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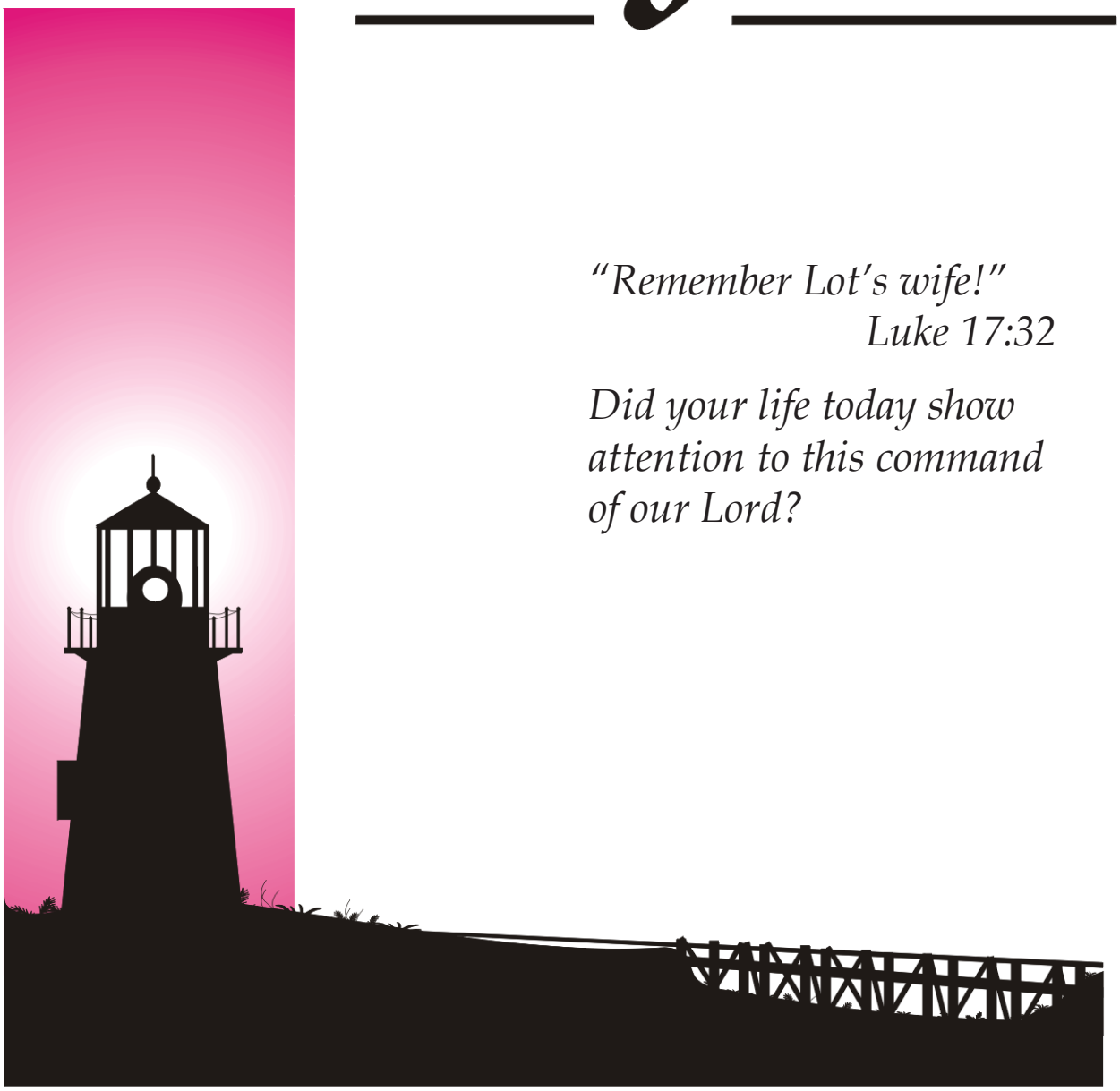

"Remember Lot's wife!"
Luke 17:32

Did your life today show attention to this command of our Lord?

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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.

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A Hearty Thank You to Our Mailers

by John Huizenga

For as long as *Beacon Lights* has been published, the process of producing your address on the issue has been a tedious and time consuming job. I do not know the details about early methods, but for as long as the subscription list has been maintained on a computer database, the addresses have been printed on sheets of label paper and then manually each label is removed and stuck on the back of your issue. I recall one evening when all who were able on the *Beacon Lights* staff were called upon to help with this work while looking for new volunteers to take over the work. It was an eye opening experience for me, and has given me a great appreciation for Mr. and Mrs. Leep who have volunteered to do this work for the past 10 years or so.

Volunteers for this job did not always stick with it for a long time, and it is understandable. It is tedious work and sometimes there may be a delay in getting the printed issues or labels, or time conflicts come up. Postal changes and new ways to organize for bulk mailing also contribute to frustrations. Perhaps the longevity of Mr. & Mrs. Leep's help has been their ability to organize a fun gathering of some of their friends each month to help with the work.

This has been a work of coordination between saints of a variety of church congregations. Bill and Fran Leep live in Holland, Michigan. Each month they looked for a package of printed labels mailed by my wife from Wisconsin, and lately Iowa. They picked up boxes of *Beacon Lights* from Jim Huizinga in Jenison, Michigan. Having gathered with their friends to label and sort them, they delivered them to the Jenison post office for mailing.

This past July, your *Beacon Lights* came with its address printed directly on the magazine thanks to staff and equipment at the RFPA. Although it has taken some time to coordinate the information on the subscription database with the way RFPA needs it, much of the tedious work is now done by a computer printer that prints the addresses right on the back page. We trust that your subscription will continue to arrive faithfully in your mailbox, but if you have any problems, please give Jeanine a call at 712 439-1897 or email subscriptions@beaconlights.org. We would be happy to address any problems you are having.

As we move on with a new way of mailing, we want to thank Bill and Fran Leep for their faithful service. We commend them for their efficiency and appreciate their diligence. We give thanks to God for providing such to put in the thousands of hours of volunteer work over all the years of *Beacon Lights* publication. ❖

The Body Fitly Joined Together (1) United in the Truth

by Ryan Barnhill

What would you consider to be the "glue" of the church? Have you ever given thought to why exactly it is that you, as a young person, live in unity and blessed fellowship with your family and friends in the church? Have you ever wondered why your parents, in the consciousness

of church unity, would use up so much money and time to teach you the Word of God and send you to schools that would do the same? Have you ever observed with amazement the selfless and sacrificing life of hard work put forth by your pastors and teachers on behalf of the body of Christ? In an individualistic age, we might be tempted to utter one simple word: "why?"

Lord willing, I intend to write a brief series concerning the church of Jesus Christ. As young people, we must examine how it is that we fit into this body and how we are to relate with other members. In this first article I would like to go about answering the inquiry above—"why?" In the next article we will consider how we as young people can compare ourselves to one another, and how living a life of comparisons can be damaging to the body of Christ. In a couple following articles I hope to address the place of members, whom we judge to be weaker, in the church.

Fellowship and unity among members of the church rests upon the knowledge of Jesus Christ (Col. 2:2; Phil. 1:27). Paul, by the inspiration of the Spirit, writes in Ephesians 4:13: "…we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God…" The Belgic Confession, article 27, brings out an even more striking aspect of this unity as it relates to this knowledge: "Furthermore, this holy church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same spirit." How amazing! The church in this world can be found in many different places, cultures, and walks of life, from the plantations of Brazil to the arid deserts of Saudi Arabia; from the towering skyscrapers of New York to the humble abode of the hut-dweller. Yet, that unifying knowledge of Jesus Christ lives in each and every believer's heart. Although seemingly separated by a thousand different factors, the catholic church lives as one body in this truth.

Love, however, is rooted in knowledge. By doctrine we increase in our love of God.

This knowledge or truth of God in Jesus Christ is opposed today. We live in an age that despises doctrine. Our world does not have the time to sit down and learn about who Jesus Christ is and what he has done. Such doctrine, according to the world, and even reformed churches, is dry and boring. "Tell us," they cry, "that Jesus loves us; that is all we need to know." Love, however, is rooted in knowledge. By doctrine we increase in our love of God. Doctrine reveals to us our great God and how he has sent his Son to die for miserable sinners! As young people, we must swim against the currents of the world's thinking concerning this knowledge. Let us love doctrine! Let us never allow doctrine to become anything less than the lively, awesome, and exciting truth of our almighty God!

This truth about God in Jesus Christ is vital for the life and unity of the church—both history and our own experience demonstrate this. When we, in our spiritually weak moments, become disillusioned with doctrine, let us think on those who have sacrificed so much so that the church could be unified in the truth. Remember the church fathers who labored tirelessly to maintain right doctrine. Remember those throughout church history who were mercilessly burned at the stake, thrown to the lions, and separated from family and friends for the sake of this precious knowledge. Remember those, like Rev. Herman Hoeksema, who held this knowledge in such high regard that he was willing to jeopardize his career and ruin many relationships to maintain it faithfully. Remember your father and mother who loved this knowledge so much that they forsook many earthly pleasures to pay for Christian schools and maintain a godly household. What a dreadful and arrogant thing it is to despise doctrine and the unity it brings.

Young people, do you and I *love* doctrine? If we do, this will bring out a number of things in our lives. Because we understand the absolute importance of this truth to the fellowship and unity of the church, we are careful to choose good friends. The teenage years are critical. With whom will you share your time? God is praised when we make friends with those who share our love for the truth. Doctrinal

agreement and mutual love for the truth of God's word must not simply be one aspect of a friendship, but *the defining* aspect of a friendship. Because we must constantly strive to know God in the purest way possible, and because this completely defines our thinking, we will make sure that love for God trumps every other quality we may seek in others—looks, personality, intelligence, humor, etc. Making friendships with unbelievers places a stress on our unity with the body of Christ. What about dating? Since doctrine reigns at the center of our lives, we ought to ask our boyfriend or girlfriend, right away in the relationship, what he or she believes—whether we think we know or not. Christ must be at the center of any relationship, and love for him demands that Christian couples agree on doctrine first and foremost.

Doctrinal agreement and mutual love for the truth of God's word must not simply be one aspect of a friendship, but *the defining* aspect of a friendship.

How thankful we may be for this unity in the truth as it is found specifically in the Protestant Reformed Churches. I know that I am often guilty of taking this unity for granted. Many of us were brought up in this environment—unity in doctrine is nothing new to us. Let us never take it for granted! A few weeks ago, a generous person from my church gave me bound volumes of the *Standard Bearer* which go all the way back to 1993. As I paged through the volumes, I was amazed at the doctrinal consistency and faithfulness to the truth over the years—and that is just a small example of unity in doctrine. Think of all the other blessings that unite us as a denomination: faithful preaching that makes the sheep strong; a wonderful catechism program that nourishes the lambs; countless reformed books that sound out God's Word; many hours around the supper table reading Scripture. In a day of spiritual drought and apostasy, my head spins when I think of the oasis we live in. The Protestant Reformed Churches have and continue to experience these undeserved blessings from the head of the universal church, Jesus Christ. Indeed, blessed agreement in the knowledge of our head, Jesus Christ, is that glue which holds the church together, both in the PRC and in the church universal.

All of grace! Lest we young people become proud of our heritage, let us always remember those three words. What a dreadful contradiction we make in our lives if we boast of our denominational unity in the truth, for we confess that we are saved by grace. When we witness to others of the truth, we must not proudly present our position, nor should we stubbornly refuse to listen to others when they tell us their views—such actions arise out of pride. As those who sit under the preaching twice a Sunday, sit under years and years of catechism, and for many, attend Christian schools, the question is not whether you and I know our doctrine—we know it; but learning to witness that precious and great knowledge to others in *humility* takes work. Young people who humbly speak of this doctrine, and adorn their lives with it, are a powerful witness in God's hand to show others what it means to walk in the unity of the truth.

Remember, too, that such unity in the truth does not come without work. Church unity is all of grace, but God also calls us to work out of thankfulness for what he has given. Sadly, very sadly, we observe some denominations that have abandoned the truth to accept a watered-down, indeed, lower-case, truth. The young people die spiritually for lack of knowledge. Shepherds do not feed their sheep. Parents do not provide a spiritual foundation for their children. The results can be seen all around. Doctrinal disagreement and disunity splits families and churches—just ask a person alive in 1953. Do not think for a moment that this could not happen in our generation! Pray that God will continue to faithfully bless us. Pray that God will work in your and my heart a zeal for the Word and the doctrine contained in it, and that he will raise us up to be strong elders, deacons, pastors, society leaders, singles, fathers, mothers, and workers in the church.

Working for unity in the truth especially comes through reading, studying, and meditating on God's Word. When we have such a zeal for the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, we want to read all about

it. We will then strive, despite the demands on our time from school, work, Facebook, and recreation, to reserve time in our day to read and memorize Scripture; we will read solidly reformed literature; we will take time to meditate upon the greatness of God and his wonder-work of salvation in Christ; we will pray to our great God daily as part of our relationship of friendship with him in Christ. A denomination full of young people who are disinterested or bored by reading this kind of solid material is a denomination in grave trouble. God uses reading so that his people might boldly, unashamedly, and uncompromisingly, yet humbly, speak in defense of the truth that they love.

Be assured: God will bless that church. Pray for that unity. Ask for that zeal for doctrine. Fall on your knees daily in total dependence upon God, the giver of that truth and unity. God will surely continue to give it. ❖

Pitching Away from Sodom: The Reformed Life of Antithesis (1)

by Jonathan Langerak

When yet upon earth, our Lord Jesus Christ prayed to his father concerning his elect brethren, his church, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [which is in the world]" (John 17: 15). This was a final prayer on behalf of his people that they would live as he had taught them in his ministry. In his ministry, he commanded his disciples to watch earnestly for his return after his ascension, warning that the days before his coming would be "as it was in the days of Noe…as it was in the days of Lot….But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:26a, 28a, 29). To keep his disciples from becoming so comfortable in the world—as Lot certainly did—that, in the day of God's judgment, they would lament the loss of their earthly way of life, Christ gave the stern warning: "Remember Lot's wife!" (Luke 17:32). The history of Lot, Old Testament believer and nephew of Abraham, offers sharp lessons and warnings to the New Testament, Reformed believer today on how he is to live in the world. The Reformed believer, taking instruction and warning from the sin of Lot, earnestly desirous of living in spiritual separation from Sodom and of living in holiness toward God in the power of the risen Jesus Christ, will live the antithesis and repudiate with all his being the failed fiction of common grace as a bridge to allow Sodom into the church and his own life.

The Reformed believer, taking instruction and warning from the sin of Lot, earnestly desirous of living in spiritual separation from Sodom and of living in holiness toward God in the power of the risen Jesus Christ, will live the antithesis and repudiate with all his being the failed fiction of common grace as a bridge to allow Sodom into the church and his own life.

We begin with the sin of Lot. The sin of just and righteous Lot, for that is Scripture's own testimony of Abraham's nephew in II Peter 2:7, 8, "And [God, through

judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah] delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds)." Lot was elect; this is the only possible explanation for Scripture's description of him as just and righteous, in spite of his enormous sin. Lot was one of the select number of men whom God in eternity, of his good pleasure, took out of the "common mass of sinners"[1] and gave to Jesus Christ, to be redeemed to the uttermost by Christ, justified by faith in Christ, and in Christ to have Jehovah God's gracious covenant established with him. That Lot was just and righteous is emphasized in II Peter 2:7, 8 when the apostle says that Lot was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" and "with their [the men of Sodom's] unlawful deeds." The reprobate ungodly are not vexed with the filthy conversation of themselves or their fellow reprobates. So far are they from being vexed by their fellows'—and their own—unlawful deeds that Paul, in Romans 1:32 concludes, "Who [the reprobate] knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, *not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them*." The reprobate, conscious of the imminent and inevitable judgment of God, not only commit sin, but take the greatest delight in all iniquity—theirs and others—and especially in the sensual transgressions of fornication, adultery, and sodomy. It is especially with this last perversion that righteous Lot vexed his soul in the city of Sodom. In the vexing of his soul, Lot is shown to be righteous: the Spirit of the risen Jesus Christ was at work in him to stir his soul to grief at the perversions of the Sodomites.

Nevertheless, we must address the shameful sin of Lot. The Scripture says that he "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Gen. 13:12). In pitching toward Sodom, it is implied that Lot pitched *away from* something or someone else. Verse 11 says "Lot and Abram separated themselves [from each other]," Lot toward Sodom in the valley of Jordan and Abram toward the less fertile but more isolated plains of Canaan. In pitching toward Sodom, Lot pitched *away from* Abram. Abram's family and household, with whom Lot was joined by both blood and faith, was the manifestation of Jehovah's church of the Old Testament. Abram and Lot had been called by God out of the nation of Ur of the Chaldees to wander as pilgrims and strangers in the unknown wastes of Canaan (Gen. 11:31–12:5). Both Lot and Abraham were commanded to wander as pilgrims in a strange and evil land, looking "for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).That Abram's family was chosen by God as his church of the Old Testament is made unmistakably clear in Genesis 17, where Jehovah God established his everlasting covenant with Abraham and with Abraham's seed. Therefore, for Lot to separate himself from Abraham and pitch toward Sodom—and that for the purely carnal reason that the plain of Jordan in which Sodom lay was "well-watered everywhere…even as the garden of the Lord"—was for Lot to commit *schism* in the family of Abraham, the manifestation of the church.

Moreover, Lot knew that the men of Sodom were "wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (Gen. 13:13). From the actions of these men of Sodom we derive the term "sodomy," which is that grossest perversion of God's natural, created order so that "even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet" (Romans 1:26, 27a). With this execrable transgression just Lot vexed his soul.

But the sin of just Lot in pitching toward Sodom and away from Abram developed. This is always the case with sin. One never stagnates or stands still; one always develops. Lot developed from pitching his tent *toward* Sodom to living in a permanent dwelling *within* Sodom itself. Lot became prominent in Sodom: he sat in the gates, a sign in the Old Testament of prominence in the society of men (Gen. 19:1). His daughters married reprobate men of the city (the "sons in law" of vs. 14), which men, if they did not also practice sodomy themselves, were products of a culture where it was not only practiced, but advocated and glorified. God gave Lot's wife over to the luxuries and pleasures of the city, as is shown in her deliberate rejection of God's command "Look not behind thee" (vs. 17) as she and her husband and daughters fled from Sodom as God's judgment fell upon the city. Transgressing his duty to be a covenant father, Lot even offered to substitute his daughters to the mob that surrounded his house seeking for carnal relations with the two angels whom Lot was hosting for the night, saying to the mob, "Let me, I pray you, bring them [his two virgin daughters] out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes…" (vs. 8). Lot became so

1 Canons of Dordt, 1.10, in *The Confession and the Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches* (Grandville, MI: Protestant Reformed Churches in America, 2005), 157.

infatuated with the delightful position he had in Sodom that when the Lord sent his angels to deliver this one just man in all of Sodom from Jehovah's judgment with the men of Sodom, Lot "lingered" so that the angels "laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters…and they brought him forth and set him without the city" (vs. 16). When the angels then commanded Lot to "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountains lest thou be consumed," Lot whined and pleaded "Oh, not so, my Lord…I cannot escape to the mountains lest some evil take me and I die: Behold now this city [Zoar] is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live" (vs. 17–20).

Then, there is that grievous history of Genesis 19:30–38. Having departed from Zoar for the mountains, no doubt shaken by the Lord's judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah and upon his own wife which he had witnessed, Lot was made drunk by his own two daughters in the cave where they had taken refuge. They then lay with him, so that the children they produced were Lot's sons as well as his grandsons. Oh, if such a man, whom the Scriptures—and therefore God himself—call just and righteous strayed so far off the path of holiness, how then are we, who confess with the apostle in I Timothy 1:15 "I am the chief of sinners," to live? I say, how then shall we live?

The answer to the question "How then shall we live" is: antithetically! This is exactly the demand of God's Word and of the Reformed Confessions.

The antithesis is the "spiritual separation and warfare that God himself has placed between his holy people and the unholy world of men and women outside of Jesus Christ."[2] The antithesis is an institution of God, found in Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." The antithesis—the warfare—between the two seeds springs, like waters from a fountain, out of God's eternal decree of sovereign election and sovereign reprobation. Predestination is the foundation of the antithesis. The Mother Promise grounds predestination—and therefore the antithesis—in Jesus Christ. God gave his mercy and grace to certain persons in Jesus Christ, electing those persons to salvation and faith in Christ. Likewise, he withheld from other certain persons all mercy and grace in Christ, leaving them outside of all salvation and faith in his son. Between these two species of men, God instituted separation and warfare.

In the Old Testament, the antithesis was manifested in physical separation between Israel and the ungodly nations of Canaan. Moses instructed Old Testament Israel in his blessing of the people in Deuteronomy 33: 27, 28a, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee and shall say, 'Destroy them.' Israel then shall dwell in safety alone…" Through the total, physical destruction of the Canaanites, Israel would sanctify herself and experience God's love and his blessing upon her.

In Genesis 13 and 19, just Lot rejected the antithesis for a time. For him, as a believer of the Old Testament, the antithesis was to be a physical separation from Sodom and Gomorrah. Rejecting the safety of separation, Lot rather pitched his tent toward Sodom and shortly moved into Sodom to make it his permanent dwelling. "The Lord being merciful unto him" (Gen. 19:16), Lot was saved only by fleeing away from Sodom and into the mountains of isolation, while God's righteous fire and brimstone consumed the cities that had filled their cup of iniquity.

The safety of God's elect in the New Testament is also in separation.

The safety of God's elect in the New Testament is also in separation. This is not physical, in the form of world-flight. It is the stirring call of II Corinthians 6: 17, "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 Revelation 18:4, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." This is the "spiritual separation and warfare" of the antithesis of the New Testament church. Next time, we shall begin to study the demands that the call "Come out of her [the world], my people" lays upon us as Reformed believers, especially as Reformed young people. ❖

Jonathan is a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Wyoming, Michigan.

2 David J. Engelsma, "The Failure of Common Grace (4)," *The Standard Bearer,* vol. 74, no. 21 (Sept. 15, 1998): 485. The article is also available online at www.rfpa.org, using the "Search Standard Bearer text here" feature of *The Standard Bearer* tab.

Remembering Rev. Hoeksema

Dear Editor,

I have just read in *Beacon Lights* of Rev. H. Hoeksema, and his labors in the youth of the CR Churches. I especially enjoyed his article, called "Lost—A Thinking Cap." I so enjoyed also, Prof. Engelsma's articles on Rev. Hoeksema, so I was so happy to hear more of him now. I have many joyous memories of him, Rev. Hoeksema, as my pastor in my first days in the Protestant Reformed Churches. As you see I came out of the Christian Reformed Church at an early age, maybe 18 or so. Though I was young, the Lord showed me in no uncertain ways, that which I did was right in his sight. He, the Lord, through the gifted voice of Rev. Hoeksema, showed me plainly the error of common grace. And through the Lord's sustaining grace and favor, he has caused me to continue to grow and increase in knowledge. So I say to our youth: May the Lord cause you to grow in the love of the truth and our precious Protestant Reformed doctrine.

A humble servant of the Lord,

Fred Ondersma ❖

Who's Who for the Federation Board Elections

This year's Young People's Convention is in sight as summer is just around the corner. At the convention, the delegates of each Young People's Society will be electing the new officers that were nominated by the Board of the Federation of the Protestant Reformed Young Peoples Societies (Fed. Board). Those who are elected will take up their position at the end of this summer.

Because the Fed. Board meets monthly, it is necessary that all its members be from the West Michigan churches. Regrettably, this means that few of the young people from the west will know the people nominated. For that reason, the Fed. Board wishes to introduce the nominees to all the societies.

Vice President
Jonathan Langerak or Joe Holstege

The nominees for the office of vice president are Jonathan Langerak and Joe Holstege. Jonathan is nineteen and attends Southwest Protestant Reformed Church. He is a full-time student at Grand Valley State University and part-time employee at Wonderland Tire Company. Jonathan hopes to help the Fed. Board acquire more student writers for the *Beacon Lights*. The *Beacon Lights* is the magazine of the Protestant Reformed Young People. Therefore it would be profitable for the young people if more of their number who are spiritually mature and who have the writing skills necessary for this work would step up to the plate.

At age nineteen, Joe Holstege attends Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. He currently works part time for his dad's greenhouse business and is a college student at Grand Rapids Community College. Joe plans to attend Calvin College next year in order to earn a degree in Secondary Education. Joe's goal for the Federation Board is to do his best to focus his votes and decisions on what is best for the Protestant Reformed Denomination as a whole, and also to promote awareness among the young people of our entire denomination, including those from the mission field and each individual congregation.

Vice Treasurer
Jordan Koole or David Noorman

The nominations for vice treasurer are Jordan Koole and David Noorman. Jordan, age twenty, is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church. He works at Kamps Pallets and is also a full-time student at Grand Valley State University, majoring in Accounting and Finance. He hopes to help the Fed. Board operate smoothly and carry out all of its responsibilities in regards to the young people of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

David Noorman is the other nomination for vice treasurer. He is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church. At age nineteen, he is a full-time student at Calvin College. As a member of the Fed. Board, David would like to help the *Beacon Lights* become more pertinent and applicable to the lives of young people. He would also like to increase the young people's awareness of the Federation Board.

Vice Secretary
Lynette Kleyn or Annie Zuverink

The two nominees for the office of vice secretary are Lynette Kleyn and Annie Zuverink. Lynette is nineteen and attends Grace Protestant Reformed Church. She is currently in her first year at Davenport University, majoring in Medical Assisting. When Lynette is not at school, she works at Motman's Greenhouse. Lynette thinks the Fed. Board already does a wonderful job with the *Beacon Lights*, and with helping plan the conventions and singspirations. She hopes to keep up this work, continuing to serve and help the young people as they grow in faith and in knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Annie Zuverink is nineteen and attends Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. She is a cosmetologist. Annie would like to continue in helping the Fed. Board in the decisions needed to be made on behalf of our young people, providing them with many enjoyable opportunities and experiences, for the main purpose of encouraging them in their spiritual growth and walk together as children of God.

Youth Coordinator
Jonathon Kamps or Scott Van Uffelen

Jonathon Kamps and Scott Van Uffelen are the two nominees for the office of youth coordinator. Jonathon is thirty-seven and attends Hope Protestant Reformed Church. He is a builder. Jonathon hopes that the Fed. Board would actively be looking for ways to help the youth of our churches to go forward in glorifying the name of our God.

Scott Van Uffelen, a teacher at Covenant Christian High School, is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church. Scott feels that the Fed. Board must continue to provide meaningful, poignant and spiritually edifying lectures, meetings, and conventions for the "youthful" members of the body of Christ. Together the members the of Board need to strive not to merely plan elective activities for the young people to casually consider, but rather inspire their spiritual walk one with another, gathering them in discussion, devotions, readings and writings from all of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Spiritual Advisor
Prof. Dykstra or Rev. Eriks

The two nominees for Spiritual Advisor are Prof. Dykstra and Rev. Eriks. Prof. Dykstra is a Professor of Church History and New Testament Studies in the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary. Rev. Eriks is currently a pastor at Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church.

We, as members of the Federation Board, feel that all these nominees will be able to carry out their work with the Protestant Reformed Churches and our Young People's Societies. We ask that each of our young people prayerfully consider each nominee for their specific office on the Federation Board. ❖

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Chester Hunter

August 10 Read Proverbs 19:1-10

Amid the many admonitions concerning the use of the tongue, we find verse 8. Do we work at getting wisdom? This is not the wisdom of worldly knowledge, though with wisdom it can profit. This is not the worldly wisdom that enables us to get ahead in this life. This is the wisdom of the knowledge of Jehovah. This is the wisdom that leads to eternal life. It is the wisdom that will keep us and will give us what is good in God's eyes. How do we get it? We start with knowledge of Scripture. This is found by careful attention to the preaching. We also spend time in the study of the Bible. We do this in devotions, but we must not ignore the study of the Bible with others. Finally, we pray to God to open our hearts and minds to his truth. Let us seek the wisdom and understanding that has a real profit. Sing Psalter 428.

August 11 Read Proverbs 19:11-20

Verse 11 shows to us a gracious way that we must live. First of all, by controlling our anger we can show discretion in our dealings with others. In this way we will truly show that we are wise. Sometimes, even if we are right, we are better off swallowing our anger and our pride, and turn the other cheek. The second half of the verse does not mean that we ignore sin. That we may not do. But we can ignore the personal attacks and again turn the other cheek to those that would do us wrong. Think of what Christ did in his last days before he was crucified. Think of his prayer, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Go and read Isaiah 53. In doing this we will know how to live verse 11 and by that knowledge know how to love God and our neighbor. Sing Psalter 369.

August 12 Read Proverbs 19:21-29

Solomon returns to pointed words of wisdom to his son. He reminds him of many salient points that God has shown to him. He speaks once more of the necessity of following the fear of the Lord. We need to remember that way in which we must walk in this life for it leads to happiness in the life to come. He reminds him of the folly of laziness. We, too, need this reminder. We especially need it in the ways of the Lord. The final verse of this chapter contains warnings of the calamities that will come upon those who do not heed Jehovah's way. Will they fall upon us? Sing Psalter 323.

August 13 Read Proverbs 20:1-10

In this section of Proverbs, Solomon examines many aspects of life from the doings of kings to the work of the merchant. In verse 1 he reminds us of the power of alcohol. Alcohol is a good gift of God, but its misuse is the cause of much pain and suffering. The sin involved hurts not only the sinner, but also family, friends, and often the innocent bystander. The right use of it is something that young and old must consider. Solomon's denunciation of alcohol's misuse is complete when he calls those who misuse it fools. Let us use all of God's good gifts wisely and to his honor and glory. Sing Psalter 281.

August 14 Read Proverbs 20:11-20

Solomon begins and ends this section with words of admonition to children and young people. First of all, we see that nothing escapes the notice of almighty God. Children are not innocent as some have said, but children are responsible for their actions even when very young. Secondly, the admonition to obey the fifth commandment is evident in verse 20. The parent-child relationship is a picture of God and his children. If we curse God, we will suffer extreme punishment. Children of all ages must honor their parents and especially their aged parents. Parents must expect and demand that honor. In this way we will best reflect the picture that God has given to us in this relationship. Then we can recite with joy Psalm 128. Sing Psalter 325.

August 15 Read Proverbs 20:21-30

Verse 23 is one of several verses in the book of Proverbs that can guide us in our daily life. In Israel, which was an agrarian society, the scale was a familiar tool in the marketplace. The merchant would weigh out his goods to sell to the shoppers. Unscrupulous vendors would figure out ways to cheat those buyers. In our daily lives we must be honest at all times whether we are the buyer or the seller. To do otherwise is to sin against the eighth commandment. In doing so we neither honor God nor love our neighbor. Let us make it our goal to be honest and God glorifying in all of our lives. Sing Psalter 24.

August 16 Read Proverbs 21:1-10

What comfort we can find in verse 1! As Christians who must live in the world but not be of it, we can know that all things are in our sovereign God's hands. He controls all acts of all kinds of government. Whether the head of government be a king, a president, a prime minister, or even a dictator, he can only do what God allows him to do. God makes a Pharaoh let Israel go. God makes a Cyrus allow Israel to return to Jerusalem. God will direct all heads of state so that this world will come to the end that he alone has decreed. As Jeremiah and Paul both commanded, we may and we must pray for those who are in authority over us. God will bless us when we walk in his way, and that includes directing those in authority to care for his church. Sing Psalter 223.

August 17 Read Proverbs 21:11-20

Here we have a series of proverbs dealing with how the righteous shall and shall not live. A title might be "Living an Antithetical Life." This life must always characterize us. It is not something that we put down and pick up again when it is convenient. We must always be saying yes to the things of God and no to the things of Satan. Solomon, as he expressed in the book of Ecclesiastes, has experienced all parts of life. He did not always walk in the antithesis. So he knew how to instruct us. Each of us, as we go through our lives day by day, must see the right way. That is the narrow way which leads to life eternal. May we always ask our heavenly Father to keep us on that way. Sing Psalter 363.

August 18 Read Proverbs 21:21-31

There are many verses in this section that have practical application for our lives. Maybe you will pick a different thought than I have today. I want to remind us about verse 23. Solomon has mentioned the use of the tongue on many occasions. He must have seen great misuse of the tongue, and maybe it was one of his besetting sins. As people of God, we can do more damage in our families and in the church of God with the tongue than with almost any other deed. Let us daily pray for guidance in this matter. The last clause of this section will give to us the direction that we need to go. "Safety is of the LORD." There is no other haven in life, as Solomon discovered, than in the haven of rest, Christ Jesus. Let us seek that haven each and every day of our lives. Sing Psalter 298.

August 19 Read Proverbs 22:1-9

It does not matter what time of the year it is, it is always time to "train up a child." This verse graces the stationary of many Christian schools. It is a command of God to parents of covenant seed. It is not a choice they have, but a command and through that command a conviction. Covenant children have a way. It is a way ordered by Jehovah God. When they are trained in that way, there is a reward. That reward is a continuing walk in the way in which they are trained. Parents, grandparents, and all other adults have a high calling in this matter. If we fail, we become like Eli. If we heed God's command, we will have olive plants around our tables and polished stones in God's palace. Let us heed this command and make it our conviction. Sing Psalter 14.

August 20 Read Proverbs 22:10-19

Solomon is beginning to wrap up his admonitions to his son and the church as a whole. You see in this section some summaries of past thoughts and instructions. Then in verses 17-19 we see a general summary of what we must do in this life. In all that we do, we must bow down and hear the Word of the Lord. After hearing we must apply our hearts to that work. Solomon then gives two reasons for these actions. First off all, it is a pleasant thing in this life. Secondly, we see that we must trust in God for all things. Do we sometimes weary in this life and of this life? Draw near unto God, and he will draw near unto us. Seek him, and know that he will care for you in all your ways. Sing Psalter 247.

August 21 Read Proverbs 22:20-29

While the physical reality of verse 28 may not have as much significance for us as it did for those of Solomon's day, the spiritual picture is rife with meaning. In Israel there would be stones piled up to mark a man's property lines. These stones were first placed when Israel regained the land as they returned from Egypt. To move those stone markers was to steal someone's land that was a picture of his inheritance in heaven. We have ancient landmarks as well. We have been given the beautiful doctrine of salvation by faith alone. We must guard that landmark and not let it be removed. Our eternal inheritance is not on this earth but in heaven. It was gained for us by the work of Christ on the cross. Let us keep that landmark ever in front of us, and let it lead us to eternal glory. Sing Psalter 227.

August 22 Read Proverbs 23:1-9

Solomon spends a few verses talking about a practical part of our lives. While he gives good counsel concerning eating habits, there is more than that here. Earthly food is but a picture of that which is spiritual. Some food on this earth has no nutritional value. It tastes good, and we might crave it, but it has nothing to help us grow or remain strong in this life. There are words and doctrines that have the same effects. They may taste good and entice us, but they have no value and might even harm us. Think of

the story of Daniel and his three friends. Their faith kept them from eating the kings' meat. The King of Kings gave them a strength that no one else had. Let us by faith seek for the meat that does not perish. Sing Psalter 135.

August 23 Read Proverbs 23:10-18

Verses 15-18 sound like farewell remarks a father and mother would make to one of their children as he leaves the house to go out and make his own way in the world. The parents wish for their offspring's heart to be wise. Along with a wise heart they want to know that the child's mouth speaks wisdom. As the child looks around the world and sees all the enticements found in it, the parent admonishes him to seek Jehovah's fear at all times. Why is this so? Not because of pride or some earthly desire, but because in a right heart and right living there is a blessed end. That end is eternal life with God. May this be our prayer for our children, and may our children heed such an admonition for God's sake. Sing Psalter 214.

August 24 Read Proverbs 23:19-28

How do you buy the truth? It is not something that you can find in the marketplaces of the world. The truth is only found in the Word of God and faithful preaching of that Word. It can only be gotten when that Word is faithfully discussed among God's people. Once that truth is obtained, it must not be let go. We must hold it fast in every aspect of our lives. As we are shopping, we must also pick up wisdom, instruction, and understanding. These along with truth are a matched set. You must have all four. Let us seek that truth, and let us purchase it knowing that its possession gives to us a great treasure. Sing Psalter 60.

August 25 Read Proverbs 23:29-35

Here we have an unusual passage in the book of Proverbs. It is unusual not for its subject matter; Solomon has addressed this subject before. It is unusual for its length. Solomon has not often spent this many consecutive verses on one subject. Solomon had seen the effects of the misuse of alcohol. He had seen the troubles it had brought upon individuals and probably their families. He does not condemn alcohol; he condemns and warns against its misuse. These words are very applicable in today's world as well. How much trouble has been brought to God's people and to his church by the misuse of alcohol? Each of us must contemplate its use in our lives. Each of us must see that this good gift of God must be used with wisdom. Let us consider alcohol's ways, and let us use it wisely. Sing Psalter 140.

August 26 Read Proverbs 24:1-9

Notice the two contrasts in this selection. Verses 3-6 once again extol the virtues of true wisdom. The other verses warn against the folly of foolishness and its variety of expression. Which do we choose, people of God? Do we wish to be wise in God's eyes or accounted to be a fool? Verse three nicely sums up the benefits of wisdom while verse 9 lays out the end of those who choose folly. Let us get wisdom and as Solomon has said, "Get understanding." In this way we will live a life pleasing to God now and have an outlook on the future reserved for God's people. Sing Psalter 251.

August 27 Read Proverbs 24:10-20

There are various thoughts in this section upon which we could ponder. Let us look at verses 17-20. Our human nature is that when we see someone who is our "enemy" have problems that we rejoice. I say our "enemy" because we must be careful about classifying anyone as such. If God puts them in our path, we must love them, even as Christ commanded us. In fact we should almost ignore the activities of the wicked. We must give them over unto God. If we are consumed by the world's activities, it will be to our downfall. Let us seek God and if he puts someone in our path let us fulfill the first and second great commandments in loving God and our neighbor. Sing Psalter 165.

August 28 Read Proverbs 24:21-34

Here we have a section in which Solomon discusses a variety of matters that belong to our life on this earth. As each of us must work or prepare for work, it is good for us to look at verses 30-34. This is a topic that Solomon has addressed more than once in his book of wisdom. Are we lazy? Are we tempted to be lazy? Let us listen to the words of the wise preacher. Solomon learned from seeing laziness in the world. Do we learn? Do we learn from our own bouts of laziness? Let us heed the wise teacher and vow to be industrious in whatever station or calling the Lord has placed us. Let us flee laziness in all of its forms. Sing Psalter 101.

August 29 Read Proverbs 25:1-10

In verses 9 and 10 we have another aspect to the use of our tongues. In these verses we find some beginning principles of the carrying out of the truths of Matthew 18:15-17. When we believe someone or some body has wronged us, we must take the wrong up with the person or the body. We must not spread the perceived wrong to others. Quite often the wrong can be righted very quickly with the person to whom the wrong is done. When it cannot, then there is a proper method to continue to right that wrong. Christian friendships are important in this life. Damage done to them in the misuse of the tongue is often not repaired easily. Let us talk to our neighbor and seek

to walk in Christian harmony with him. Sing Psalter 70.

August 30 Read Proverbs 25:11-20

The picture in verse 13 is not a snowfall that blankets unharvested crops. But rather it is the snow taken from the mountains and placed into the drinks of the hot and weary harvesters. Just as that snow is used for refreshment, so is the word of a faithful messenger. What messenger is there that brings more refreshment than does the faithful minister of God's Word? When we hear that Word it is a message from faithful Jehovah to cool our brows in this dry and thirsty land. Let us seek after that Word at all times, and let us welcome that faithful messenger. May God send us his message each and every week. Sing Psalter 334.

August 31 Proverbs 25:21-28

In verse 25 we find another reference to the ability of cold water to refresh. Israel was a dry dusty land most of the year. That drink of cold water was precious. As Israel would learn not too many years later in their history, they would need refreshment of another sort. They would need the refreshment of the gospel. The prophets would bring them the good news that Christ would redeem them. For the faithful this was refreshing news. This is our state as well. The world in which we live is a dry and thirsty land spiritually. It is only when we hear the gospel faithfully preached that we take in the refreshment we need. Let us crave that gospel, and let us seek it daily. Sing Psalter 336.

September 1 Read Proverbs 26:1-12

Here we have one of the longer sections in the book of Proverbs on one subject. This is not a new subject for Solomon or us. The subject of folly is one we must heed. There are two kinds of people in the world: the wise and the foolish. We must learn how to live with and among the foolish. Verses 4 and 5 seem to contradict each other. But they, too, are among Solomon's wise sayings. In verse 4 Solomon tells us to be quiet and not act like the fool among them. We do no good for them or us when we act like them. In verse 5 he tells us that a word of reproof may be necessary at the right time. We must know by God's Word how we must act and speak even among fools. Sing Psalter 25.

September 2 Read Proverbs 26:13-19

There are two important thoughts in this section for God's people. Even the very young can learn from Solomon's wisdom here. First of all, Solomon admonishes us not to be lazy. He gives to us several fitting examples of what a lazy person is like. Laziness is stealing. We steal from God in that we do not use the time that he has given to us. We also steal from God when do not use the talents and abilities that he has given us. The second thought is found in the last two verses. The world we live in today is all about fun. It's motto is "If it is fun it must be all right." Much of what is called fun is actually going against the second great commandment. If we do not love our neighbor in our actions toward him, may we call it fun? Solomon does not think so, and more importantly neither does God. Let us seek to love God and our neighbor in all that we do. Sing Psalter 119.

September 3 Proverbs 26:20-28

Once again Solomon returns to sins of the tongue. We do well to read through these verses more than once and see ourselves in the mirror of faith. What are we like? For what do we need confession and repentance of sins? In truth we commit all of these sins each day. We all are affected by the misuses of our own tongues. We may have all been hurt by someone else's sin, but our focus must be on ourselves. Do we love God with our tongue? Do we love our neighbor as ourselves with our tongue? Let us pray for the grace to guard our tongues and show love for God and the neighbor. In this way we will find the blessing of Jehovah. Sing Psalter 11.

September 4 Read Proverbs 27:1-9

Good friends are worth their weight in gold. This is not one of Solomon's proverbs, but the idea can be found in these verses. Verse 9 sums up the thought. We need friends who will give to us wise counsel. That counsel will be steeped in God's Word. This will be counsel that will admonish us to walk in the way of that Word. We must also be that kind of a friend. We must not just tell people what they want to hear. We must tell them what they need to hear. Let us seek that Godly kind of friend, and let us be that same Godly kind of friend. Sing Psalter 371.

September 5 Read Proverbs 27:10-18

Solomon continues with admonitions and advice for the church in dealing with those around them. In verse 17 we see important words for the church. Solomon takes a common sight in Israel and applies it to spiritual life. In those days they did not have the sharpening tools that we have today. They would rub two iron tools together to straighten and sharpen the edge of them. When God's people meet together in the study of God's word, they help each other. Here we find the admonition of studying God's Word with others. When we engage in discussions about the word of God, we benefit in that we are more able to use that Word. This is the same admonition of Paul given to Timothy when he said, "Study to show thyself approved before God..." Let us meet together to discuss God's Word and not man's. Sing Psalter 337.

September 6 Read Proverbs 27:19-27

In verses 23-27 we see some practical advice from the man of great wisdom. He tells us that we cannot ignore our daily lives. If we remember his words of wisdom in Ecclesiastes, he told us to pay attention to our daily lives but with the fear of God in the forefront of our thoughts. God has given to us the earth for our place. We must pay attention to the little corner that is ours. We must use it to his glory, but for our welfare. Throughout this book Solomon has warned us not to be sluggards. Here is the positive side of the same admonition. As we do this, let us remember to pray for our daily bread that comes from Jehovah. Sing Psalter 1.

September 7 Read Proverbs 28:1-7

Once again we have a series of proverbs in the form of antithetical parallelism. Many of the verses either have the word "but" in them to show the opposite meaning, or there are two opposite words or ideas. Each of them shows the way of the righteous compared with the way of the wicked. Read the verses again and seek the wisdom in them that comes from Jehovah. Sing Psalter 327.

September 8 Read Proverbs 28:8-14

Verse 13 is good for us to consider often. The old man, which resides in us, would have us hide all our wrongdoings. The way of the child of God is by confession of sins. David had to learn this by a very hard lesson. From his lesson we, too, should learn. After confessing our sins, then we must seek to walk a life of sanctification. This is the way of killing the old man of sin and living out of the new man of Christ. This is not something that can be done once in a while. This is something that must be done daily and even hourly. In this way we shall find true happiness and receive the mercies of Jehovah. Sing Psalter 83.

September 9 Read Proverbs 28:15-21

Notices all the comparisons made in this section. We would do well to examine each one of them separately because each gives to the child of God instruction in daily life. God's Word is our guide for a right walk in our lives. Verse 20 speaks of a faithful man. This faithfulness is not an earthly faithfulness to something or someone, even though that is part of a right walk. This faithfulness is a spiritual faithfulness to God. The blessings received are not earthly blessings, even though God does give his people what they need for this life. We must live our lives as citizens of the kingdom that is above. Let us strive to do that every day. Sing Psalter 149.

September 10 Read Proverbs 28:22-28

Verse 26 serves as a nice summary for many of the thoughts of the book of Proverbs. When we trust in our own hearts, we will try to do things that are to our own advantage. We will not love God or the neighbor in anything that we do. On the other had if we walk wisely, we will trust in God. As the hymn writer put it, "Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus." Trusting and obeying our heavenly Father is the way to true blessedness. It is how we can walk wisely in this life. The blessing that we receive is deliverance from this vale of tears unto the glorious heavenly kingdom. Sing Psalter 100.

September 11 Read Proverbs 29:1-9

Again we have a collection of antithetical proverbs describing the way of the wise and the foolish. These proverbs cover a wide area of life, and each has a message to which we should attend. In verse 6 we see the difference between the songs of the world and of the church. The world's music causes a snare. Read some of its words, and see how they describe some very wicked thoughts. Then read the songs of Zion, and enjoy the peace that they bring. God's people need those songs because the rejoicing is the rejoicing over sin and Satan. Sing Psalter 261.

September 12 Read Proverbs 29:10-18

Among this group of proverbs that speak of a variety of sins, we find two proverbs which give instruction concerning child rearing. In both verses 15 and 17 Solomon instructs parents to correct their children. This correction must be, as Solomon has expressed it in other places in his book of wisdom, founded on the Word of God. Only when children walk in God's word will they bring delight to their parents. Parents must correct their children in this manner. This correction is not grievous, but it brings true happiness. Sing Psalter 90.

September 13 Read Proverbs 29:19-27

In verse 25 we find words which we would do well to always follow. In this world many would attach themselves to some person. Whether it be a politician, a sports figure, someone from the entertainment industry, or even just an ordinary person, there is no hope there. The only hope of safety is in Jehovah. Jehovah will bring us through all situations in life. Jehovah will care for us because, as it states in verse 26, all men's judgment comes from him. Let us put our trust in him all of the time. By doing that we can have the hearty confidence that we will be protected. Sing Psalter 71.

September 14 **Read Proverbs 30:1-7**

Bible scholars are not certain who this Agur is. There are many theories. Some say that it is a pen name for Solomon. In verse 2 and 3 he recognizes himself as he is naturally. He see that he has the old man of sin in him. In verses 4-6 he speaks of God and of Christ. The writer recognizes that there is a power that has created all things. He recognizes that God's word is pure and must not be tampered with. In this day and age, men often try to re-write the Bible. They make it say things that it does not say. Let us, as we are directed throughout Scripture, not tamper with God's Word. Let us use it, meditate upon it, and cherish it. Sing Psalter 42.

September 15 **Read Proverbs 30:7-14**

Paul in I Timothy makes the following statement; "But godliness with contentment is great gain." Are we content, people of God? Do we live lives in the way of the wisdom of Jehovah that Agur shows to us? "Give me neither poverty nor riches…" Are we content with the station and calling in which God has placed us? As we look to the future, we must let these words be our guide. Let us be content with food convenient for us. When we do this, we will find true blessedness on this earth as we await heavenly happiness. Sing Psalter 95.

September 16 **Read Proverbs 30:15-23**

The whole world is full of pictures that speak of spiritual truths. Solomon used his wisdom to seek these pictures out and to learn those meanings. The Belgic Confession calls all creation "a most elegant book." The book is to be viewed through the glasses of faith. First of all, we need to spend time viewing creation. This means we must put forth the effort to see it. Secondly, we must view it through faith, which means we must study God's Word daily and diligently. Finally, we must allow creation to speak to us. Are we listening to God's voice in creation? Sing Psalter 285.

September 17 **Read Proverbs 30:24-33**

Solomon continues with his observations of the world of nature. In it he finds various animals that exhibit a way of life that should be emulated by man. The last two verses of the chapter directly address man's habits. There are times to speak and times to not speak. The controlling of our temper is an important part of our lives that must be lived to God's glory. Our daily life must be guided by God's ordinances. Let us learn those laws and live a life that glorifies God in all things. Sing Psalter 37.

September 18 **Read Proverbs 31:1-9**

There are many conjectures as to whom Lemuel is or who his mother is. The important part is not their identity but rather her words. Lemuel's mother counsels him to stay away from various sins. She acts similar to any parent who counsels his children. She also counsels her son to care for the poor and distressed. This is not only the work of rulers but also the work of all the people of God. These are the words of James concerning pure religion found in James 1. Children and young people need such counsel. Parents must give it and it must be received properly. This is the meaning of the fifth commandment. Sing Psalter 25,

September 19 **Read Proverbs 31:10-18**

Lemuel's mother moves from admonishing her son about various sins to describing for him the wife he should seek. Is this the wife that you seek young men? Do you look for a virtuous woman? Do you overlook physical features to see the spiritual character of the young woman that you desire? What about you, young woman? Are you virtuous? Do you seek a husband that you can do well for all the days of your life? Parents, too, can learn how to raise their children from these verses. Let us read them often even as we raise our sons and daughters to take their places in the church of Christ. Sing Psalter 360.

September 20 **Read Proverbs 31:19-24**

One of the themes found in Proverbs is care for the poor. In verse 20 we find that the virtuous woman is on the lookout for those who are needy. When she sees or finds them, she cares for them. It may be food, clothing, or some other physical need. It might also be a word of encouragement or some spiritual care that she provides in a hard time. This practice is one that needs to be learned. Mothers must show their daughters how to care for the poor. Jesus told us that the poor are always present among us. Do we look to care for them? Sing Psalter 101.

September 21 **Read Proverbs 31:25-31**

Verse 30 sums up the chapter. It is much like the summary verse found in Ecclesiastes 12. "Fear God and keep his commandments..." In all that the virtuous woman does, she must fear Jehovah all of her life. This is not something accomplished later on in life. Young girls and teenagers must be taught by parents to fear Jehovah. Solomon's earlier admonitions to "My son" are applicable to daughters as well. The journey to becoming a virtuous woman begins at a young age. May parents and adults constantly work at bringing up both sons and daughters that fear Jehovah. In this way God's church will be blessed and will prosper. Sing Psalter 62.

September 22 **Read I Corinthians 1:1-9**

Paul, in his letter to the church at Corinth, begins with a section of praise and benediction to God. Like many

of his benedictions, it centers around salvation in Christ. Count the number of times he uses the phrase, "Lord Jesus Christ." We can be assured that our salvation is sure by the phrase in verse 9, "God is faithful." This faithfulness is ours no matter in what way he leads us. As we go through this life, whether young or old, we can be assured of that faithfulness. We can also be assured of our place in glory by that faithfulness. Let us give thanks each day for the grace of Christ and the faithfulness of the Father imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. Sing Psalter 391.

September 23 Read I Corinthians 1:10-16

One of the problems in the church at Corinth was that of church unity. We will find this throughout the letter. Church unity is precious. Without unity in a congregation among the members, the congregation will be weak and may even die. Every member must work toward the goal of a unified church. Just as in the body one infected part will affect the rest of the body, so in the church one weakness will affect the whole church. Let us strive for that unity as members and as office bearers. In this way God's name will be glorified, and we will be ready for the gathering together of the whole church as the new Jerusalem. Sing Psalter 369

September 24 Read I Corinthians 1:17-25

If there is one area that is the weakness of congregations throughout the world, it is the area of preaching. Like the Greeks of Paul's day, many think good solid preaching is foolishness. Witness the many alternative worship formats. Witness the watered down stuff that passes for preaching. The lively preaching of the Word, which is the Word of Christ speaking to his people, is ignored and scorned today. We need to seek sound, exegetical preaching of the Word. We need to cherish that preaching, for it is Christ speaking to us about the great salvation he has wrought for us. Sing Psalter 337.

September 25 Read I Corinthians 1:26-31

As the first chapter of Paul's letter to Corinth finishes, Paul reminds us of a very important principle. It is a principle that would guide the church at Corinth then, and it is a principle that should guide all phases of our lives. Church unity will be preserved when all glory is given to God. Family unity also will be preserved when God is given the glory. Giving God the glory will stop the over use of the pronouns "I" and "me". Giving God the glory will help us keep both the first and second great commandments. We truly will love God and our neighbor if our goal in life is to glorify God. Let us remember this principle all the days of our lives. "Soli Deo Gloria!" Sing Psalter 368.

September 26 Read I Corinthians 2:1-9

The preaching opens to us the mystery of Christ and the gospel. This is not something that is apprehended by man's logic; the Greeks were masters at that. This is something that comes by the Holy Spirit. The glorious end of that preaching is salvation in Christ and eternal life in heaven. Once in a while we get a small glimpse of that glory, but none of us are prepared for the full glory that will be ours in heaven. Let us cling to that preaching which shows to us the wonderful mystery of salvation. Sing Psalter 350.

September 27 Read I Corinthians 2:10-16

One of the characteristics that set us apart from the world is that we have the Holy Spirit within us. This Spirit gives to us the knowledge and assurance of our salvation. He is the Comforter promised by Christ just before he died for our salvation. This Spirit is only given to those who have been chosen before the foundations of the world. He helps us in our infirmities and makes intercession for us before the throne of God. This is a great gift. Do we use it to God's honor and glory? Sing Psalter 287.

September 28 Read I Corinthians 3:1-9

The church of Christ is made of men and women who live upon this earth. As earthly bodies they also have an earthly makeup both physically and spiritually. As spiritual babies we must be nourished slowly. We are taught with the pure milk of the Word until we are able to be given meat. This is a natural progression and must not be overlooked. The figure then switches to that of a crop. Different laborers worked with the Corinthians. They carried out different tasks, but ultimately, as it always is in life, God was in control. This is a comfort for us to know that God is the master gardener and builder. Let us grow in grace under his wise handling of our lives. Sing Psalter 359.

September 29 Read I Corinthians 3:10-23

Paul finishes this admonition to not follow a man but to follow Christ with another figure. This figure is the figure of a building with different trades working to complete that building. God is the masterbuilder or contractor. Each of the other ministers who have come to Corinth is a different tradesman. All work together for the finished project, the church built on the foundation of Christ. This is not any building but the living body of Christ. The summary is found in verse 22 and 23. Reread those words and learn to live out of them. Sing Psalter 237.

September 30 Read I Corinthians 4:1-6

Paul in this section admonishes all believers to esteem highly the ministers of God. They are to be esteemed not

for their own sakes but for the work that God has placed upon them. In this day and age it is common to "blame" or to judge anyone with whom we come into contact. Paul reminds us that we will be judged by almighty God for all things at the judgment day. These "all things" include our thoughts and that which was done in secret. There are many texts in both the Old and New Testaments which bear out this truth. Let us esteem highly those who preach the gospel, for it is God's gift in them that this is done. Sing Psalter 271.

October 1 Read I Corinthians 4:7-13

Paul uses his own circumstances to set forth the ridicule and shame a Christian may have to endure in this world for the gospel's sake. Christians were persecuted in almost any way imaginable in some areas of the Roman Empire. They could stay strong in their faith only by the grace of God. He will give to us this grace to stand in the day when we may be persecuted. Persecution is one of the signs of the end times. Seeing that we see so many other signs, we should be aware that this one is coming to us as well. Christians in other parts of the world have already experienced this sign. Let us hold fast to the unity of the church so that we may help each other, by the grace of God, to stand in the evil days that approach. Sing Psalter 379.

October 2 Read I Corinthians 4:14-21

Our officebearers come to us as spiritual fathers. Like earthly fathers they love their children. Sometimes they must come with a word of admonition. Sometimes they come with a word of commendation. It does not matter the reason for which they come, they must come in love. Paul had this love for the Corinthians even in their sins. He told them that he would come and bring to them the Word. That is what we must desire, and that is what our officebearers must bring. Let us heed God's Word as it guides us in our lives. Sing Psalter 325.

October 3 Read I Corinthians 5:1-8

Along with a lack of unity in the church, the Corinthians had another fault which Paul addresses. That fault is they allowed a man who was living in sin to remain in their midst. Paul's words to them were simple. They must put that man out of the church. This must be done for two reasons. First of all, it was for the man's sake. By putting him out they were showing to him that he could not remain in the church of Christ and live in sin. Secondly, they must put him out for the church's sake. We have a common saying that one rotten apple can spoil the whole bushel. This is true in the church as well. God's church must keep itself pure from sin. This too will help preserve its unity. Sing Psalter 300.

October 4 Read I Corinthians 5:9-13

Paul continues to admonish and instruct the church at Corinth to remove from them the sinner. In this instruction he gives to all Christians the admonition to not associate with those who walk in gross public sins. Even though we are in the world, we must live an antithetical life. One way that we do this is to not have company with evildoers. In our normal every day life we might come into contact with such people, but in our social lives we must not associate with them. In this way we will keep ourselves unspotted from the world as James charges us to do. May God grant us the grace to live this way in our life on this earth. Sing Psalter 253.

October 5 Read I Corinthians 6:1-11

Paul continues admonishing and instructing the church concerning sins found within it. There are two principles found in this portion of Scripture. First of all, as much as is possible, we are to handle matters between church members within the church. Unless it is absolutely necessary, we should not go to the world's courts. That leads to the second principle. That principle is that we must keep ourselves separate from the world. This is not to say we must be like the Amish and similar groups, but rather we are to walk an antithetical walk in these matters as well. As Christians, members of Christ's body, when we walk this way we will promote and enjoy much more unity in the church. Sing Psalter 371.

October 6 Read I Corinthians 6:12-20

Many in this world think that their body is their own to do whatever they wish with it. This was the thinking in the ancient world of Greece and Rome. Nothing, as Paul points out in this chapter, can be further from the truth. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, and, as with any temple, must be kept holy. Therefore we must use our physical body to glorify God at all times. This is a great responsibility, and one that cannot be carried out without grace. Let us pray for the grace necessary to use our bodies in all activities only to glory of the maker of that body and not for our own lusts and pleasures. Sing Psalter 366.

Covenant Courtship: (9) The Role of Parents

by Aaron Lim

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

The blessedness of covenant truth is that God's covenant friendship extends to believers and their seed. God purposes to save not only individuals but families in their organic lines as well. He does so by instructing covenant parents to teach their children his ways, raising them up in the fear of Jehovah. As covenant parents discharge their parental duties faithfully, covenant children grow up in the consciousness of their salvation in Christ and their membership in the church of God. In so doing God's people are saved in the lines of their generations.

Part of covenant instruction in the home involves teaching young teenagers what covenant courtship involves. Covenant parents play a crucial role in the way their children engage in courtship. In the first place covenant parents teach their children what kind of partners they should choose. On one occasion I had a conversation with an elder of a Reformed church. During the course of the conversation I asked him what kind of Christian he would want his children to marry. His reply was that he would be satisfied so long as their partners are godly and sincere Christians.

The Reformed believer questions: What is the measure of godliness and sincerity? I believe the answer lies in 2 parts: 1) A biblical confession of God as he reveals himself in Scripture, and 2) A godly Christian walk according to his confession.

These two fundamental aspects make up the Reformed believer's understanding of godliness and sincerity. It is necessary to confess God rightly. This means knowing who God is as he reveals himself in his Word. It means confessing him as the sovereign one who governs and purposes all things according to his counsel. It means confessing the cardinal truths of Scripture as expressed in the five points of Calvinism and the Three Forms of Unity.

When a believer confesses God rightly, then he will be able to live aright with God. He will walk in humility as he acknowledges the absolute sovereignty of God in his life. He will love God and his neighbor aright when he appreciates God's eternal and predestined love for him in Christ. The truth of God is the moral compass by which a Christian directs his life and the course of his courtship.

In the next place covenant parents are living examples for their children to follow. How covenant parents relate to each other and govern the life of the home will affect their children's way of managing their own courtships. A young man whose father rules over his wife and the home in love will likewise learn how to lead his girlfriend in love and care for her needs. A young girl whose mother obediently submits to her husband will learn the importance of submitting to her boyfriend as God's divine will for her. As covenant children learn from their parents, so they will learn how to treat and live with their partners in courtship.

Covenant parents also serve to be good counselors for their children. As their children are engaged in courtship they will be able to supply them with a wealth of advice from their own experiences. The problems and heartaches arising from courtship are not few, neither are they all easy to solve. Sometimes breakups happen which cause great emotional turmoil to the individual. Covenant parents are placed there by God to comfort and ease the pain of their children. Godly counsel from covenant parents therefore serves to make our children wiser and better equipped to manage courtship.

The dangers for covenant parents are not insignificant. They can sometimes be indifferent to the relationships their children are involved in, preferring to let them handle things completely on their own. Such parents care little about who their children are dating, or the spiritual character of their partners. I find it very tragic that Reformed parents would allow their covenant children to date unbelievers outside the church or Christians from vastly different denominations. We risk losing our faith when we allow our children to date flippantly. The Reformed faith insists on unity in the faith between covenant couples. Covenant parents must do all in their power to warn their young people about the consequences of dating outside the church.

Sometimes overly-concerned parents can be too stringent in managing their children who are engaged in courtship. They want to decide who their children date. They pry into every single detail of their children's relationships and sometimes intrude upon their privacy. This is inappropriate as it creates unnecessary fear and suspicions in the minds of the young people. It also restricts the proper development of a covenant couple who are learning to live independently as one flesh.

It is necessary, therefore, to establish trust between covenant parents and their children. The young people must be given sufficient, guided freedom to pursue the course of courtship with their covenant partners. When trust is established they will not hesitate to share all the abundant details of their courtship with their parents, seek their godly counsel and follow after them.

In a small congregation like CERC, dating within the church can sometimes be a tricky situation. A couple who begin dating is naturally brought under the spotlight and scrutiny of the congregation. Members of the congregation can sometimes be rash to point out the flaws, incompatibility and weaknesses of the couple. Such criticism is most unwise and harmful to the couple's relationship. It is necessary that the people of God exercise love and wisdom towards the young couple, encouraging them in the way of the Lord.

Another problem arises when the parents of the couple sinfully assess each other's child. They set ridiculous standards for their child's partner according to their misconceptions on what a good married life ought to be. This is sinful and it injures the unity amongst fellow members of the congregation. Covenant parents are to be concerned, above all else, with the spiritual character of the young person their child is dating. They must insist on the spiritual element of the relationship. The person whom their child dates must be godly, one who fears God and who will fulfill his calling in the church and home. Such a person must provoke their own child to godliness and union with Christ. Covenant courtship is spiritual.

Covenant parents are ultimately responsible for who their children date. God has given them the authority to instruct and discipline them according to his ways, all in obedience to him. Although the common excuse from many parents is that their children are already young adults with minds of their own, it nevertheless remains their sacred duty to discipline them. Covenant parents are authoritative influences for their children. In love for their souls covenant parents must exhaust themselves and all their resources to ensure that their children engage in godly relationships.

In ensuring that their covenant children enter into godly relationships, covenant parents preserve the precious faith that God has entrusted to them and their children. Children are an heritage, says the Scriptures. This means that the children whom God entrusts to us to raise are living testimonies of God's faithfulness to us. For them we must labour and train up to the end that they will be well-equipped to carry on the faith of our fathers.

In the final sense I think covenant parents carry the sacred responsibility of envisioning what the church should be in the generations after them. Do I, as a covenant parent, want the church in my children's generations to be strong? Do I want my children to continue in the faith that the LORD has entrusted to me? This is indeed a heavy responsibility for which the LORD will require our accountability in the day of his coming.

If we prize the Reformed faith, we must teach our children to marry in the unity of the Reformed faith. ❖

Aaron is a member of Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore.

Church History

Athanasius: Too Young?

by Joshua D. Engelsma

As you recall, young people, in our last article we looked at the work of God in the life of the young minister Timothy. We saw how God worked mightily in and through Timothy at a young age. He shouldered the work we would have expected a more seasoned minister to carry. Especially noteworthy were

these words of Paul to Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth; *but* be thou an example of the believers…" (I Tim. 4:12).

In this article we examine the wonderful work of God in the life of another young hero of faith: Athanasius. Like Timothy before him, Athanasius was used by God to do outstanding things while still very young. Like Timothy (and us), he was not too young to do the work of the Lord.

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Athanasius was born in the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria, Egypt between the years AD 296-298. At the time, Alexandria boasted itself as one of the most outstanding centers of learning in the Roman world. It was in the prestigious schools of this city that Athanasius was educated. He received a top-notch education which prepared him for the work God had in store for him to do.

I think it is worth mentioning the importance of education. Young people, education is absolutely important. Not just any education, but solid, Reformed, Christian education. The kind we receive in our Protestant Reformed elementary and high schools. We must not overlook the fact that God used Athanasius' education to equip him for the work which he would soon take up. God also uses our education to prepare and equip so that we might one day take up our place as the leaders of the church.

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It appears that either Athanasius was born to Christian parents and instructed by them in the faith or he himself became a Christian at a very young age. There is a story told that supposedly young Athanasius was caught by Alexander, archbishop of Alexandria, performing an imitation baptism on some of his friends. Rather than punishing the zealous boy, Alexander took a liking to him and educated him further in the truth. Whether this baptism story is true or not is uncertain. What we do know for sure is that Athanasius' outstanding education and firm grounding in the Word of God undoubtedly caught the eye of Bishop Alexander. Young Athanasius became Alexander's personal secretary and later was made a deacon in the Alexandrian church. In 318, he wrote his first major work, *Against the Heathen*, while only about twenty or twenty-two years of age. He may have been young, yet he was actively involved in the defense and edification of the church. Imagine that! Here was a young man *barely out of his teens* working as a top assistant to the highest ranking church official in one of the largest and most prominent cities in the Roman Empire!

It was during the time that Athanasius served as secretary to Bishop Alexander that a controversy arose in the church of Alexandria, a controversy that would sweep across the Empire and divide the church. The source of this great whirlwind was a man by the name of Arius.

Arius was a priest in the city of Alexandria. Beginning around the year 319, this man began to publicly preach and teach his own views on the divinity of Jesus Christ. He taught that the Son was not eternal like the Father; rather, the Son was a created being like men and beasts. Arius' catchphrase was: "There was a time when he was not." This meant that the Son was not co-eternal or co-equal with the Father. He was subordinate to the Father. The implication of Arius' teaching was two-fold: a denial of the Trinity and a denial of the full divinity of Christ. By arguing that there was a time when the Son did not exist, Arius was essentially saying that there was a time when the Trinity did not exist. There only would have been a Father. But even that name is wrong, because God cannot be a Father without a Son. So, all that Arius' imagination envisioned was a singular Deity. That is, until the Son was created. But the Son that Arius conceived of was not fully God. He was not the same as the Father; he was not of the same *essence*. He did not partake fully of the divine.

To the Reformed reader this all seems absurd. "Arius is in Wonderland," you might say. "How could these ideas ever pose a threat?" The truth of the matter is, however, that the teachings of Arius *were* a major threat. At that time in history the church had no official creed that clearly set forth and explained the Biblical doctrine of the divinity of Christ and the relationship of Christ to God. The church had no official stance, so people like Arius believed whatever they wanted. Such people were heavily influenced by the pagan philosophy of the Greeks, especially Plato's views on subordination. Arius embraced this subordinationism and took it even farther than anyone else had done before him.

As soon as it became clear what Arius was trying to

teach, he was officially condemned by an Egyptian Synod headed by Bishop Alexander and young Athanasius. The year was 321. Notice again the youthfulness of Athanasius. He was only about twenty-five years old when he took part in the condemnation of Arius' heresies. He knew the Bible. He knew the truth and boldly defended it.

The official condemnation of Arius and his teachings did not mark the end of the struggle. In fact, it marked the beginning. Arius' poisonous views, though condemned, spread like wildfire, and he soon had legions of followers willing to take up his cause. Arianism became so popular and the church was so thoroughly divided that the Roman emperor Constantine decided to step in to preserve the unity of his empire. He called together a council of church officials at the city of Nicea in 325. Bishop Alexander was invited to the Council of Nicea since he was a top-ranking church official and involved in the conflict from the start. Along with him went his personal secretary, Athanasius. The twenty-nine year old man did not intend to take part in the discussion. He went only to assist the aged Alexander. Yet, Athanasius quickly became involved in the proceedings of the Council, and he was soon looked to for leadership by the other more seasoned delegates. This smart, eloquent, wise young man entered the Council as a relative unknown and left as the unquestioned champion of the orthodox faith. And he was not even thirty!

What was it that Athanasius and the Council of Nicea decided? After much debate, the Council wrote a creed that opposed Arianism and set forth the Biblical truth concerning the proper relationship of Christ to God.[1] The Nicene Creed declares that Christ is "the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all the worlds, God of God; Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made, being of one essence with the Father…" Jesus Christ is the Son of God, not a mere creature. He is begotten, not made. He is of one essence with the Father. He is eternal, infinite, uncreated. He is fully God.

The Council of Nicea set forth unequivocally the orthodox faith, for which we give hearty thanks to God. This did not, however, put an end to the controversy. There were many Arians who continued to infiltrate the ranks of the church and tried to undermine the confession of the Council. They tried by many slippery schemes to spread their heresy among the Christians.

After the death of Alexander in 328, Athanasius was made bishop of Alexandria at the ripe old age of thirty-two. Athanasius used this position to try to root out this Arian weed from the church. However, he was forced to flee the city no less than five times because of the opposition and persecution of the Arian-sympathizers. He often stood alone against these enemies of the truth, which is why he received the title *Athanasius contra mundum* – Athanasius against the world.

Athanasius did not live to see the final victory over the Arian heresy. He died in 373, and the Arians were not finally defeated until the Council of Constantinople in 381. By God's grace, this man continued to fight even when all seemed lost. He fought like a lion, giving all he had for the cause of Christ from the time he was a teenager until he died at the age of seventy-seven. Often he seemed to be fighting alone, with no one to stand beside him. Still, he never gave in. He "count[ed] all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus [his] Lord" (Phil. 3:8).

Defending the truth means we will be hated by those whom we once counted friends. Are we ready for this?

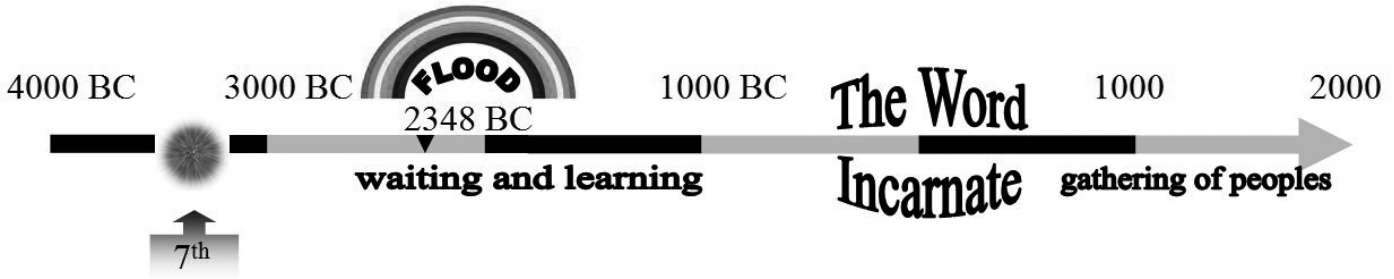
Athanasius is an example to us, young people. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord is going to cost us the praise of this world. Defending the truth means we will be hated by those whom we once counted friends. Are we ready for this? Are we willing to stand alone, like Athanasius? Fear not, young people. Although times are even now becoming difficult, rest assured that the same God Who strengthened Athanasius is the same God Who will strengthen our weak knees. By his grace we will stand, Protestant Reformed young people contra mundum. ❖

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

1 The creed written by the Council of Nicea is almost identical to the Nicene Creed we have today. In 381, the Council of Constantinople added the section on the Holy Ghost.

The Seventh Century of His-Story: The Church Is Invaded and a Great Warrior of the Antithesis Defends Her

by John Huizenga



God, in the last two centuries of His-story, delivered a detailed description of the power and glory of fallen man living as gods to themselves in the glorious creation that God had created for his glory. Year after year the city of Enoch grew, the wonders of technology dazzled the imagination, and the rowdy celebrations increased. Increasingly, the church which lived near the garden of Eden saw and heard of the wonders of man. Many in the church which gathered weekly around Adam to hear again the gospel of a promised Savior grew restless and impatient. Those who had ventured out to visit the city of Enoch could not concentrate for a minute on the sermons or history instruction because the wonders of Enoch and good looking girls kept dancing through their heads. Faith wavered: the earth with her treasures and the power of man seemed to be the only real salvation.

Young men in the church began to bring home beautiful young girls from the city and suburbs of Enoch flushed with excitement and deaf to all the concerns and warnings of their parents. God gives us a clear picture of these developments in Genesis 6:1-2 "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." One marriage opened the floodgate to more. At first the charm of happy young couples seemed to prove the concerns were overrated. The children were not interested in Adam's history, but they were hearty children and grew to be men of massive physical and intellectual power, "men of renown." Soon the attractions of Enoch began to take over the church, and those who wearied of the life within the sphere of the church moved out.

It was during the early stages of this invasion of the world into the church that a child who was to become a prominent warrior of the faith was born to Jared and his wife. Interestingly, they name him Enoch which means "dedicated" and "to begin." If Cain's motive in naming his son Enoch was his hope in beginning a new life away from God and dedicated to the glory of man, we see here a sharp antithetical contrast in a godly man who names his son Enoch with the hope and prayer of dedicating him to the Lord and the great battle of faith.

The prayers of Jared and his wife were heard by God, and God graciously worked within Enoch's heart to make him a man who became famous for his intimate walking with God (Gen. 5:22, 24). The inspired writer of Hebrews describes his walk in terms of "faith," "pleasing God," and "diligent seeking of God" (Heb. 11:5-6). While many of his peers grew up and became enamored with and devoted to the pleasures of this world, Enoch's mind was filled with love and devotion to God.

It was his close covenant walk with God that made

Enoch the great warrior and defender of the church for which he would soon become famous. To be sure, his parents carefully instructed him in history and the knowledge of salvation revealed by God. Even though many in the church did not fully comprehend the grave danger that the growing worldly population posed to the spiritual life of the church, Jared and his wife did, and they knew exactly what to do. They humbly put their trust in God. In doing so, they did not wait passively, but were busy training up their son Enoch and doing all they could to outfit him for the battle to come.

Can you see Jared sitting down with his son and saying to him, "my son,

"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.
For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but
against principalities,
against powers,
against the rulers of the darkness of this world,
against spiritual wickedness in high places.
Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God,
that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day,
and having done all,
to stand.
Stand therefore,
having your loins girt about with truth,
and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel
of peace;
Above all,
taking the shield of faith,
wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts
of the wicked.
And take the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:
Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the
Spirit,
and watching thereunto with all perseverance
and supplication for all saints."
(Eph. 6:10-18)

As Enoch grew up in the church and walked closely with God in covenant fellowship, the scorn and derision of his God by men who grew up in the church as well as those who came from the line of Cain aroused a holy anger in his heart. Like Samson, "the spirit of the LORD began to move him" (Judges 13:25). What a joy and encouragement it was for the church to see Enoch confront the enemy saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. … For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude).

As he began to carry out the work God prepared for him, God gave to him a wife, and right at the end of the 7th century God gave to him a son who would live to see Noah begin to build the ark in preparation for God's judgment on the wicked and salvation of the church. "And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5:21-24). We will come back briefly to Enoch and the wonder of God plucking his battle weary friend from the heat of the battle in the 9th century. For the next century we will focus on the role of Methuselah as a vital link for the church between Adam and Shem who would witness the birth of Abraham and Isaac. ❖

John is a teacher at Trinity Christian High School, a member of Hull Protestant Reformed Church and the Editor of Beacon Lights.

The Story of the Sea

The skies turn dark
And the winds blow strong
And everything seems
To be going wrong

Rain that pelts
The sandy shore
The lightning's flash
The thunder's roar

Waves so strong
So fierce and bold
Tell a story
That hasn't been told

A story of days
And years gone by
The groan of a ship
The sailor's cry

A story of ships
And lives that were lost
A story of men
And boats that were tossed

But in God we find
Great strength and might
He leads us from darkness
Into His light

Trust in the Lord
For He is our Guide.
Through troubles and trials,
In Him we confide.

– Kelsey Kooima

Kelsey is a member of Calvary Protestant Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa.

Church News

BAPTISMS

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

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Dana Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Aric Bleyenberg—Byron Center, MI

Holly Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Phil Doezema—Byron Center, MI

Sophia Samahel, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Todd Overbeek—Byron Center, MI

Renee Dawn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Russ DeVries—Edmonton, AB

Kaliyan Peggy Jane, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. George Barendregt—Edmonton, AB

Landon Robert, son of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Noorman—Faith, MI

Olivia Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Rock Wigger—Faith, MI

Micah James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Darren Vink—First, MI

Alexander Duane, son of Mr. & Mrs. Aaron Lehrman—First, MI

Phinehas Daniel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bill Leep—Grace, MI

Melanie Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Westra—Holland, MI

Jane Lenore, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brad Duistermars—Hope, MI

Andrew Philip, son of Mr. & Mrs. Drew Duthler—Hudsvonville, MI

Annika Kaylee, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Gallagher—Immanuel, Lacombe, AB

Riley Jacob, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jan Zeldenrust—Immanuel, Lacombe, AB

Adelyn Katherine Shewchuk, daughter of Mrs. Jessica Zylstra—Immanuel, Lacombe, AB

Joshua Charles, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bill Moore—Loveland, CO

Ian Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Michael Brands—Loveland, CO

Chase Bernard, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jordan Kamps—Loveland, CO

Nicole Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Matthew DeJong—Peace, IL

Aden Luke, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kyle Bleyenburg—Sioux Falls, SD

Greyson Thomas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Christian Flikkema—Southeast, MI

Carmen Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Velthouse—Southeast, MI

James David, son of Mr. & Mrs. Aaron Regnerus—South Holland, IL

Adult baptism was administered to Mrs. Jessica Zylstra—Immanuel, Lacombe, AB

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." Proverbs 4:26

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

John Helmholdt—Byron Center, MI

Alex Kingma—Byron Center, MI

Nathan Jessup—Hope, MI

Jaycen Klamer—Hope, MI

Daniel Langerak—Hope, MI

Lisa Brands—Loveland, CO

Leah Griess—Loveland, CO

MARRIAGES

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3: 5 & 6

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Matthew Gritters and Miss Gabrielle Spriensma—Byron Center, MI

Mr. Justin & Mrs. Tanya Huizing—Edmonton, AB

Mr. Nathan VanMeeteren and Miss Esther Griffioen—Faith, MI

Mr. Tyler Doezema and Miss Marice Kooienga—Faith, MI

Mr. Nathan Nikkel and Miss Rachel VanBemmel—Hull, IA

Mr. Cameron Zylstra and Miss Kelsey Hall—Immanuel, Lacombe, AB

Mr. Mark Kooienga and Miss Holly Dams—Loveland, CO

Mr. Ryan Wories and Miss Paige Swan—South Holland, IL

Mr. Caleb VanBaren and Miss Jennifer Schwarz—Randolph, WI

Mr. Jared Langerak and Miss Lisa Feenstra—Southeast, MI

Mr. Tony VanDonselaar and Miss Laura denHartog—Southwest, MI

"LITTLE LIGHTS" . . . let it shine !

by Connie Meyer

The Living Tree

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:3).

Sitting in the stuffy house one winter day, Dr. Martin Luther looked at his son and decided they should get some fresh air together.

"Son, let's go for a walk. We both have been cooped up enough today," Father declared.

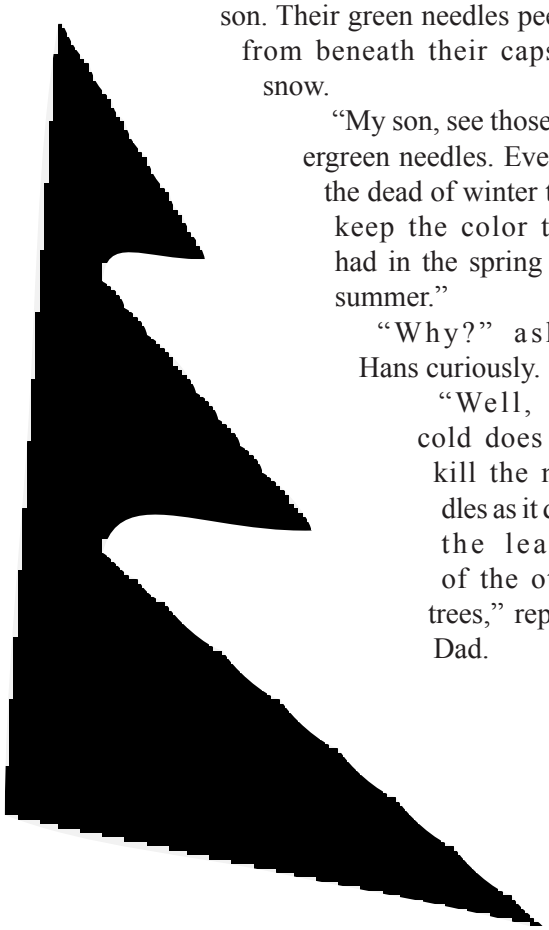
"Okay," Hans said enthusiastically. The sun was shining brightly, casting crystals on the white blanket of snow. The German countryside was covered with the newly fallen snow showing the calming effects of the previous night's storm.

Stopping, Dr. Luther turned to point out the evergreen trees to his son. Their green needles peered from beneath their caps of snow.

"My son, see those evergreen needles. Even in the dead of winter they keep the color they had in the spring and summer."

"Why?" asked Hans curiously.

"Well, the cold does not kill the needles as it does the leaves of the other trees," replied Dad.



"Is that why they are called evergreens; because they are forever green?" Hans asked acutely.

"Yes. Hans, we are like those needles. They never die and we don't either because we are alive in Christ."

Remember this, dear child. We will live forever in Christ. Even though we will die on earth, our souls will go on to live with Christ where they will be joined with our new bodies at Christ's return. Then we will be in heaven praising and giving glory to God. As the evergreen needles live "forever," we too will live forever with God in heaven.

Circle the following words in the word search below:

E	X	S	X	W	K	I	F	T	M	T	N
Z	V	S	E	P	I	W	V	W	W	R	L
F	K	E	U	A	U	T	O	C	N	O	K
K	K	S	R	G	S	W	H	Y	W	N	R
E	T	W	F	L	K	O	R	E	E	Z	P
S	R	A	D	V	A	I	N	E	R	Q	C
J	E	S	I	K	R	S	R	L	D	C	T
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I	F	J	V	L	F	F	F	H	A	G	Y
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evergreen	fruit	plant	trees
everlasting	season	leaf	wither

Connie is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This article was written as a Senior Writing assignment by Kirsten Gustafson, a member of First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan.

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John 8:32

2010 Young People's Convention
August 16-20, 2010

Are you prepared for the convention? Be sure to spend some time with the outlines in the June issue of *Beacon Lights* (also on the convention website www.prcconvention.com). Also, don't come to the Federation Board elections in ignorance—read the profiles of the nominees in this issue. We hope you have a blessed time at the convention. Please consider writing about your experience and impressions of the convention.

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See You There!