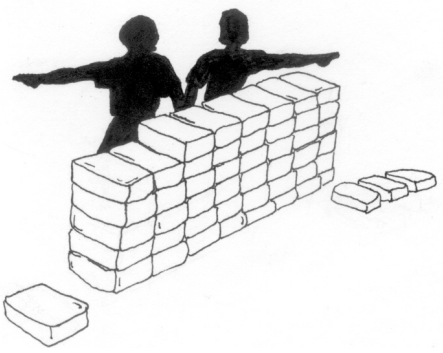
"I was walking past the brick yard when the men who were working there started shouting at each other, but all they shouted were strange noises. They made no sense at all. No one could understand what the other one said or meant, and they became angrier and angrier with each other."

The old man listened intently to his grandson's story.

"As I continued on my way, I heard more and more shouting from all directions. Then, as I reached the edge of the city where I was to barter the last of my wool, the woman I spoke to just looked at me. I tried harder and harder to tell her about the quality of my wool, but she only stared at me the more. Finally she spoke, but she made such strange sounds! It scared me so much, I-I ran all the way home." The boy was still shaking.

His grandfather considered the matter. "It is the Lord's doing, my son. The wickedness of this city—and the tower—is great. They try to reach up to heaven and put themselves on the throne of God. They try to make a name for themselves. They try to dwell together in one place instead of replenishing the earth as God told us to do. This confusion is a very fearful thing—" he stopped as they could hear the noise in the city grow louder, "but their iniquity is worse. Yes, it is fearful, but I am also relieved. Like the flood not so long ago, this is a great judgment; and, like the flood, this will save us. This city will not tolerate us much longer, for we will not go along with their plans. Now God is destroying their plans."

The boy stopped shaking. He could understand the danger they had been in. It was a great comfort to know that God was in control of this chaos, and even bringing it about.



"LITTLE LIGHTS" . . . let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

His grandfather continued, "The old serpent is being dealt a deadly blow in this. He's being crushed. The question is—will he ever recover?"

c. 2247 B.C.

We don't know exactly what it was like to live at the time of the tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues, but we know the event was real and that God was in control of it all. Find the underlined words from the following verses of Genesis 11 in the puzzle below:

And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.—verse 4

And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.—verses 6 & 7

Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.—verse 9

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

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)

Family Vacation

Looking for a place to vacation this summer? While the young people are enjoying their convention July 14 - 18, you can also enjoy the beautiful camping facilities at Covenant Hills Camp in Otisville, Michigan. 320 full hook up campsites are available for RV and tent camping. Call 810-631-2267 for more information or to make your reservations.

PRYP CONVENTION
2008
Safe from the Snare

Hosted by Byron Center
Protestant Reformed Church
www.prcconvention.com