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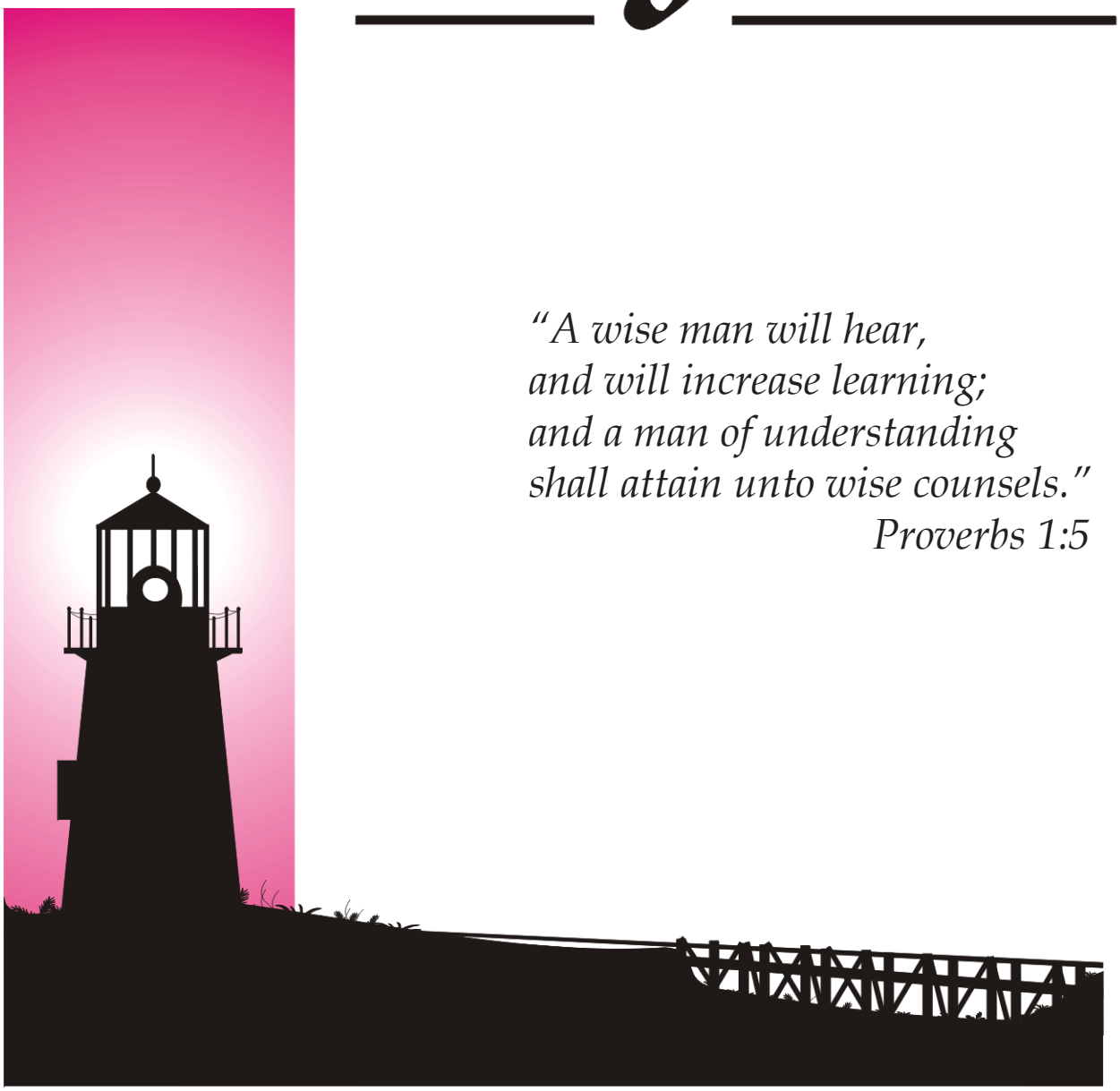

"A wise man will hear,
and will increase learning;
and a man of understanding
shall attain unto wise counsels."
Proverbs 1:5

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The Body Fitly Joined Together (4) Heeding the Wisdom of the Older Members

by Ryan Barnhill

In the first article in this series, we considered how the unity of the church is based on the Truth. In the second article, we delved into the sins of pride and envy, and how they so easily can tear apart the body of Christ. The third article talked about special needs members, how they teach us so many things, and how they play a vital role in the church body. In this final piece, we will examine the role of older members in the body. We will look at the relationship between older members, who are well passed their youth, perhaps with silver hair and a few grandchildren, and young people in the body.

Out of touch with what is going on; too old; out of step with my life. These are some of the judgments that are leveled on older members in the church. These attitudes lead to proud refusal to listen to authority and disobedience. This attitude is not surprising, even among Christian youth. It is not surprising, because, as an adult or young person, you likely remember or see these same thoughts arising out of your heart, as I know they arose in mine.

This attitude is based on a number of things. The first is our own sinful flesh. Our old man does not want the wise instruction of elders, nor does it desire their advice. As happened in the Garden of Eden, our flesh desires to follow only itself instead of heeding the command of God and those he has placed in authority over us. Proverbs 1:5, 7-9 speaks about a man's attitude toward authority: "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels…The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck."

The world we live in also influences our attitude toward the older members. In certain respects, the world honors the grey head. According to laws in government, congressmen and high officials need to be a certain age to take office. The world recognizes that age brings experience. It is unusual to see CEOs of large companies steering such a big ship at a very young age. But, apparent from what we see in the world of broken homes and ruined teens, this same rule does not guide the home-life. Even in homes where parents care about their children and seek their good, young people despise that authority, which is not even saying anything about homes where parents could not care less about the welfare of their children. Instead, the thinking spread by teen magazines, television shows, movies, and books, is that the teenage years ought not be limited or restricted by the instruction and watchful eye of parents. "Besides," this media says, "your parents were young once, too, and you can bet they did the same things that they are telling you not to do." Let us expose this rubbish of the world for what it really is: despise the authority of your parents, overthrow the good instruction of your elders, and follow the sins of your heart!

The actual time of youth also develops these kinds of proud and rebellious attitudes toward those in authority. As Proverbs 20:29 states, "the glory of young men is their strength." No doubt young people are strong physically. David, for example, slew a lion, bear, and an uncircumcised Philistine in his youth. Young people are often mentally sharp. Teenagers and young adults are often optimistic and filled with confidence. This, too, can mean that we as young people reject the wise counsel of parents and other members of the church because we think we know better.

It may be that we do not recognize the experience which the older members of the body, especially

our parents, have. The wrinkles lining their face should show us something of the struggles and afflictions they have faced; their grey hair should remind us of the battles they have fought; their strict warnings and admonitions must not frustrate us, make us angry, or discourage us, but must serve to build us up spiritually. If you are blessed to have your parents and grandparents yet on this side of the grave, listen to them. Submit to them.[1] Honor them.[2] Hear their instruction.[3] Heed their warnings. Listen to their experiences.

This is not to say that their experiences replace biblical wisdom. It is only when experience has its foundation on the Bible that it is worthy to instruct others. It may be that wicked men or women have much experience in life. Perhaps they have grey hair and deep wrinkles from the afflictions and sorrows of their life. Perhaps they have learned their own lessons. Perhaps they even diligently talk to their children about living a morally good life. However, if the instruction is not based upon the wisdom of the Bible, it is utter foolishness. The value of the wisdom of our elders is not based simply upon their age or experiences in life, but how they have grown in biblical wisdom. Experience that comes with age, which is rooted in biblical wisdom, is invaluable for us. This wisdom shows its fruits: parents teach their children that the sins of youth can have terrible consequences, and that sin is truly bondage; the older members teach the youth of the church that sin is indeed frightening and must be avoided at all costs; they diligently teach the young people that true joy and freedom is found in following the commandments of God; they encourage the youth and remind them that their present and future sorrows are for their profit; they help the young people, amid all the little problems of life, from difficulty finding a job, to strife in relationships, to keep things in perspective of the cross.

Young people, do you and I seek advice and instruction from our parents and the older members of the body of Christ? One of the reasons that God, in his wisdom, has placed these members in the body of Christ is so that they might instruct us. Talking to our friends and seeking their advice certainly has its place, but do not ever underestimate the value of seeking the advice of those who are spiritually experienced. It may be that your parents, grandparents, pastor, or elders do not know the exact dynamics of your relationships, do not exactly know the nature of your problems at school or work, or do not completely understand the stormy seas you are swimming through, but one thing is for sure—their advice and instruction is based upon the timeless, changeless, and powerful Word of God. Although they seem out of touch, they are not because their teaching is from the Bible.

Young people must be encouraged in these things, but never should we ever brush aside our young people as a group of hopeless hooligans that need to grow up in order to be mature. I had the privilege of chaperoning at the past convention hosted by Hudsonville PRC. I and the other chaperones, and the staff at the camp, noticed the godly walk of the young people and their obedience to authority. A number of camps in the last few years have told steering committees that the young people were well-behaved, spiritually mature, and a joy to have around. May God continue to bless us with young people and young adults that obey their parents and all other authority. Parents, grandparents, and leadership in the church, be encouraged by this and continue to raise and instruct children that are receptive to such instruction and advice. What peace and joy the church body experiences when the young people and young adults walk in obedience to authority!

Let us, then, as young people and adults, pray for the body. Pray for her unity in the truth; ask God earnestly that you might have the strength to love your brothers and sisters in Christ in all humility; beseech God that he would give you a spiritual mind and heart to learn from all the family of God around you, regardless of age and human ability. God gives that people a sweet unity, a foretaste of the perfect unity that we shall have in heavenly glory. Psalter number 371, stanza one, expresses it well: "Behold, how pleasant and how good that we, one Lord confessing, together dwell in brotherhood, our unity expressing." ❖

1 I Peter 5:5
2 Leviticus 19:32
3 Proverbs 1:8

Our Brothers and Sisters in Singapore

About one year ago, a group from the Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore began publishing a bimonthly periodical designed to provide "a platform for youths to read and write Godly Christian literature. It is to encourage youths to make the study of God's doctrine a personal priority and a common activity regardless of age." They have expressed a desire for support from *Beacon Lights* and would like to work together to promote our publications. In an effort to minimize shipping and printing costs, they are publishing an electronic copy which you can receive by contacting Josiah Tan (josiahtanrs@googlemail.com). They receive an electronic copy of *Beacon Lights* for distribution in Singapore.

Their fourth issue, September 2010, featured an anniversary celebration of "23 Years of the Grace of God." In an effort to draw us closer together as young people of Reformed faith, we include here a sample of some of the material found in their publication called *Salt Shakers*. Below is a brief introduction to their new publication.

> The magazine committee in the past week has decided on our magazine name which is *Salt Shakers* based on these following texts:
>
> Joel 3:16 KJV: "The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."
>
> Mark 9:49-50 KJV: "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."
>
> Matthew 5:13, 14, 16 KJV: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. … Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
>
> Leviticus 2:13 KJV: "Every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt, neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt,"
>
> Luke 14:34-35 KJV: "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"

The objectives of the magazine can be summed up by our magazine objective statement: "*Salt Shakers* is a platform for youths to read and write godly Christian literature. It is to encourage youths to make the study of God's doctrine a personal priority and a common activity regardless of age. Ultimately to provoke us daily to seek God, love Him and love His people."

That would be a short summary of what *Salt Shakers* hopes to carry out.

Dear Readers

It is great to once again be able to share with you the Word of God, and His testimonies through our lives, by way of this publication, *Salt Shakers*. It is indeed a privilege to write for our Lord. Nothing we say or write in this life, however wise, will ever be remembered for years. But when we put down in words our confession of the truth and power of God's Word, we speak and write things that are for eternity. Without doubt, the writers and servants of Salt Shakers are blest. We pray, and hope, that our Lord blesses you as much as He has us, as you read and meditate on the articles contained in here.

This issue is released in conjunction with the 23rd Anniversary of Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church. It is a joyous occasion as we reflect on how our Lord has led us through all these years and also wonder about the great things He has in store for us as a church. I would like to share from Ezekiel 16 as we look back at the amazing grace and mercy that God has shown to His church and look forward to its glorious adorning and perfection.

We were pathetic beyond words, and it is difficult to express it in better terms than the prophet Ezekiel. As individuals we were brought out of darkness into light and made alive from being dead in sin. Even now, we struggle with the old man in us and daily increase our debt

to our Lord Jesus Christ. As a church, we also constantly fail to be the witness that we should be. We struggle with doctrines because we are weak and do not understand many things. But God is merciful, and His unfailing love covers our nakedness. We were so unlovable, that no one would offer love. But, even if someone offered, no common love would have been sufficient, as only His love could fully cover the extent of our nakedness. It was an impossible situation. God's grace was our only hope, and so we are of all men most blessed, as those who are in the gracious Covenant of God.

Celebration for its own sake profits little, especially if it is man-centered. As we celebrate how far we have come, we should also remember the great debt that we have been forgiven of. In this frame of mind, our service to God becomes more and more acceptable as we say with John the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

Another useful application, as we remember how much we owe, is that which we can draw from Matthew 18:21-35. We have been brought from an extreme of poverty—owing more than everything, to an extreme of riches—owning more than everything. How do we behave then? The parable shows us that it is simply unreasonable if we fail to forgive those around us! Of course there are many human obstacles that would prevent us from forgiving others. We might be unwilling to show forgiveness because we feel that the other person owes us too much. We might be unwilling to forgive because the other person has not begged us enough. We might even be unwilling to forgive in false holiness that forgiveness would show we have compromised on our high Christian standards!

Whatever our weakness is, God knows, and he still tells us "seventy times seven". The only reason we need for forgiving our brother is that we were forgiven of so much more. The focus is not on our unwilling hearts, or on the debt owed to us, but on the cross of Christ. If you, often times, run there to beg forgiveness from your Creditor, then you must forgive your brother.

Do you know of someone you have told yourself that you would never forgive? Forgive, and tell him or her that the only reason is because Christ has forgiven you. Should our Lord Jesus use this to bring a lost sheep into the fold, it will truly be cause for celebration!

As we celebrate our 23rd Anniversary, may we never forget where we came from, and remember the forgiveness of our brother we owe to our Lord.

Christ regardless, Paul

Letters to CERC

Rev. Daniel & Sharon Kleyn

Protestant Reformed Foreign Missions—The Philippines—Rev. Daniel Kleyn P.O. Box 1173, Antipolo City Post Office, Antipolo City, Rizal 1870, The Philippines. Phone: 011-63-2-284-5603; Email: d.kleyn@prca.org.

Dear Youth of the CERC, Greetings from the Philippines!

It is a joy to extend to you, from just a relatively short distance away, my congratulations for this your church's 23rd anniversary. We join you in thanking the Lord for blessing you with and in the truth of His Word, and for His faithfulness in preserving you in that truth. It is our prayer that you may continue to experience these blessings from above.

I know from my own observation through our recent visit among you that the Lord has blessed your church with a large group of godly young people and young adults. We see in this the evidence of God's covenant faithfulness. He has fulfilled and is fulfilling His promise to save and gather His church in the generations of believers and their seed.

At the same time we realize that you, the youth, are the future of the church there. Thus you are crucially important for the church's continued existence. Under God's blessing, you will be the future fathers and mothers, and leaders and office-bearers in the church. With this in mind it is my prayer that you youth will remain steadfast and immovable in the ways of God.

Perhaps this is difficult at times, also because of the reality that you are a relatively small and isolated church in Singapore and in Southeast Asia. But be assured that you do not stand alone. This is true, first of all, because the Lord is with you. But it is also true because of fellow believers here in the Philippines who, with you, also love and confess and defend the glorious truths of the gospel of God's sovereign and particular grace. May this be an encouragement to you, as I know it is to the believers here when they hear of you and of your commitment to God's truth. May God be pleased to provide ways in which we are able to continue to encourage each other—even in person, the Lord willing.

Again, thanks very much for enabling my wife Sharon and me to visit this past June. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you all in Singapore and at the June Camp, and came home here with many good memories.

Congratulations and God's blessing to you all. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (II Thess. 2:15).

Prof. Herman Hanko

Congratulations on this significant milestone in the history of Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church. Your existence today as a congregation is solely due to the mercy and grace of our covenant God. In a certain way I am almost as aware of this as many of you are. I, along with Rev. Van Baren and our wives, did participate in the activities of CERC from the time of its organization. I well recall the organization of the congregation, the installation of its first office bearers, and the ordination of its first pastor. It all took place in the Kampong on River Valley Road, and the pictures of that event have a treasured place among our many pictures of our travels abroad.

I, with Prof Dykstra, was in Singapore when the congregation was meeting in its own place of worship on Tessensohn Rd. I preached for the congregation and spoke various times in that building; I and Prof. Dykstra met with the Session in the upper room. This was the one time I was in Singapore without my wife. When Mrs. Hanko and I were in Singapore for six months from October, 1999 to March, 2000 we spent many happy hours with the congregation when it was meeting in the Bible House. We were there frequently to preach, and remember well the times of fellowship we had.

In the last two or three years we have been in Singapore four or five times. You will all remember how I told the congregation, early in these visits, that we would probably not see each other again until we met in heaven. How little we knew then of God's plan and purpose for us in our lives. And now we hope to see you all again shortly, if the Lord wills it. But the history of CERC is not only one of moving about for places of worship and visits by me and my wife; it is also a history of considerable trouble. The Lord has led the congregation through many difficult times. It was difficult when the congregation had reluctantly to bid farewell to Pastor Mahtani because of serious incompatibilities. It was surely a very trying time when the Lord took from the congregation its shepherd, Pastor Cheah. But indeed in the memory of most of you the most grievous event was the sharp disagreement with many in FERC over the question of divorce and remarriage. That brought about a necessary but sad breach with others who had been one with you in the household of faith.

All these difficulties have this result that today there are now only a few members who were members of CERC when it was first organized. But the congregation was preserved through all these troubles and today stands as a monument to God's faithfulness in preserving a Reformed witness in Singapore. Not all the struggles are over and not all the difficulties have been overcome; but you may be confident that the Lord who has preserved you up to this point will surely continue to be your strength and help.

Mrs. Hanko and I have been very close to the work of CERC in the last few years. You were never far from our thoughts, and many were the prayers we made for you in our own devotions and in congregational prayers in the churches of our denomination. You have become dear brothers and sisters in the Lord and we have that sense that the cause of CERC (the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ) is also our cause as well as yours.

May our God who has preserved you all these years, also preserve you in the years to come. May you grow in grace and the knowledge of the great truths of the Reformed faith and may your witness in Singapore and in SE Asia become more widely heard that you may be an instrument of Christ to gather His church in your part of the world.

To God alone be the glory! May it be His will that we see each other in a few weeks.

Looking Back and Looking Forward

Being personally part of the history of Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church (CERC) for some 15 years, and having read its history since its institution in 1987, I must say, as the prophet Jeremiah spoke of Judah in her captivity, that "it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22-23).

I do not intend to pen down a lengthy reflection on the entire history of the church (I think that should be reserved for the occasion of the church's 25th anniversary in 2012, God willing, and perhaps it would be more meaningful and appropriate to get some founding members of the church to author this), but just share some brief thoughts with regards to how I have seen God lead CERC over the past few years.

The past five years has undoubtedly been a trying time for the church. We went through our first ever doctrinal controversy in the denomination. In the early stages of that period, the Lord took home our then-resident minister, the late Pastor Cheah. This "double-trial" tested the unity of the church severely. There was tension and uncertainty in the air. Many members were unsettled and undecided as to what to do. Fellowship was strained and spirits were downcast. All, young and old, were discouraged. The vitality and zeal of the church

diminished. A flock without its shepherd at a time of doctrinal controversy seemed destined to be scattered. But the Lord carried us through.

Behind His frowning Providence, the Lord has His perfect plan. He provided another resident minister for us in Pastor Paul Goh, as well as new elders and deacons. Over time, new members settled down and gradually but surely, the life of the church returned. The church took on a new character and "face," with renewed love and zeal for the truths of sovereign, particular grace and the doctrine of the covenant. In this regard, I am especially thankful for the coming of Professor Hanko over the past two years to help us and reinforce these truths through his clear and powerful preaching and teaching. The heightened interest in these precious truths among the young people of the congregation was also evident as they initiated the study of Reformed doctrines in their meetings and Covenant Instruction classes. The publication of this very magazine is testimony to their desire to learn, apply and spread the Reformed faith!

The Lord has preserved CERC through one of the most difficult times in her history. It was painful and wearisome during the period of the controversy, but looking back, I would say : "we were better for it." We have developed a greater appreciation for the truths of sovereign, particular grace and the unconditional nature of the covenant. The church has become more united in the truth, in our fellowship and in our mission to preach the gospel of sovereign grace. The Lord would have the church purified in the crucible of the doctrinal controversy. As we emerge from the controversy, may we not forget the lessons we have learned. It is my prayer that God would imbue in each of us a passion to know, maintain, defend and develop the precious heritage of the Reformed faith that He has entrusted to us. May He make CERC a pillar and ground of the truths of sovereign, particular grace and of the unconditional covenant in our generations.

What does the future hold for CERC? I do not know what tomorrow may bring, but I know God holds tomorrow. He has gone before us. He is already there. No doubt there will be more difficulties, challenges and perhaps controversies, but our confidence must always be in the Lord. For He is the ever faithful One, Whose love never changes. Through every mountain and valley that He would lead His church, He will never leave her nor forsake her. "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me" (Isa. 49:16).

Now and always, our confession remains "Our help is in the Name of Jehovah, Who made heaven and earth" (Psa. 124:8).

Elder Kong Wee

Desiring the Office in a Reformed Church

It is the joy of every godly parent to bring up god-fearing covenant children, and greater joy it is to hear that their sons desire the office in a reformed church. It is therefore my delight to advise a young man desiring the office because he desires a good work. One of the first questions in this young man's mind is whether it is God's will or whether God is calling him to the office. Is that desire an indication that God wants him to be in such offices? I hope he will find here some principles which will guide him to answer those questions.

The Call

In the first place, I am convinced that he is to prepare himself for the office without first asking or knowing if God wants him in it. God does not call a man to office by some mystical internal call known only to him. There is only one way that God calls a man to office—through the church. But how does the church know who to call? The Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 21 Q&A 55 summarizes God's calling to every believer within the church when it says, "…that everyone must know it to be his duty, readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts, for the advantage and salvation of other members." It speaks of 'employing his gifts.' There are no gift-less Christians (Rom. 12:6) but there are three types of gift users. Those who use them for the salvation of others, those who use them for themselves and those who do not use their gifts. It is when the young man performs his duty that the church will recognize God's calling for him and extend the call to him.

The use of gifts must not be equated with being active in church activities. While it is a good thing, it is not necessarily a good measure of a man's qualification for office. It is a common mistake to nominate men who are "active in church". Active members often stand out in the crowd but the church must look out for members with the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and who use such gifts for the salvation of other members. An example of such gifts is being apt to teach. For both pastors and elders, the ability to diligently study the Word of God is necessary. The form for the ordination of elders says this about the need to be apt to teach: "…for the performance of which [watching diligently against the wolves] the elders are duty bound diligently to search the word of God, and continually be meditating on the mysteries of faith." The young man ought to be able to do such before

he is in office as entering the office will not make him suddenly knowledgeable in the word of God. The church needs men who are able and willing to defend the faith, not great organizers or people with abilities to lead it forward in the next lap.

Until the young man is already diligently using his gifts for the good of members in the church, which is his basic Christian calling, he is outside the radar of the church's search for office bearers.

Qualifications

The qualifications have been expounded by many at great length and I must insist that these qualities are not opinions or words of wisdom but scripture prescribed requirements. Except for that of ruling one's house well, being apt to teach and not being a novice, all the qualities listed are to be expected in every regenerated child of God. More so, it must be true of office bearers so that they can be an example to the flock. These requirements must not be compromised for the sake of filling vacancies.

This is not to say that only a perfect man will do because then no one would qualify in this life. The Lord uses the weak things of this world to do His work so that all glory goes to him alone. It is a true saying that "… when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10). The qualifications of the offices are qualities given by God as He sanctifies us, so that in our service to God we can only say "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil 4:13). Therefore, the church must look out for men "full of the Holy Ghost", that is, men who are evidence that God sanctifies and chastens because the Lord only sanctifies whom He loves. The evidence of God's love in the man is his love for the brothers, the members of the church (1 John 4:21).

The Church

It must be remembered that this whole matter is first and foremost about the Church and not about the person. The local church, as part of the Universal church, is a very special entity in this world. She consists of those called out of this world to be members of the body of Jesus Christ. Unlike membership in an earthly organization where members voluntarily join for some benefits, Christ saves us into the church. None of the true members of the church would have joined voluntarily and no heavenly benefits would have enticed sinners dead in sins except God had chosen them before the foundation of the world and given them faith to believe. So the young man must remember that the church consists of sinners saved by grace who in this life continue to struggle with the power of sin and the weaknesses of their flesh. As a member in this imperfect body of Christ, he seeks her good with every gift that God gives him. More than just desiring the office, he cannot allow himself to neglect the apple of God's eye bought with the blood of Christ. He is duty bound to prepare himself to be ready to answer when called to serve in the special offices.

Furthermore, desiring the office is equivalent to desiring the work of Jesus Christ in the church. Every child of God, without exception, must be a servant of Jesus Christ but some, the Lord calls to be chief among us. To these, the Lord says, "whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:27). Faithful servants do not lord over God's heritage but use their gifts to serve them. A faithful and diligent servant "will purchase to themselves a good degree" but mediocre servants put the church at risk of having its candlestick removed (Rev. 2:5).

Considering the Call

How should you consider a call that the church extends to you to serve in one of the offices of Christ? This call means that the church recognizes that you have been faithful in the office of believer and now calls you to a specific office. It is not a promotion but a call to already faithful servants to take up a specific and honourable task.

Such calls from Christ, through His church, must be considered with all due diligence. Throw false modesty out of the window when the Master calls. As I said in the beginning, you should have prepared yourself for it before and, with few exceptions, be ready to give the answer "Lord, send me". We have to humbly accept that there are times when the Lord does put us in difficult circumstances in life when it will not be advisable for us to be in the office and it pains us to have to say "no." If, after much prayer, you have to reject the call, a substantial reason must be given. To be godly is every man's calling but not every godly man is ready for the office.

In a Reformed Church

The young man desiring such office must be an example of submission to the rule of the elders. In the Reformation, God returned to the church such offices and the truth of the plurality and equality of elders so that there is no hierarchy where one elder or pastor rule above others. There is only the rule of Christ in the church and it is through the rule of the elected elders.

Any church that calls itself reformed but is dominated by an elder or pastor denies the rule of Christ and is far from being reformed. I doubt an office in such a church is desirable or worth consideration because they essentially deny Christ. In fact, my advice to the young

man would be to come out of an apostate church because by continuing in her, he bears the corporate responsibility of her errors and is guilty before God for propagating her errors.

Finally, office bearers are mere men, unable of themselves to do the work; but like us, they can do all things through Christ Jesus. We pray that God may replenish them with gifts of wisdom, courage, discretion and benevolence so that they may take heed in doctrine and life, keep out the wolves, reprove the disorderly and comfort the poor with the Word of God. We also pray for ourselves, that God will give us grace to submit to their rule, that His holy name may be magnified and the kingdom of Christ may be enlarged.

Deacon Chan

Remembering the Lord's Day

On 11 May 2010, the Reformed Reading Book Club met to review and discuss the pamphlet on "Remembering the Lord's Day" written by Prof Engelsma of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. Though this is only a ten page pamphlet, Prof Engelsma has concisely pointed out the essence of keeping or remembering the Lord's Day.

In his introduction, Prof. Engelsma equated the Lord's Day to the dikes in The Netherlands that keep back the threatening seas and preserve the Hollanders from destruction by the seas. In his analogy, he explained that the Lord's Day holds back the raging waves of materialism, earthy-mindedness and pleasure-madness that threaten to engulf the Church and the Christian.

In the subsequent three sections, Prof Engelsma stressed and elaborated the one and fundamental truth of Sabbath observance: As of today, or in the present time, and according to the Fourth Commandment, Jehovah God still sets apart one day of the week as a special day and requires His people to remember this day by ceasing from their secular work and play, in order to devote themselves to worship Him. He also gave both the Biblical and confessional proof to show that remembering the Lord's Day is the will of God.

In the last three sections of the pamphlet, Prof Engelsma gave some ideas on how we can go about remembering the Lord's Day.

Prof. Engelsma emphasized the urgency of remembering the Lord's Day and he gave three reasons for his emphasis :

- First, keeping the Lord's Day is a commandment that belongs to the first table of the Law.
- Second, the 'Lord's day' belongs to the risen, glorious Lord Jesus Christ. It is not our day.
- Third, by the Lord's grace, we receive the greatest benefit of rest, by remembering the Lord's Day, because the Sabbath was made for man.

In our discussions, we asked ourselves these questions:

- What does the Lord's Day mean to you and me?
- Does keeping the Lord's Day still apply to Christians today or is it only valid in Old Testament times?
- Does keeping the Lord's Day require Christians to cease from work and play on that day?

We concurred with Prof. Engelsma that the Lord's Day is still applicable to Christians today, and of the importance and urgency of keeping the Lord's Day. The Lord's Day is a sacred day, out of the seven days of the week, set aside for God and for our spiritual rest.

The Lord's Day is a day where we come to meet God, worship Him, sing praises to Him and enjoy fellowship with the saints. The Lord's Day is a time when we hear the preaching of the Word of God as we have been hearing the preaching of the world and the lies of the devil for most of the time during the week. As faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom 10:17), we come to receive the Word of God on the Lord's Day. Through receiving the word of God, we will learn more of God, understand more of His will for us and be reminded of the blessing of the forgiveness of sins. The Lord's Day is a place where we can have a foretaste of heaven; entering into the heavenly kingdom and having a glimpse of heavenly worship. While most of the time in the week, we are subject to the unrest in the world, the Lord's Day brings us into His sanctuary where we can find peace and rest in the presence of God.

As those in the office of believers, we are always on the receiving end on the Lord's Day; however, for the office of the pastor, instead of receiving, he gives the word of God to the people through the preaching from the pulpit.

Lastly, we all recognized that to be in church the whole day on the Lord's Day takes effort. We can do our part by encouraging each other, out of love one for another and love for God, to keep the Lord's Day Holy, as a whole day.

Bro. Seow Thong ❖

The Twelfth Century of His-Story: The Church among Giants

by John Huizenga

The last century marked a prosperous period for the church from an earthly perspective. But now, as the twelfth century unfolds, any fanciful hope of a great spiritual revival, redeeming of creation through a common grace of God, or a turning of the kingdom of this world to God are swiftly dashed to pieces. Genesis 5 ends with the words "And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth" (Gen 5:32). Notice how old Noah was when the birth of these sons takes place! Up to this point it was a child born early in the life of a patriarch that was chosen to represent the line of Christ and the elect church. What was going on with the church during those 500 years? What about the many children that were undoubtedly born to Noah before Shem, Ham, and Japheth? What about all the children born in the church during this time?

To put it simply, the young people were leaving the church in droves. Between the death of older saints and apostasy, Noah, his wife, his three young boys and their new brides were the only ones left when God brought salvation to his little flock by way of the earth shattering flood. These were dreadful days for the church, and we think of the words of Christ as he spoke of the days shortly before his return on the clouds of glory: "But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days" (Mark 13:17-20). For some 500 years, then, the church dwindled, and God tells us that the world grew in wickedness and was characterized by violence. The world knew clearly that it was the church which hindered its progress and it began a systematic program of eradication.

Concerning this period of time before the Flood, God has revealed to us a number of truths that emphasize how weak and helpless the church is in herself. Our Lord describes us as sheep. We require constant supervision. In comparison to the world, we have no "street-smarts." The church, after all, realizes that this world is not even her home and spends her time and energy putting up spiritual treasures into the kingdom of heaven. But even in her spiritual life and godliness, she has no strength of herself, and is completely dependent upon God. Peter instantly began to sink apart from faith in Christ. We will consider next month, the Lord willing, the devastating effects of earthly and sensual attractions that governed the selection of marriage partners.

In contrast, the world is the intelligent and subtle wolf. It is shrewd and clever in attaining with a single eye its goal of glory and power. When Satan brought Jesus to the mountain top to show him the kingdoms of this earth, he saw real power and earthly glory. Satan has been given a very real power and authority in this world. All the good treasures and powers hidden in this earth to be discovered and used by man for the glory of God are systematically developed and channeled into service to Satan. The giants of commerce, money, and technology serve the kingdom of this world.

Satellites scurry around the globe knitting together the lives of everyone and giving to each man, woman, and child the power to buy, sell, communicate, and know whenever and whatever he wants.

Today we stand amazed at the power of technology and the glory of modern cities. Satellites scurry around the globe knitting together the lives of everyone and

giving to each man, woman, and child the power to buy, sell, communicate, and know whenever and whatever he wants. If our eyes could see the networks of communication, each of the seven billion human lives on this earth would be like individual nerve cells in a brain—a brain that is the mind of Satan himself—a psychotic brain that is determined to overthrow the living God. The church within this world are like so many cancer cells waiting to be identified and eradicated once and for all. The church doesn't stand a chance…apart from Christ.

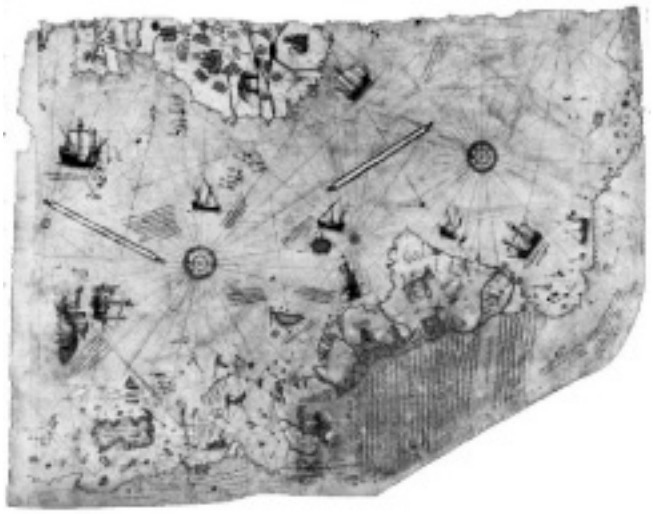
The church of the twelfth century lived among giants—not only physically large, but intellectually, economically, and socially as well. They "became mighty men which were of old, men of renown (Genesis 6:4). To comprehend the power of these "mighty men," we only need to look around at today's multitude of billionaires, the powerful organizations and corporations, and the glamour of their lifestyles. Then we need to give these men hundreds of years to live, IQ scores that would make Einstein look like a schoolboy, and an enormous physical capacity to carry out their grand dreams. The Darwinian thinking that has saturated our schools and culture for the past hundred years has pretty well ironed into our minds the idea that somehow, even if we confess not to believe in evolution, that we are much more advanced than anyone could have been in "olden times." We can hardly get the "cave man" picture from our minds. From our childhood, we have been bombarded with the evolutionary artist's rendering of "early man" as a dumb-looking ape with some sort of spark in its eye that speaks of some greater destiny. Our pride continually stokes the notion that we must be much more advanced than these men of old.

If these men were to walk into the great science labs of today, the corporate headquarters of the world, or Wall Street and begin to speak, they would soon silence the greatest minds of today and turn them into mesmerized students.

These were not "men of renown" just for their times. If these men were to walk into the great science labs of today, the corporate headquarters of the world, or Wall Street and begin to speak, they would soon silence the greatest minds of today and turn them into mesmerized students. Scientists and archeologists continue to stand in awe over what have been called the "seven wonders of the ancient world." The wonders are not limited to these massive works of engineering. A list of what is now called "ooparts" (Out-of-place artifacts) is growing. These are man-made mechanisms, tools, or artistic objects which clearly belong to BC times, but according to evolutionary thinking can't possibly come from earlier times. Some explain these artifacts as the product of alien life, and various cults and sects, including the Mormons have developed religions around the idea that the civilizations before the Flood used space travel. God has revealed that man was capable of fantastic inventions, but we have no reason to go off into the bizarre directions that these cults and sects go.

We have space here to describe only a couple of these "ooparts." The first defies the evolutionary notion that man had, already long before Columbus, acquired the technology and ability to navigate the oceans, explore, and chart coastlines using complex star charts, navigation inventions, and calculations. The following gives a description:

> In 1929, a group of historians found an amazing map drawn on a gazelle skin. Research showed that it was a genuine document drawn in 1513 by Piri Reis, a famous admiral of the Turkish fleet in the sixteenth century. His passion was cartography.
>
> Piri Reis' high rank within the Turkish navy allowed him to have a privileged access to the Imperial Library of Constantinople. The Turkish admiral admits, in a series of notes on the map, that he compiled and copied the data from a large number of source maps, some of which dated back to the fourth century BC or earlier.
>
> **The Controversy—the Piri Reis Antarctica map**
>
> The Piri Reis map shows the western coast of Africa, the eastern coast of South America, and the northern coast of Antarctica ice free. The northern coastline of Antarctica is perfectly detailed. The most puzzling however is not so much how the Piri Reis Antarctica map managed to be so accurate 300 years before it was discovered, but that the map shows the coastline under the ice. Geological evidence confirms that the latest date Queen Maud Land could have been charted in an ice-free state is 4000 BC.
>
> On 6th July 1960 the U. S. Air Force responded to Prof. Charles H. Hapgood of Keene College, specifi-



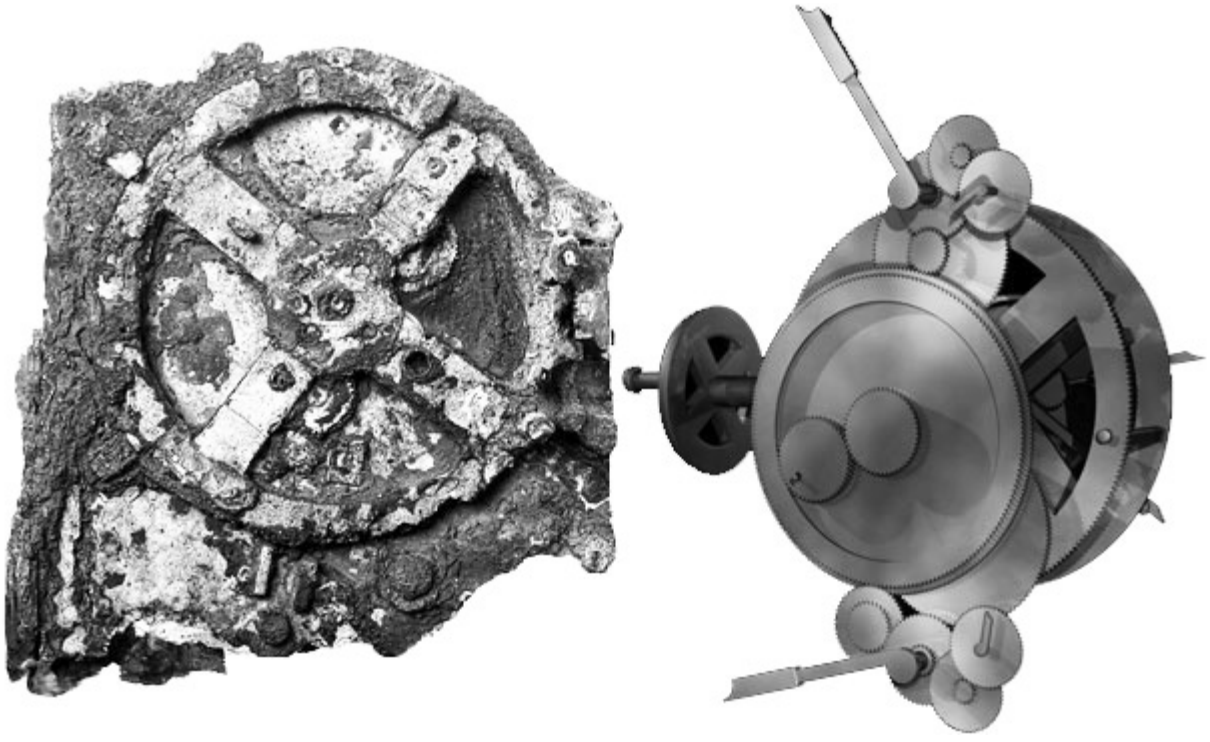
cally to his request for an evaluation of the ancient Piri Reis Map: …

…Dr. Charles Hapgood, in his book *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings* (Turnstone books, London 1979, preface), said that:

It appears that accurate information has been passed down from people to people. It appears that the charts must have originated with a people unknown and they were passed on, perhaps by the Minoans and the Phoenicians, who were, for a thousand years and more, the greatest sailors of the ancient world. We have evidence that they were collected and studied in the great library of Alexandria (Egypt) and the compilations of them were made by the geographers who worked there. Piri Reis had probably come into possession of charts once located in the Library of Alexandria, the well-known most important library of the ancient times. http://www.ancientdestructions.com/site/destructions/piri-reis-antarctica-map.php

Not only do these maps defy the false evolutionary thinking that man really only began to blossom intellectually at the time of the Greeks, but it exposes a world of men shortly after the tower of Babel who were exploring the new world and apparently had the technology to map Antarctica before the new seasons following the Flood had time to cover the continent in ice.

Another discovery in 1901 was an interesting looking clump of bronze from a Roman shipwreck that went down near the Greek island of Antikythera some 100 years before Christ was born. It was not until a team from the Cardiff University in Wales was able to apply X-ray tomography to the artifact that its complexity was revealed. It turned out to be a highly complex mechanical device with some 37 gears that were not thought to have been invented until the 16th century. By turning a crank, the device would calculate the positions of planets as well as solar and lunar eclipses for any given day in the past or future. It could also perform mathematical calculations. The discovery has forced historians and sociologists to rethink what they had before said was impossible (November 20, 2007 and July 31, 2008 LA Times).



What do these discoveries have to do with life 600 years before the Flood? God has revealed to us that the Flood destroyed the world that then was. The only glimpse we get of that world is what God has revealed about it and what Noah and his sons brought with them into the new world. Even with a drastically reduced lifespan and the devastating blow at the tower of Babel, the children of Noah who had not even belonged to the ancient "men of renown" were able to recreate and develop quickly some of the things that had been learned and developed before the Flood. When we understand these great achievements of mechanical computers, navigation, and construction marvels to be mere shadows and memories of the knowledge that existed before the Flood, it only serves to heighten our wonder of these men of renown. Then, too, what artifacts we have discovered are likely only the tip of the iceberg.

Man in his earthly kingdom under the guidance of Satan has limped along with severe handicaps of reduced life span, famines, warfare, disease, poverty and language barriers ever since Babel. Even so, look around you and see what he has achieved! In Revelation 13, he is described as a great beast that had been wounded. Today he is using the power of electrons to work a healing of the wound and restore the collective power of men. Before the Flood, the church witnessed the amazing and wonderful, yet fearful development of the powers of man. The church also understood that she was the one thing on this earth that stood between the beast and its goal of dethroning God. As long as the church exists on this earth, the world sees God's faithfulness and purpose in saving his elect and working all things to his glory. And when the world develops in glory and power, it will do everything possible to destroy the church which gets in its way. ❖

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He Gathers Every Teardrop

Regardless of the circumstance,
Regardless of the fear,
Regardless of the pain we bear,
Regardless of the tear.

Our God is ever in control,
Performing as He should,
And He has promised in His Word
To work things for our good.

But as a loving Father would,
He sometimes lets us cry
To cleanse the hurt out of our heart,
To wash it from our eye.

Yet gently gathers up the tears
Within His hands to stay
Until He turns them into pearls,
and gives them back someday.

—Author Glenda Fulton Davis

Psalm 42:1-5
As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

In Christian Love,
Sadie Buiter

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Chester Hunter

February 5 **Read Psalm 43:1-6**

When we have difficulties with those around us especially those not of the household of faith, where do we turn? David had those kinds of difficulties. We read of many in Scripture, and we can imagine that he had many more. David knew that he must turn to God, the almighty Judge. He knew that God would take up his case and provide for him the deliverance that he desired and needed. We must do this as well. We must go to God through his Word and through prayer. In this way we will find the answers to the needs that we may have. David knew that to encourage his flagging spirit, he needed to hope in God alone. Let us hope in the God of our salvation and turn to him for help in time of need. Sing Psalter 120.

February 6 **Read Psalm 44:1-8**

The Psalmist praises God for the victories that he has given to Israel as they settled in Caanan and established his church. God continues to give to us such victories today. Of course they are not the physical victories of long ago, but rather victories over sin and Satan. We must see that God continues to establish his church throughout the four corners of the world. As that church is established, the signs will be fulfilled, and the ultimate victory will ensue. All of the church will be triumphant and will reign with Christ in heaven. In this God we must boast and not in any god of this earth. Sing Psalter 121.

February 7 **Read Psalm 44:9-16**

There are times of our lives when we believe that God has deserted us. It is evident from this portion of the Psalm that the writer believes that was true in his case. Each verse gives another piece of evidence that he uses to prove his case. But yet there are certain phrases that show that in his heart he knows that is not the case. First of all we see that in most of the verses, he states "Thou…" He knows that the sovereign God is in control of all things. Is that our confession? In verses 15 and 16 he comments that he is ashamed because God's name is blasphemed. Do we feel shame when that is the case? It is a comfort to know that God is in control of all things. May we never blaspheme his holy name when things do not seem to be going the way we think they should. Sing Psalter 122.

February 8 **Read Psalm 44:17-26**

In the last section of these Psalms we looked at the afflictions that the wicked bring upon God's people. We saw that it is comforting to know that God is in control of all things. Here the Psalmist calls upon God to arise and deliver his people from their troubles. He sees that God knows all things, but yet he sees that because God's people trust him they are afflicted. Does God really sleep? The answer is of course, no! We know that all things work for our good and God's glory. When the time is right he will arise and deliver us from troubles. He does this for his sake and not ours. May we be "patient in adversity," as our beloved catechism states. Sing Psalter 123.

February 9 **Read Psalm 45:1-9**

This Psalm is a Messianic Psalm; some say it was written by Solomon. Do we proclaim Christ's kingly nature often? Do we give the honor and glory due him in that office? Christ is our king who will return on the clouds of heaven to take us unto himself in heaven. He is God whose throne is in that heaven. Each day we must bow to his kingly majesty. We must refrain from glorifying ourselves in anything that we do. We, too, must love righteousness and hate wickedness even as our king does. Take another look at our king's attributes. Do we emulate them? Shouldn't we? Sing Psalter 124.

February 10 **Read Psalm 45:10-17**

Yesterday we looked at the king and his glory. The king was Christ who once came to earth as a meek and lowly baby but will return as the triumphant King of his church. Are we preparing to stand in the presence of that King? Verse 11 tells us how to be ready. First of all, our body must be prepared. We cannot do this by ourselves. This is part of the mystery of the incarnation. That same king took on our flesh to die on the cross for us. Secondly, we must worship him. We must learn how to do that now. This is why Sabbath observance is so important, for here we learn how we must worship the King in eternity. Let us continue to look forward to the day when we will be united with the King and all those who are his. Let us prepare ourselves for that grand and glorious day. Sing Psalter 125.

February 11 Read Psalm 46:1-5

Devotional after devotional could be written about this Psalm, Luther's favorite. The child of God and the church in general can draw much comfort from its words. With God as our refuge, we need not fear any enemy. Satan may bombard us; man may heap affliction upon us, but we can be confident that God is always with us. We find that refuge as we attend the worship services of our God twice each Lord's Day. There in his house we can find a peace that is unsurpassed by any man can imagine. People of God, look for that peace and find it in almighty Jehovah who gave to us the Prince of Peace. Sing Psalter 127.

February 12 Read Psalm 46:6-11

From the busyness of verses 6-10, we come to the peace of verse 10. How often do we have to be reminded to "Be still"? Sometimes God has to make this reminder quite forceful as he stops us from going about our normal daily life by illness. He uses other methods as well. We must take the time to be still and know that he is God. We might not discredit his Godhood, but we might be guilty of not giving to him the glory due his name. Devotions are a good time to be still and know that he is God. We should let the Bible speak to us daily about him so that we can glorify him as the sovereign God of the covenant that is extolled in verse 11. Let us "be still." Sing Psalter 128.

February 13 Read Psalm 47

As you read through this Psalm, you see some variations of the phrase, "Sing praises." This, along with prayer, is the chief means of thankfulness that we have to God. In the church world today there are many forms of music and singing. Many of them are beautiful and worthy of imitation. Others violate the principle found in verse 7. Our praise singing must be with understanding. It cannot be the repetition of words or sounds that have no basis in God's Word. Let us "make a joyful noise" because God is the King of our salvation. Sing Psalter 129.

February 14 Read Psalm 48:1-7

Throughout the Psalms and other parts of Scripture, Jerusalem and Zion are used as pictures for the Church of God on this earth. Physically Jerusalem, situated on Mount Zion, was an excellent location for a capital city because it could be easily defended. This was David's plan when he chose the location for the city. This was in God's providence and counsel, as he would use the location as a picture of his church. In the first few verses of this Psalm we see that during the height of Israel's glory nations dared not attack Jerusalem. As the nation grew sinful then God allowed Satan to incite nations to come up against it and eventually take it into captivity. A strong church will stand as a defense against Satan's wiles. A church riddled by sin and refusal to obey God's commands will fall prey to those same spiritual wiles. Only with God's help can we stand strong. Let us pray for that help every day. Sing Psalter 131.

February 15 Read Psalm 48:8-14

The Psalmist continues to give thanks for the strength the people of God can find in the church. While it appears that he extols the physical strength in these verses, we can easily see in the last verse that it is the spiritual strength that is being lauded. Do we take the time to examine God's church for its strengths, or are we too busy bemoaning its weaknesses? With which do we wish to impress our children-strength or weakness? In that church we find the guide who will direct us throughout our life on this earth. He will never let us wander around lost in the maze that is here. He is a faithful guide and will lead us unerringly on the path that leads to heaven. Thanks be to God! Sing Psalter 132.

February 16 Read Psalm 49:1-5

The Psalmist begins this Psalm with a call for all to listen to what he has to say. As we will see, he will not be boasting or calling the world's inhabitants to listen to his wisdom. Rather, he will be calling them to listen to the wisdom of Jehovah. Is this to what we call people to listen? Do we show those around us about the wisdom of God and the fear of Jehovah? We have been given a beautiful treasure in that Word of God. We are called to share it. We need not fear what the world will say about that wisdom. Its author will care for us. May we speak the wonderful words and works of God to all with whom we come into contact. Sing Psalter 135.

February 17 Psalm 49:6-14

At first glance we may say that there is nothing for us in these verses. Or worse yet, we might be inclined to say, "well, the wicked will get what is coming to them", without a thought of what God's grace has wrought for us. But there is much in these verses for us. First of all, we see what man by nature has in store for him. Without the redemptive work of Christ, we all would be looking at death with no hope of salvation. Secondly, how often are we guilty of saying the same things that are captured in the above verses? How often are we guilty of those sins of pride and rely on wealth to deliver us from life's situations? We must see ourselves in these verses, and then see the beauty of God's grace shining down upon us bringing to us the good news of salvation. This good news has nothing in it from us. It is all for us. Thanks be to God. Sing Psalter 135.

February 18 Read Psalm 49:15-20

In yesterday's Scripture we discovered that one condition is common to most men. That condition is death. Many in the world today fear death. Some will go to great lengths to prevent it. Some even look for ways to come back from death. This need not be the attitude of the child of God. Death is given by God as the passageway to the glorious life of heaven. Christ has gone through the grave for us to conquer death. This conquering gives to us a unique hope in this life. We know that death has no sting for us and the grave has no victory over us. We have been given a gracious gift. Thanks be to God! Sing Psalter 136.

February 19 Read Psalm 50:1-6

This Psalm shows that even the church of the old dispensation knew of a judgment day. While they did not know as much as we do, they, nevertheless, knew of its existence. They, like us, had to live lives that showed they waited for such a day. We must do this because God is a righteous judge. He will come for his people whom he has made his own through the final sacrifice. All the sacrifices of the Old Testament were but a picture of Christ's sacrifice for all those comprehended in the covenant of grace. May we look with eager anticipation for the final coming of Christ. May we live a life that is pleasing to God the righteous judge. Sing Psalter 137.

February 20 Read Psalm 50:7-15

Israel had a very scripted worship. There were times that they were guilty of carrying out that worship but not with their hearts. While we do not have the sacrifices and rituals of the Old Testament, we still have elements of worship that are commanded by God. We still can be guilty of going through the motions of worship but not worshiping with our hearts. We need to see that our worship must be as God has commanded us. We must not have a worship of convenience or what we think feels good. We must worship God in spirit and in truth. The blessing of a right worship is found in verse 15. Let our worship be that which glorifies God in the way that he has commanded. Sing Psalter 138.

February 21 Read Psalm 50:16-23

As we look at the words of this part of the Psalm, we might be inclined to think that they are only for the wicked. However, there are strong words for us found in these verses. Look at verse 17. When we do not listen to our instructors, no matter who they might be, we find ourselves wandering aimlessly through the material that they show us. When we do not listen to God's instruction found in his Word, we are just as hopelessly lost. God's Word is our instruction through this world. We need to read it, learn it, and follow it. Then there is verse 23. It needs little explanation. When we walk according to the Word of God, we will see his way of salvation. What more do we need? Sing Psalter 139.

February 22 Read Psalm 51:1-9

Here we have the familiar Psalm of confession and repentance. David penned these words after his sins of adultery, theft, and murder. These are the hardest words for someone to say or write. To confess one's sin before almighty God and our acquaintances is a necessary part of our lives. God brings us to our knees in order that we may contemplate who we are, and how we have come to be in this world. The sinner loses the sense of joy as long as his sins remain unconfessed. We need to ask for forgiveness from God and from those against whom we have sinned. Only God can cleanse us from our sins; may we remember this need each day as we pray. Sing Psalter 140.

February 23 Read Psalm 51:10-19

As David continues this Psalm of confession he prays that God will send his spirit unto him to remove the stain of the guilt that pervades his soul. David knows that he must show thankfulness after the forgiveness that God has given to him. He promises to teach those around him about God and his goodness. He also asks God to allow him to open his mouth so that he can sing songs of praise to God. Finally, David shows that true repentance is found in a heart that is obedient unto God. That obedience is the sacrifice that we must lay upon God's altar. That altar is found only in one place-God's church. May we seek him in the beauty of holiness each and every Sunday. Sing Psalter 141.

February 24 Read Psalm 52

Which part of this Psalm describes us? Do we find the description of our lives and personalities in verses 1-7 or in verses 8 and 9? In what do we place our trust- in God or in the strength and riches of man? These are questions that the child of God must consider as he lives his life on this earth. If we do not trust in God's mercy forever, we will find no mercy. David had to learn this as he fled from Saul. After David learned that God is sovereign and does all things for David's good, he could praise God forever. As we live our lives on this earth let us trust in God's mercy to sustain us in all life's situations. It will, because these situations are of God. Let us wait on his name, the name above all names. Sing Psalter 145.

February 25 Read Psalm 53

Sometimes we tell our children that God sees them doing bad even when they may think that no one knows. But yet, are we any different? This Psalm tells us that God sees all the evil that man does even when man thinks that no one

knows. We may look at this fact in two ways. First of all, it should make us consider our ways at all times and walk in a way pleasing to God. Secondly, we may gain comfort that God sees the work of those who persecute us and will avenge us of the evil done upon us. Salvation will come out of Zion in the form of the righteous Judge. We will sing songs of praise to him when this is accomplished. Sing Psalter 146.

February 26 Read Psalm 54

What a comfort it is to God's people to know that God is our helper! In the direst straits we can call unto him in the confidence that he will hear us and deliver us from all the troubles that Satan may bring upon us. This was David's experience as he fled from Saul, and this can be our experience as we walk in this life. God's name is good, and in that name we can do much for his name's sake. Sing Psalter 147.

February 27 Read Psalm 55:1-8

Here we have another Psalm in which David seeks from God deliverance and peace from the onslaughts that his enemies brought upon him. While we may not have the outward attacks that David faced, we have the inward attacks of Satan. Our response to these must be the same as David. We must go to our God in prayer. If we do not pray, we will not feel the peace that passes all understanding. It was Christ's promise to the disciples and the church that he would send peace through the operation of the Holy Spirit. By God's grace we can feel that peace. Sing Psalter 148.

February 28 Read Psalm 55:9-15

As David continues to pour out his soul to God, he brings a very serious distress to the throne of grace. Sometimes God's people face opposition from an unexpected source. That source is someone within the church or even a trusted friend. This was David's experience when Ahithophel betrayed him to Absalom. This was also Christ's experience when Judas Iscariot betrayed him to the rulers of the church of that day. We can do nothing better than what David and Christ did. We can pray in the faith and confidence that deliverance will come from our heavenly Father. Sing Psalter 149.

March 1 Read Psalm 55:16-23

Here we find David's answer to his prayer. God granted his request and brought to him peace. He was able to return to Jerusalem and once more take up his position as king of God's people. But he also felt an inward peace in his soul that could have only been given to him by God. We need to go to verse 22 often. We need to cast our burdens upon him who will not let the righteous be moved. May this be our response when those burdens become heavy just as Christ told us to do when he was on this earth. Sing Psalter 150.

March 2 Read Psalm 56:1-7

Here we have another Psalm in which David recounts a trying experience and his quest for help from God. First of all, he asks God for mercy. David knows that the sovereign God holds all things in his hand. He also knows that these trials were for his good, but he asks for mercy that he would not be destroyed. Secondly, we see that even when he is afraid, he puts his trust in God. Is this what we do? When we are afraid of all kinds of troubles, do we trust in God? Do we praise his name even in those troubles? Do we pray for divine help? These things we must do and we can do because Jehovah is our refuge and our strength. Sing Psalter 151.

March 3 Read Psalm 56:8-15

Our tears are in a bottle in God's sight. What a blessing that is for us! In all our fears and sorrows he cares for us. This is a cause for rejoicing for God's people. In this way they can trust God in all that he does. When our pillows are wet with tears every night, we know that not a single one of them goes unnoticed by our all-seeing Father. He will deliver us from all evil that some day we may walk before him in that place where there will be neither tears nor memories of tears. As we weep, let us look up for solace from the only one who is capable of wiping those tears away forever. Sing Psalter 152.

March 4 Read Psalm 57:1-6

Our God is so great that in the most distressful of situations his glory spreads from heaven to envelop us. He covers us with his wings just as a hen would protect her frail chicks with her wings when danger is present. We must never forget to pray in these situations. These prayers can be with confidence because God is able to deliver us from all harm. David could pray these prayers, and we must as well because in that way we will feel the assurance that comes from God to us. Sing Psalter 154.

March 5 Read Psalm 57:7-11

When we pray in the direst of situations, we will receive an answer. That answer will cause us to break forth into singing praises of him and to him who delivers us from all evils and fears. When we sing his praises, we are once more assured of our salvation and the care of our heavenly Father. Here we see the greatness of the attributes mercy and truth. They are higher than the heavens and they are full of God's glory. This is what awaits us when we are delivered from this valley of tears. May we pray, and may we sing to him from whom all blessing flow. Sing Psalter 155.

Enthroning Alcohol as My God

by Dan Pastoor

Lying on my bunk in Allegan County Jail, I think back to the night of February 6, 2009, a night which has forever changed my life. It was getting late. I finished up my beer, left the party, and started my drive home. That was the last thing I could clearly remember when I regained consciousness in the intensive care ward of Spectrum hospital, completely disorientated. I immediately started asking what, where, how? My parents, who were by my bedside, told me with tear-streamed faces that, while I was driving drunk back home, I had run a stop sign and T-boned an SUV. I had killed the passenger and seriously injured the driver. They were an innocent, elderly couple on their way home from a friend's house. As the words registered in my head, my chest heaved as I began to sob like a baby. I buried my head in my pillow, filled with untold grief, guilt and shame. What had I done?

Like many teenagers today, I was partying on a Friday night and decided to drive home drunk. That choice cost an elderly woman her life, robbed a husband of his lifetime partner, robbed a family of their mother and grandmother, and left me with lifelong guilt and shame.

My story starts back when I was 14 years old. That was the age I was when I went to my first party and drank alcohol. Being raised by strict Christian parents you would think I would have made the right choice and refused that first beer. Just like every other sin we commit, I made an excuse as to why I could drink. I was just having a few drinks and I wouldn't get drunk.

This was the beginning of years of excuses to justify my ever growing drinking habit. Drunkenness, just like every other sin, will slowly take over your life if you continue to allow it in your life, until it completely takes over. That is exactly what happened to me during my four years of drinking. For the first nine months I held true to my promise and never got drunk at the parties. That came to an end fast as soon as I started my sophomore year at CCHS. I made new friends who drank and within a month I got trashed for the first time. I quickly justified getting drunk because I didn't do it every weekend like other people I knew. This too quickly changed. Within a couple of months, I was getting drunk at least once a week, sometimes two or three days a week. I was a known partier at school now.

My final excuse to justify my drunkenness was that as long as I never did drugs, I was okay, at least in my mind. I actually managed to abide by this guideline; however, I let alcohol completely take over my life. That's when all the problems came. I got busted by my parents and ended up getting kicked off the soccer team my Junior year. Sadly enough, rather than deter my drinking, it led me to drink all the more. Every one now knew I drank. I had been kicked off the team. What else could they do to me now?

Halfway through my Senior year, drinking had become a normal part of my everyday life. I didn't look forward to the parties; they were just where I went whenever there was one. If I wasn't at a party on Friday night, I felt completely lost. It was so ingrained in my lifestyle, that I felt the need to drink at least a few times every week.

It was then that my spiritual life reached a critical point. So far God had allowed me to live my drunken lifestyle without serious consequence. God had let me wander far enough from him. My life started crumbling beneath me and falling apart. It was then that I faced an ultimatum. It was either forsaking my drunken life and turning to God, or forsaking God and giving myself completely over to the bottle. It was no longer the simple choice of drinking or not. It's hard to explain, but it was like God gave me the option of choosing him or my alcohol. It couldn't be both or anything in between. It was a terrifying decision.

To this day I shudder when I think of how I consciously chose to forsake God and give myself over to my drunkenness. I vividly remember thinking of how I would quit going to church as soon as I moved out of my parent's house. I knew God would not allow me to

both worship him and continue to live in drunkenness. I had made my choice.

That next weekend found me with a case of beer trying to drown all my problems. Unknown to me, my problems were about to reach heights I could never have dreamed of. It was that Friday night that God directed my "accident" as I was driving drunk just like hundreds of times before.

I have been locked up in jail for eight months now as a part of the legal consequences of my actions. Only doing a year in a county jail is paltry compared to the normal sentencing for someone with my charges. A normal sentence would be anywhere from 5 to 20 years in a state prison! God had other plans for me.

The victims' family was extremely forgiving and gracious, only requesting a year in county jail. Not a day passes when I don't think of that elderly woman and man. I never will forget what I did and the consequences of my actions. It's a lifelong emotional scar I can never rid myself of.

I haven't had a sip of alcohol since the night of my accident. I know that if I allow alcohol back into my life, it will take over just like it did years ago. When you abuse alcohol, it slowly replaces God in your life till you eventually push God out all together. Alcohol becomes your "god." I learned firsthand that "You cannot serve two masters, ye cannot serve both God and mammon." God might allow you to wallow in your sin for a time, but eventually it comes down to forsaking your sin or forsaking God. God will not allow us to worship our sinful desires and him, and he will deliver his children from their sin.

My dad always told me, "Dan, if you continue to live in sin, God will deliver you and turn you away from that sin, but it will cause great pain and hurt." I always got mad at my Dad when he told me that. I thought he was threatening me, when in reality, he was only warning me. I refused to turn from my drunken lifestyle and so God planned my "accident" to deliver me from my sin, and it has caused untold pain and grief.

If you find yourself getting drunk on weekends, stop before it gets worse. No one in high school plans on becoming an alcoholic and no one in high school believes he can become an alcoholic. I know I thought I could never be an alcoholic. If God allowed me to drink for just one more year, I have no doubt I would have become a raging alcoholic. I've met countless alcoholics in their early 20s since I've been in jail. None of them thought they would turn into alcoholics when they first started drinking. They all have the same story. They've left behind them a trail of ruined relationships, broken marriages and broken homes in their years of drunkenness. Just like me, they started drinking, thinking they could keep it under control. You can *never* control sin. If not for God's grace to us, we would all be given over to our sins.

I'm just your every day, normal teenager trying to warn you to learn from my mistakes and experiences. I wish to God I could have learned a different way. However, this was God's path for me. I hope and pray you learn from my life, so that nothing like this happens to you.

God loves his children. "For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth" (Heb. 12:6). His chastisement may be excruciatingly painful. If you are caught up in drinking or drugs, forsake it and turn to God, or God will turn you from them through whatever means.

If you are telling yourself that drunkenness or drugs has too strong a hold on you so you can't quit, you are just making excuses for yourself just like I did. God himself says in Scripture, that "for every temptation, he offers an escape." Pray to God to deliver you from your lifestyle and lean on him for your every need. He will not fail you. He cannot fail you. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

We must seek to glorify and serve God in all that we do, say and think. Alcohol and drug abuse have no part in that calling. Ecclesiastes 12:13 tells us plainly: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

Let my life be an example to you. Do not allow alcohol, or drug abuse, into your life. ❖

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Abstruse Melancholy Part III: Depression and Anxiety – Help and Comfort

by Dan Bergman

"Be patient. God is using today's difficulties to strengthen you for tomorrow. He is equipping you. The God who makes things grow will help you bear fruit" (Max Lucado).

How true that is! The very God who made all things is also the One who will help us through the difficult times in life. We all have difficult times, but the suffering from depression and/or anxiety can feel as though every day is difficult or certain days are the worst ever. That is why some even consider suicide as an alternative.

Most of us don't have the professional credentials when it comes to counseling a depressed person, but that certainly doesn't mean that there isn't something we can do to help them. There are various things to do and certainly not to do when dealing with a depressed person. By the grace of God we can help the depressed loved one work through their depression.

In the first part of this article, what depression and anxiety are was laid out as well as their various symptoms. In part two we became aware of many treatment options for both illnesses. In this third and final part, we will look at what we can do to help the depressed loved one. "But Dan", you may be saying, "I don't even know what to say or do." Or, "Can I really help even if I never experienced it myself before?" It's okay, and, yes you can help. Lord willing, by reading this part of the article—as well as the previous two—you will be much better equipped to help your depressed loved one.

What Does "Melancholy" Mean?

Before we delve right into what you can do to help the depressed loved one, I feel it's important we get a decent understanding of what type of person is likely to get depressed—maybe even a little quicker than other people. The better we understand the type of person, the better we can relate to them and help them. We'll do that by looking at what it means to be "melancholy" or melancholy type personality, according to Florence Littauer; or "C" type, according to Robert A. Rohm, Ph. D.

This type of personality is (typically): deep, thoughtful, analytical, quiet, laid-back, task-oriented, cautious, careful, calculating, perfectionist. They are emotional, except their highs are higher, their lows are lower, and the whole pattern is prolonged. It can be hard to determine if they're happy or sad, because they prefer not to get excited, and much of their life is rather serious—even just plain depressing. As mentioned by Ms. Littauer, they tend to take everything too personally. She also mentions how they can take a positive situation and turn it into a negative.

It's really no wonder then that when a person uses significant mental energy focusing on negatives that such a mind falls easily into depression. Littauer says how the Melancholy should keep his thoughts on positives, and "the minute he finds himself focusing on the negative aspect of anything, he must refuse those thoughts an entrance." They need to be and think more positive and work to find the best in situations and people, and we can help them do this. True, it's not easy for any of us to do.

Littauer (who has battled with depression herself) says, "Look for the best in people, and when things go wrong, thank God for the experience and ask him what positive lesson you are to learn from this." She mentions Proverbs 16:20b, "…and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he."

As Robert Rohm describes them as the "C" type personality, he mentions that their basic need is quality answers. They tend to be quite sensitive. "They react more to their environment, rather than responding to it," Dr. Rohm adds. They're known to see what's wrong, rather than what's right. He goes on to say, "Learn how they think and feel, and you will be able to work better with them."

This is certainly not to say that this is the only personality type to fall into depression. All four types can

fall into depression (for a better understanding of the four types, read both Littauer's and Rohm's books, which are listed at the end of this article).

How To Help That Depressed Loved One

As mentioned earlier, you can help that depressed loved one. You can do that by your support and encouragement—this can play a pivotal role in their recovery. However, it's equally important to take proper care of yourself. Ever try to help someone with a project or try to explain something to someone when you don't feel well at all yourself? Doesn't work out so well, does it? It works kind of the same way with dealing with someone who's depressed. It may be a weak example, but I trust you get the point. How can you help someone who's depressed if you're not well or even a little depressed yourself? You need to make sure that you're taking care of yourself, so then you can better help that depressed loved one.

So, how can you help them? Well, it is difficult to deal with a loved one's depression. It can even become overwhelming if you're not careful.

You can help by learning about the problem (we don't know what we don't know), encourage them to seek treatment, and offer support. Also, as mentioned before, you need to look after your own emotional health.

Education Is Key

Have you ever gone over to your parents house and had them say to you, "Are you feeling ok? You look a little pale." Or someone else you know well may say, "Have you lost weight or something? You look different than the last time I saw you." It's a little bit like that with depression. If you're depressed, your family may (even without knowing about the symptoms) likely sense a problem even before you do, and you're the one with the depression. The family member's positive influence and concern can likely motivate the depressed person to seek help. But—according to helpguide.org—*you need to understand what you're dealing with before you can help someone who is depressed, so educate yourself about its symptoms, causes, and treatment* (emphasis mine).

One example that comes to mind is of when I was working on the front brakes of my sister's car. Aside from all the other challenges I faced while working on it, I just could not figure out what to do about a couple bolts—one was broken off and the other just wouldn't come off. I talked to a local mechanic I know well, told him the problem and even showed him a picture of the problem. He still told me that he really needed to physically look at the car to fully grasp what he could do to fix it. We finally got the car over to him and he ended up taking care of it and now it's all fixed.

The mechanic needed to educate himself by physically looking at the car. So also, we can educate ourselves about depression by reading about and researching it.

It's Important To Understand the Loved One's Depression

It's not like being hypnotized and someone just snaps their fingers and you go from being asleep to awake, or being depressed to not being depressed. That is why your love and support is so important to that depressed person.

Connecting with someone on a deep emotional level can be very hard for a depressed person, and they can speak hurtful words and even lash out in anger. It's important to remember that you not take this personally; for it's the depression, not the loved one, that is talking.

If you get a big gash on your arm and then quickly wrap it and always hide it by wearing long-sleeved shirts, will the gash get better on its own? No, not too likely. The gash needs to be looked at and properly taken care of by a nurse or doctor. You can do what you wish to cover up that gash; but it's still there, it still hurts, and it will certainly hurt if someone touches that arm and then they will wonder why that hurt so badly. What would you do then? Would you start with all the excuses and false reasons why it hurts? The same can be said if you have depression. You could try to hide it for as long as you could in hopes that no one will ever discover the depression and also that it will just go away on its own, but that likelihood is very slim to none.

That is why it's imperative to seek medical help as soon as you can. Understand though, that with depression, it's a much different ache and pain than a bruise or cut on your body. The wound of depression can and will likely take much longer to heal and require more treatment. So do not try to hide your depression and hope it will go away. If you do think about hiding your depression, think about the words in Psalm 9:9-10: "The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." Did you catch that? *The LORD will not forsake them that seek him.* That is something you can find comfort in. Trust in him for he is always there.

For those who have a depressed loved one, remember not to be an enabler. Just like if your loved one had a large gash on their arm and you helped them hide it and made excuses for and lied about it with and for them, so you may be tempted to do with their depression. Well,

don't. Doing so might keep them from even seeking the treatment they need.

Also, you are not the "rescuer" or "fixer" of their depression. It's just not up to you to fix, nor are you to blame. You are, however, there to care for and support your loved one as they work through their depression. You can do more than you realize by just being there for them. As Florence Littauer says: we can confess to a friend and they might sympathize, but only the Lord Jesus can take away the pain.

How To Encourage A Depressed Loved One To Seek Help

It's not always so easy to get a depressed person to get treatment. The depressed person is likely empty of energy and motivation, so even the simple act of setting an appointment can seem rather daunting. With depression can also come the waves of negative thinking. Such thinking can include: "I'm not sure why the doctor would want to see me anyway." "It's not even worth getting any help." or "I'll probably not get better anyway, so it'll just be a waste of everyone's time." Just as Jesus calmed the rough seas spoken of in Mark 4, so he can calm the rough waves of negative thoughts. You can change the negative into positive, but it will take work. But, oh the great benefits it will bring!

You can see how these obstacles can cause a depressed person to not even seek treatment. That is why your love and encouragement is so crucial. The depressed person needs to get help. "Only when we realistically face the truth can we begin to overcome the hurt and despair. The worst approach is to pretend that it never happened," says Littauer.

So, what can you do if your loved one resists getting help for depression? There are a few things you can do. The first thing is to suggest a general check-up with a physician. Since family doctors are usually less intimidating than a mental health professional, your loved one may see the family doctor more willingly. Also, the doctor is able to rule out a medical cause of depression. You could also either offer to go with the person to the doctor or help them find a new doctor or a therapist. Because of how difficult it can be to find a good doctor or therapist, any help you can give can be greatly appreciated by the depressed loved one. A third thing you can do is to encourage your loved one to make a thorough list of symptoms to discuss with the doctor. There may even be things that you personally noticed that you can bring to the doctor's attention.

Supporting Your Loved One

Give your unconditional love and support by being compassionate and patient. You won't know how important this really is until you go through it.

Why do we like it when someone is supportive? Simply because it involves them offering encouragement and hope to us. It shows us that that person is there for us and cares about us, and that is exactly what a depressed person needs. The book of Psalms is full of encouragement and hope. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Psalm 46:1, 7). Psalm 147:3 reads: "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Notice that the word "wounds" can be translated as "griefs." God will comfort us when depressed. He is the Comforter and the Rock we can go to when we feel lowly and in despair.

When talking to a depressed person, it's important to know what to say and *not* to say. Let them know that they're not alone in this and that you're there for them. Tell them that their feeling will change. Let them know, even though you don't understand how they feel, you do care about them and want them to get help. Ask what you can do to help them. Assure them that you are there for them and you'll get through it together. Remember, if you say you're going to be there for them, be sure that you are there for them!

Do not tell them that it's just all in their head and to simply "snap out of it." Do not say, "We all go through difficulties. You'll be OK." Don't tell them to "look on the bright side," or that you can't do anything about their situation. Or, if they feel rather worthless (which is quite likely), don't tell them all about your accomplishments you had when you were their age. Basically, think before you speak. Use an intelligent or "smart" tongue.

By being helpful and supportive, you can better tackle the depression monster as a team. For, *together* everyone achieves more. Remember, as you travel with them toward recovery, don't try to be more than the passenger or supporter. You are there to help them, not to do it for them.

Does the thought of tackling your depression seem overwhelming? Well, don't panic. The helpless and hopeless feeling is simply a symptom of your depression. It does not mean that you're weak or can't change! It's important to start small and *ask for help*. Experts say that having a strong support system in place will expedite your recovery. Also, because isolation fuels depression, it's important to reach out to others, even when you feel you want to be alone. It's a good idea to inform your

family and friends of what you're going through and how they can help and support you.

Depression can stay with someone for a while. My sister can attest to that. She has suffered from it and is still fighting it. Her depression had gotten quite severe. I'll let her say, in her own words, just how severe it got: "My depression was so severe that I was not only having suicidal thoughts, I was about to put them into action. I can tell you first hand that depression is not only very real but it can also be very debilitating. Unless you have experienced it, you will not be able to understand what someone suffers when they are going through depression; so the best thing you can do is just be there for them."

Helping A Loved One With Anxiety Disorder

Again, it's important to be there for the loved one and not to ridicule or humiliate them in any way. What they need is for you to listen actively while refraining from giving advice. Their complaints may be a bit exaggerated, but that is all part of their disorder and shows further how you need to help them find the help they need. You may ask the doctor how you can best cooperate with the treatment plan.

Anxiety disorders are an illness and they can be improved with treatment. That is why it's important your loved one gets the help they need. Remember, however, not to push them into treatment; rather continue to encourage them to seek treatment. If you do seek some help, consult your family doctor or obtain referral to a psychiatrist.

According to the Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA), people who experience anxiety disorders and their families may spend months—even years—not knowing what's wrong. Family members should learn about the disorder to help them know what to expect from the illness as well as the recovery process. Learning when to exercise patience and when to exert a little pressure would also be very beneficial.

Even though family support is not the cure, it's still of great importance to the recovery process.

Let's take a look at a few things a family member can do to help a loved one with an anxiety disorder: *Learn about the disorder.* You should *recognize and praise small accomplishments.* You may need to *modify expectation during stressful periods. Measure progress on the basis of individual improvement, not against some set standard.* You should also *be flexible and try to maintain a normal routine*.

Don't forget that, as a family member, the recovery process will be stressful for you as well. One thing that will help is building a support network of relatives and friends.

May you, as well as all of us, find comfort in these words! Also, may the following quotes be of help and comfort to you:

"Don't worry about tomorrow…God is already there!"

"Feelings stay with us until we deal with them."

"Nothing is stronger than habit."—Ovid

"You cannot change the past. You can absolutely change the future."

"Be not afraid of going slowly; be afraid only of standing still."—Chinese proverb

"When we face tough problems, we stay mired in the mud until we take action."—David J. Schwartz, Ph. D., author, *The Magic of Thinking Big*

Conclusion

As we have now seen, depression (as well as anxiety) is an illness that should not be taken lightly; but it can be made better with the proper help and treatment. So, if you have a loved one suffering from depression, remember to: encourage, love, and support them. Show them you care and want them to get better and will help them to a limited degree (without enabling them). Do not push, yell at, or berate them in any way. Also remember to educate yourself, for depression is certainly abstruse (difficult to comprehend; profound).

With God all things are possible, and if it is his will, that loved one's depression will improve. The Lord knows how we feel and what we go through each and every day. We see that in the words that were in our church bulletin a while back which I feel ties in well with all this and I'd like to add it here now.

> In all their affliction, he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isaiah 63:9). How could the care of God for his children be expressed in a plainer or more positive way? In their afflictions—He was afflicted. When they suffered—He suffered. In their sorrow—He sorrowed!…In heaven he is touched with the feeling of his people's infirmities! (Heb. 4:15). If you are weak—the burden of your weakness presses upon him. If you are hurt—the hurt is felt by him…There is no experience of your life—which he does not share. Whatever your need, your trial, your perplexity, your struggle may be—you may be sure that God knows and "careth for you" (I Peter 5:7).—J. Miller

As we read in Nahum 1:7, "The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him."

The LORD is good and merciful, and we should always come to him when we are in need. He is our light that will lighten our darkness, as mentioned in II Samuel 22:29.

I pray that God may comfort your troubled heart and that you may begin to find relief from your depression and/or anxiety. Let us all better educate ourselves and one another so we may be better able to help those who need it. We all, whether as individuals or churches or other organizations, need to better educate ourselves on this topic as well as many others. Pray to God for the strength and knowledge as we move forward!

Here are some other helpful scripture texts that those I talked with have found helpful, as may you.

Psalm: 27, 31, 34, 42, 55:22, 61:1-4, 62, 71, 73, 77, 116, 139

Heb. 4:13-16, Lam. 3:21ff, Deut. 33:27, Phil. 4:4-8, II Cor. 4:8-9, Rom. 8:18 & 28

Other helpful scripture texts:

James 1:2-6, Isaiah 40:31, Rev. 21:4, John 14:1,18,27; II Cor. 4:17,

Psalm 18:1-3 & 30, Psalm 86:6-7, II Sam. 22:29, I Peter 1:7,

Isaiah 26: 3-4, Rom. 8: 28-39; Lord's Day 9 & 10, Q & A 26-28

The following literature has been very helpful to those I talked with:

Happiness Is A Choice: The Symptoms, Causes, and Cures of Depression by Frank B. Minirth, M.D., Paul D. Meier, M.D.

Anxiety & Phobia Workbook by Edmund J. Bourne

Beside Still Waters/Words of Comfort For the Soul by Charles H. Spurgeon.

Boundaries by Dr. Henry Cloud, Dr. John Townsend

Depression for Dummies by Laura L. Smith, Ph.D., Charles H. Elliott, Ph.D.

Being the Person God Made You to Be. The Power of Determination by Joyce Meyer.

Dealing With Depression: A Christian Perspective by Faith PRC Evangelism Committee.

Quick Scripture References for Counseling by Rev. John Kruis.

Other books you may find helpful:

The Magic of Thinking Big by David J. Schwartz, Ph. D. (We all tend to think small and this book helps with expanding and improving our thinking)

What To Say When You Talk To Your Self by Shad Helmstetter, Ph.D. (We all talk to ourselves, and this great book shows us how to in a more positive way.)

Positive Personality Profiles by Robert A. Rohm, Ph. D. (Helps us in a more modern way of understanding each personality and each other)

Personality Plus by Florence Littauer (Describes each personality type and how to deal with each other better)

Peaks and Valleys by Spencer Johnson, M.D. (Great short story of how to better look at each situation in life)

The Slight Edge by Jeff Olson. (Fantastic book which shows how even the smallest thing can make a big difference.)

Blow Away the Black Clouds by Florence Littauer (Personal testimony of how Ms. Littauer went through depression and helps others through it)

The Bible (Greatest book to be used for any form of help, encouragement, and counseling) ❖

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

Job Quiz

1) In what land did Job live?
   Oz, Id, Uz, or Ur
2) How many children did Job lose in a storm?
   6, 8, 10, or 12
3) What kind of disease struck Job?
   leprosy, blindness, madness, or boils
4) Who told Job in his troubles to "curse God and die"?
   his wife, Eliphaz, Satan, or his servant
5) Who attempted to comfort Job in his distress?
   his wife, his friends, God, no one
6) Which of these was not one of Job's "friends"?
   Zophar, Bildad, Elihu, or Eliphaz
7) Job's friends kept vigil with him in silence for how long?
   24 hours, 3 days, 7 days, or 40 days
8) Job opened his mouth and cursed the day. Then what did he wish?
   That he could die.
   That he could sleep.
   That he had never been born.
   That he could be healed.
9) How many sons and daughters were born to Job after his sufferings?
   5 sons and 3 daughters
   7 sons and 3 daughters
   3 sons and 5 daughters
   10 sons and 10 daughters
10) How much longer did Job live after his sufferings?
    85 years, 100 years, 120 years, or 140 years

(answers on page 28)

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:

Jaxton Brian, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brian VanMaanen—Calvary, IA

Tyler Alan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brad DeBoer—Calvary, IA

Parker Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Griffioen—Faith, MI

Kalya Renae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mark VanDyke—Grandville, MI

Oliver Henry, son of Mr. & Mrs. Rich DeMeester—Hope, MI

Charlotte Hope, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Josh Engelsma—Hope, MI

Jack Owen, son of Mr. & Mrs. Rob Andringa—Hull, IA

Jayden, son of Mr. & Mrs. Cameron Zylstra—Immanuel, Lacombe, Canada

Kendall Belle, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Adam Santistevan—Loveland, CO

Molly, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tom Bergman—Providence, MI

Madison Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Nick Hopkins—Redlands, CA

Addie Francis, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ed Ophoff—Southeast, MI

Brodie Jake, son of Mr. & Mrs. Shon Griess—Trinity, MI

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:

Christian Briggs—Bethel, IL

Keith Gritters—Byron Center, MI

Kent Boer—Byron Center, MI

Karla Boer—Byron Center, MI

Emily Monsma—Byron Center, MI

Phillip DeJong—Crete, IL

Jana Regnerus—Doon, IA

Cameron Zylstra—Immanuel, Lacombe, Canada

Kelsey Zylstra - Immanuel, Lacombe, Canada

Katie Kuiper—Southwest, MI

Monica Ophoff—Southwest, MI

Lisa VanderVeen—Southwest, MI

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. Jeff Talsma and Miss Cindy Knapp—First, MI

Mr. Matthew Hanko and Miss Stephanie Kamps—Southwest, MI

Bible Quiz

Answers to Job Quiz

(from page 25)

1) In what land did Job live?
The correct answer is: Uz. See Job 1:1.

2) How many children did Job lose in a storm?
The correct answer is: 10. See Job 1:2, 18, 19.

3) What kind of disease struck Job?
The correct answer is: boils. See Job 2:7.

4) Who told Job in his troubles to "curse God and die"?
The correct answer is: his wife. See Job 2:9.

5) Who attempted to comfort Job in his distress?
The correct answer is: his friends. See Job 2:11-13.

6) Which of these was not one of Job's "friends"?
The correct answer is: Elihu. See Job 2:11.

7) Job's friends kept vigil with him in silence for how long?
The correct answer is: 7 days. See Job 2:13.

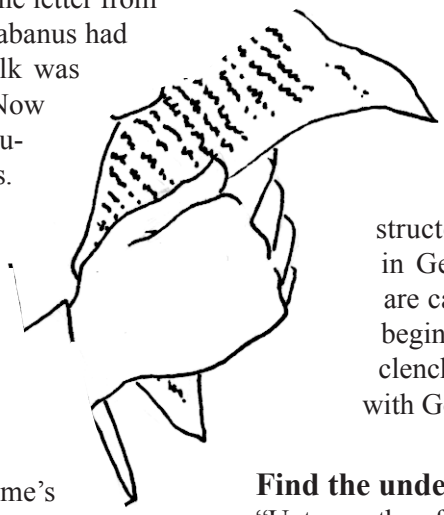
8) Job opened his mouth and cursed the day. Then what did he wish?
The correct answer is: that he had never been born. See Job 3:1-3.

9) How many sons and daughters were born to Job after his sufferings?
The correct answer is: 7 sons and 3 daughters. See Job 42:13.

10) How much longer did Job live after his sufferings?
The correct answer is: 140 years. See Job 42:16, 17.

Gottschalk:
Lone Voice in the Night (5)

Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz, folded the letter he had just read and tucked it into his cloak. He drummed his fingers on the arm of his chair and squinted his eyes. Gottschalk—Rabanus remembered him well. Now he was a troublemaker again. Bishop Noting of Verona was alarmed about what Gottschalk was teaching in Italy and other places, and Noting wanted Rabanus to do something about it. Rabanus took out the letter from the bishop and examined it once more. Rabanus had been the abbot of Fulda when Gottschalk was just a young boy at the monastery there. Now Rabanus was an archbishop and had more authority to take care of such things as heretics.



Rabanus frowned as he read the letter again. Gottschalk knew how to get at the heart of the matter. "Double Predestination." "Christ died for the elect alone." "Man has no free will of himself to choose to obey God." Gottschalk had said all those things. Rabanus crinkled the paper into his fist. Statements like these attacked many of Rome's most important teachings. That vagabond monk must be stopped.

Rabanus called for his secretary with a voice sharper than usual. "I must send a reply to Bishop Noting. Do you have paper and ink ready?"

The monk who served as Rabanus' secretary nodded.

> **...there is no double predestination, but only single...to teach a double predestination is to make God unjust... God wants to save all men...these are seven reasons that condemn this terrible heresy and show it to be false.**
>
> **Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz**

The letter was sent. The seven arguments Rabanus made against the teachings of Gottschalk were clear, if not so truthful. Rabanus did not name Gottschalk in the letter, but neither did he quote Gottschalk exactly. Making Gottschalk's teachings sound even worse would help fight this dangerous heresy, Rabanus reasoned. The battle lines were drawn.

Predestination became the topic of many conversations. Bishop Noting received the letter from Rabanus and published it. Scholars discussed it. Gottschalk continued to state his views, too. He showed that what Rabanus taught did not agree with Scripture or with what Augustine had said long ago. Gottschalk showed that the truths at stake were of greatest importance.

Rabanus could see how important they were, too. Only a synod could stop such a bold heretic as this. How dare a common monk who was hardly a priest try to counter a powerful archbishop!

Rabanus wasted no time. He instructed his secretary: "Inform all bishops in Germany as well as the king that they are called to a synod here in Mainz. It shall begin on October 1, in this year of 848." He clenched his teeth and added, "We must deal with Gottschalk and his heretical teachings."

"LITTLE LIGHTS"
. . . let it shine !

by Connie Meyer

Find the underlined words in the puzzle below:
"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed" (I Peter 2:7, 8).

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

Connie is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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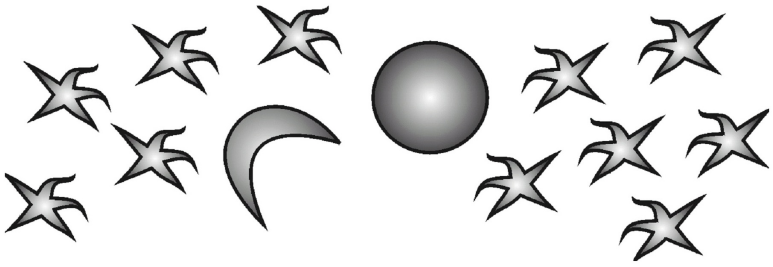

The sun, the moon, and eleven stars
To Joseph did obeisance make.
His brothers were angry, his father rebuked him;
He was despised for Jesus' sake.

But it won't be a dream as you spend a day
In the sun at the largest water park.
When the moon and stars shine that night,
You will have had great fun, my word you mark.

For this day of fun and more join us at the
2011 PRYP Convention!
August 8-12, 2011
Green Lake Conference Center
Green Lake, Wisconsin
Hosted by Randolph PRC
www.prcconvention.com

Those interested in being a chaperone at the 2011 YP convention can visit the website prcconvention.com to download an application.