The Convention Challenge:

Make Three New Friends
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JUNE 1996
The Convention Challenge

Next month, the Lord willing, young people from across the land will migrate to the tip of Lake Michigan and gather for their annual convention as they have done since August of 1939. The location for gathering changes from year to year, but the purpose remains the same, and the desire to go continues strong.

Past issues of the *Beacon Lights* provide a treasure house of information regarding these conventions. Our magazine was established in time to report on the third convention which was held at Oak Lawn, Illinois August 21 & 22, 1941. The theme of that convention was “Thoroughly Equipped,” and the activities included a meeting and an outdoor rally. The fourth convention was planned for Roosevelt Park in Grand Rapids but was canceled due to restrictions in travel and other difficulties due to World War II. The war could not, however, restrain the enthusiasm for another convention, and in 1944 the young people gathered at Fuller PRC in Grand Rapids. The 1945 convention was held in South Holland with the theme “Steadfastness.” This convention included a mass meeting, bus excursion, and banquet in addition to the speeches. In 1946 the young people gathered in Hudsonville around the theme “Strength and Beauty of Youth.” The 1947 convention was hosted by First PRC Grand Rapids. The 1948 convention at Holland MI included a pancake breakfast, lakeshore activities, hymn sing, and banquet. The theme was “Faith of our Fathers.” Then in 1949 the conventioneers headed West to Oskaloosa and Pella, Iowa. This convention with the theme “Redeeming the Time” was the first three day convention and included devotional time, discussion, music and singing, speeches, debates, outings, and the banquet. The 1950, 1951, and 1952 conventions drew the young people to Second PRC Grand Rapids, First PRC Kalamazoo, and Hull, Iowa respectively, and the themes were “The Power of Godliness,” “The Last Hour,” and “Faith, Hope, Love.” The details of these and many more can be found in the pages of the *Beacon Lights* as well as the memories of many of our readers.

During these early convention years the *Beacon Lights* included some discussion on the purpose, goals and concerns of the convention. The purpose of conventions was understood to be the edification and promotion of unity among the young people of our churches, and the concerns had to do with whether this goal was being met. There was much discussion on these issues and the question of goal and attainment of the goal is still alive today. It would be profitable, I believe, and very interesting to do a study of the history of our conventions, publish something along the lines of a Convention Guide, and formulate a mission statement for conventions.

A study of the past conventions, however, is not the challenge I had in mind. Rather, the challenge has to do with the here and now. It has to do with achieving the purpose of conventions on July 29 through August 2, 1996 by the young people living out the theme which the South Holland convention committee has chosen. The development of godly friendships will certainly edify you and bring unity within our churches, but only if you work at it. The challenge is this: make three new friends.

For some this challenge may be a cinch, but for many, myself included, finding three new friends at the convention would be a real challenge. I sincerely desire to make this challenge because it is something at which I wish I would have worked harder when I had the opportunity. There is no finer opportunity to make new friends than at a convention.
My experience tells me that the first day of convention will find many clumps of people representing various churches hanging out and looking cool. Clumping is understandable, but it’s not ideal; in fact, it is rather stupid because you’re wasting valuable time when you could be doing something really cool like discovering a great new friend! Meeting a new friend is a neat experience and is often introduced by the words “really! you like that too?” Some common interest or experience along with a common faith makes for a solid godly friendship.

So when you get to the convention, don’t waste any time. Go over to a clump and introduce yourself. Don’t worry about looking like a dork, it’s not worth it. Ask some questions that will help you discover a potential friend. I do not claim to be an expert on this topic so you might want to check out the book on friendship which is reviewed in this issue for some more advice if you think you need it.

Finally, I want you to write about your friend finding experience and send it to me for the Beacon Lights. Everyone who did not go will be waiting to hear about the convention. You may even want to write a story for the contest (see details on page 5) about someone finding a friend before you go to the convention. Not only will it get you thinking about the theme, it just might win you a prize! - ed.

Fruitful Branches

Friends and Friendships

by Kelli Engelsma

Friends and friendships are very important parts of everybody’s lives and though we do not realize it we often take them for granted. Without friends there would be no one to talk to about personal problems, except for your parents. Not many people like to discuss personal problems with their parents, but that is a whole different topic which we will not go into now. There would be no one to have fun with or to enjoy life with. The way you treat your friend should be just like the way you would want to be treated. Your friend should also treat you like they would want to be treated. You and your friend should treat each other with respect and honor. Being thoughtful, caring, understanding, and encouraging are some very great ways to be a good friend. Proverbs 18:24 says, “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” Another way to be a good friend is to be sharing and open. Share your thoughts, feelings, opinions, and secrets with your friend. Confronting a friend about anything can be very difficult. The worst thing to do is to keep putting it off until it gets so bad and there is nothing you can do about it. Tell your friend right away so something can be done about the problem. If something your friend does bothers you just come right out and say it. If they are a true friend they will try to change and if it is
something they can not change then they will help you find a way through it. For example, if your friend says words that you do not think are appropriate and they really care about you and you ask them to stop then they will try to quit saying those words. There are a few steps to follow when we confront a friend about a sin that they committed: First of all confront your friend by yourself and if they will not listen to you, take another friend with you. If your friend still will not change go to their parents about the problem. If your friend still refuses to change then you must go to the elders of their church. By that time it is no more your problem to deal with and you can not hang around with your friend anymore, but you must still be kind to them. If you friend still does not change they will be excommunicated from the church. Listening in a friendship is very important and vital. A good friend will listen to what their friend has to say because they might have a question or a problem that they can only tell a friend. A friendship is like a two way street. You have to be able to talk to your friend and you have to be able to listen to what they have to say. If you never listen and always interrupt when your friend is talking, they will eventually stop talking to you. A friendship can not survive without communication. Your friend might have some great words of wisdom for you to take advice from only you would listen to what they had to say. Also, no one likes a person who never stops talking to listen to what others have to say. Backbiting is mean, selfish, rude, heartless, and very cruel. Your friend may never want to speak to you again if you backbite them. If you see a problem talk to you friend about it, and if it is only your opinion keep it to yourself. Proverbs 17:9 states, “He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.” This verse means that someone who keeps things to himself seeks love, and someone who backbites separates the best of friends. In chapter 16:28 it says that a whisperer separateth chief friends. Encouragement is very important and everybody needs encouragement some time in their life. Your friend might need encouragement for many reasons. First of all, they might be depressed about a personal problem and need to be encouraged about it with someone. Secondly, they might be nervous about talking to someone and they need to be told that it is going to be okay. Thirdly, they might be scared to do something. They might need a little talking to to convince them to do something they are not quite sure they want to do. Fourthly and finally, your friend might not know what kind of a decision to make about a certain subject and need your opinion and encouragement on their decision. Proverbs 27:9 says that ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel. In conclusion, remember that friends are important and treat them kindly and with respect. Finally, remember what they do for you and do not take them for granted. Some friends come and go, but close friends are usually for keeps, so next time think before you do something you will regret later.

*Kelli is a student at Covenant Christian High School.*

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**Short Story Writing Contest**

Here is your chance to stretch your literary wings and soar off with a prize. In this contest we are looking for a short story. Our purpose is to promote and stimulate the production of good Christian literature. Be creative, harness the power of Calvinism, penetrate to the heart of the Christian experience, and make your pages come alive.

Do not delay, the deadline is only two months away. Start right now, and then revise, revise, revise. No entries postmarked after August 9, 1996 will qualify for a prize. There are two categories 1) high school graduates and 2) all others. One first prize of $100, one second prize of $50, and one third prize of $25 will be awarded to each of the two categories. Please send your entry to the Beacon Lights subscription address listed inside the front cover.
Choosing an Occupation
by Jack Lenting

Introduction
Being a member of a Protestant Reformed Church will make a significant impact on your decision as to what career you should or should not pursue. One must always keep before him God's Word and His Will. Choosing a career does not simply involve what you want, and, therefore, you must not take this subject lightly. Now is the time to prayerfully consider what God's plan is for you. During the convention this discussion will be divided into two main points. The first is "what is you career/calling," and the second is "what is your responsibility."

I. What Is Your Career/Calling?
A. how must one decide which career to choose and which ones not to?
B. how does a Christian's career differ from the world's choices for careers?
C. need a prayer life in making these decisions
D. calling to the ministry
E. is the calling the same for a man and a woman?
   1. in which ways yes?
   2. in which ways no?
F. what do you want out of life (your interests, your goals)?
G. what talents has God given to you?
H. use your family and friends to help you
   1. important to have godly friendships
   2. discuss with your parents

II. What is your responsibility?
A. to be a steward in all areas (time, money, ability)
B. remember your church and what God requires of you
   1. location
   2. working Sundays
   3. union
   4. environment
C. are all the doors open, or does God close some of those doors?
D. be responsible in your tasks now (in school, at home, on the job)
E. to support yourself or for the man to be able to support his family
F. work hard (six days shalt thou labor)
G. be a "good" employee or employer (honest, diligent, on time, etc.)
H. make sacrifices

Jack is a member of South Holland Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois.
Our Freedom in Observing the Lord’s Day
by Gary Eriks

We often have a tendency to think of Sunday activities as a list of do’s and don’ts instead of looking at the reasons why we should or should not do certain things. It is very easy for us to go through the motions on Sunday. Temptations surround us on every side. Some of us have friends outside of our churches who think nothing of going out to eat on Sunday or even spending the afternoon out water-skiing or playing other sports. Even when we are together with friends from our churches, we tempt each other to not keep the Lord’s Day. Are we properly setting aside one day that is different from all of the other days? Are we helping or hindering each other? Sometimes I look back at my own activities on Sunday when I was a teenager and wonder how I could better have filled that day with spiritual activities. Many of our activities which we do on Sunday, are not wrong in themselves, but in the day as a whole, are we using the day to grow spiritually? Let us all examine how we use the Lord’s Day on the basis of the meaning and purpose of the Lord’s Day. We have to be careful to stay away from legalism which makes laws where God has not given laws. We must also avoid too much freedom, which causes us to think we can do whatever we please. Then, on the basis of the given principles, put yourself in certain situations which you find yourself. As you go through the questions and situations, think about what you will do in order to properly observe the Lord’s Day, and look at the reasons why you will or will not do a certain activity.

I. The Lord’s Day is a day of rest.
   A. Negatively, the Lord’s Day is a day of ceasing from daily labor.
      1. In creation, God rested from His act of creating—He rested. (Genesis 2:3)
      2. God commands us in His law that we should “not do any work.” (Exodus 20:8-11).
   a. Therefore, we should rest from the work which we do during the week whether it is our work at a job or our school work.
   b. Because we have liberty in Christ, some works of mercy or necessity are legitimate on the Lord’s Day, for Christ also performed works of mercy—for example, healing of the sick.

B. Rest is not merely a ceasing from earthly labor, but, positively, resting on the Lord’s Day is an activity.
   1. In order to understand this rest, we look unto God.
      a. God is pure and eternal activity in His life in the Trinity.
      b. Yet in Him is rest—Rest, therefore, is not idleness.
      c. God rested from the activity of creation in order to take up a different activity.
   2. Rest for us is the fulfillment of the covenant.
      a. In Christ we are brought back into covenant fellowship with God.
         1) Only for those elected from all eternity (Romans 8:29, 30).
         2) In Christ we are restored to the image of God, which is true righteousness and holiness (Colossians 3:10, Ephesians 4:24).
      b. This rest is a heavenly, spiritual rest.
         1) It is a rest from the toil of our imperfect work on this earth.
         2) But, this eternal rest is also an activity of perfect friendship and love of God so that we praise Him perfectly for eternity.
3. The Lord’s Day is an earthly picture of the heavenly rest.
   a. The picture
      1) Our laboring is a picture of our work on this earth and the rest on the Lord’s Day is a picture of the heavenly rest we shall enter at death.
      2) This was the same for Christ; He labored on this earth in order to enter into the rest of heaven (Hebrews 4:10).
   b. Right now we have a beginning of that eternal rest.

II. Our Observance of this day of rest.
   A. Although we must cease from our earthly labors of the six previous days, we must also be active.
      1. Ceasing weekly labor is not the only idea of the commandment, nor does it make us holy in itself.
         a. This emphasis on ceasing from labor alone was an error of the Pharisees (legalism).
         b. The Lord’s Day is not merely ceasing from labor so that man can enjoy the pleasures of this world.
         c. We cease our earthly labor in order to take up a different activity just as God did in creation.
      2. Because rest on the Lord’s Day is a picture of the heavenly, spiritual rest, this rest must be spiritual in its activity.
         a. In Genesis 2:3, God sanctified the seventh day, which means that He set it apart—we, therefore must set this one day apart from the other six in order that we might concentrate upon praising and glorifying God in spiritual activities.
         b. Mark 2:27, says that “the sabbath was made for man,” which does not mean that man can use as he desires, but rather it was made for man in order that he might enjoy the things of God’s kingdom while laying aside the cares of this world.
      3. This spiritual activity is the seeking of the heavenly kingdom in which we have citizenship.
         a. To seek this kingdom, we must have a knowledge of this kingdom.

1) We gain knowledge by reading and studying the Bible—this is always a profitable activity for Sunday.
2) Studying Scripture can be aided by reading Christian magazines or good books which help us to grow in knowledge and understanding of God.
   b. Our activity in heaven will be that of praising and glorifying God.
      1) We must try to praise and glorify God in all that we do on every day, but especially on the Lord’s Day because it is a picture of this heavenly rest.
      2) We can do this in our discussion and fellowship with each other—we should desire to talk about spiritual things in order to help each other in this activity and so that we grow in knowledge, but our fellowship is not limited to only spiritual things either.

B. Scripture gives us principles and guidelines for our Sunday observance, but we do have some freedom in the liberty we have as Christians.
   1. We have freedom in our observance.
      a. This freedom does not allow us to do as we please, but rather we have freedom within the guidelines and laws which God has given us.
      b. One person’s spiritual activities will differ from another’s, for one, taking a walk on Sunday may be a spiritual activity as he sees the earthly as a picture of the heavenly, but for another, it may be a temptation to do the things that he sees the ungodly doing.
      a. Obviously we are commanded to cease from our daily labor.
         1) This does not mean that we must cease all earthly labors for we must eat and sleep, etc.
         2) To limit what we can and cannot do by creating new laws is legalism, which is the same thing that the Pharisees did and which Jesus preached against.
b. It is a day set aside for worship.
   1) This does not mean that we avoid spiritual activities on the other days of the week.
   2) Yet, God has set aside a certain day in which we are to worship Him, especially by worshiping in a church service.
      a) God demanded that Israel worship Him on the sabbath.
      b) God also demands this of the NT church.
   3) We must also worship Him in all that we do on the Lord's Day as we seek after spiritual things.

   c. If the Lord's Day is a day in which we must seek spiritual things, with what activities will we fill this day?
      1) Our freedom in the activities of this day are governed by the above principles.
      2) The question we must ask ourselves in determining what we should do on Sunday is, "Is what I do on Sunday conducive toward making me concentrate upon God and the eternal rest prepared in Christ?"
      3) In questioning these activities, let us not focus on with what can we get away with doing, but rather on what we should be doing.

III. The purposes of our Lord's Day observance should also characterize our Lord's Day observance.
   A. We fill this day with spiritual activities because we love God.
   B. The proper observance of this day shows that we are not of this world, but rather that we are pilgrims and strangers passing through.
   C. Our spiritual activities on this day are an expression of faith and hope for that heavenly rest which we experience in part now.

Questions to Consider
1. Think of some Sunday activities that could be good spiritual activities, but that could also be done as worldly activities.
2. What about the popular Sunday afternoon nap? Is it legitimate?
3. Many of the young people in our churches get together on Sunday nights. What are we going to do when someone turns on the television, or if someone goes to the store to pick up some pop or chips because there is no food in the house? How are we going to help each other rest on the Lord's Day?
4. When one of our friends asks us to go with them to their cottage over a Sunday and you know that they go to church once but spend the rest of the day skiing and boating, what are you going to do? Will you take responsibility yourself, or will you go to your parents and put the pressure on them?
5. Are we going to do our homework on Sunday? Is homework the work that a student must accomplish in six days and rest from on the seventh?
6. If you have a job, are you resting from your work not only in your actions but also in your thoughts?
7. Think of some other difficult situations which you may face, and determine how you will respond in order to properly keep the Lord's Day.

Gary is a member of Georgetown Protestant Reformed Church in Bauer, Michigan.

New Opportunities

Do you have a particular interest in history, doctrine, missions, Christian literature, science, devotional material, or poetry? These are some of the long term rubric ideas that need your input. If you are interested, we would like to include you in the Beacon Lights staff as a regional staff member. Please contact the editor for an application.
The Tie That Binds

by J.P. de Klerk

Faith Prince was always bubbling over with life. She was married to an engineer and they had two adopted children. Both Faith and her husband were active members in their local church. Their house was located on a hill with a beautiful view and was often a center of joyful fellowship, especially for young Christians.

Faith was very adaptable to all ages and many people were amazed at how she, as a young woman, kept everything in good order. She seemingly had nothing to worry about. But Faith had a secret, or at least something she did not share with others. She had been adopted herself and, deep down, had a desire to meet her natural mother.

Denise Palmer had been a secretary for a factory manager when she was twenty years old. One night she had been asked to work late. As she was leaving, a stranger confronted and raped her. Denise was desperate when she discovered she was pregnant. She felt very alone in the world because her divorced parents had not kept contact with her. Denise was a young Christian as she had not been brought up in a Christian home. The minister and his wife were very supportive, as was her girlfriend, but yet there were so many unanswered questions in her own mind. Why had this happened to her? What must she now do with the baby? The strain was beginning to show and Denise finally gave in to her doctor’s persuasion to put the baby up for adoption as soon as it was born. Deep down it still did not feel right to her.

It took several years for Denise to come to terms fully with the traumatic experience. She received much support from her fellow church members and gradually became more involved in church life generally. Eventually, Denise married a widowed man from a neighboring congregation but deep down she still wondered where her child had ended up.

Only fifty miles away, Denise’s daughter, Faith, had been brought up by her adoptive parents in a warm Christian family atmosphere. At an early age, Faith had shown much interest in the Bible stories and responded well to Christian instruction going about her days with lots of cheerful songs and a skip in her step. At school, Faith’s sunny character stood out from the crowd. At the age of ten, her adoptive parents thought it the right time to tell Faith she had been adopted, but it did not seem to make an impression on her then.

When Faith was twenty-five years old, and had been married for three years, she started the search for her natural mother. This was like a gap in her life and Faith wanted to fill it with something. At first, she was unsure whether finding her real mother was worth the risk; who knew what she would possibly turn up? What could have
been the reason for adopting a child out? Did her real 
mother want to see her? Faith was scared of the truth. It 
could turn out to be shattering news. Faith’s adoptive 
parents were very helpful in supplying all the information 
they had but yet the bureaucratic channels were com-
plex and full of forms to fill out. The wait for replies and 
consents was long and Faith was aware that her efforts 
were in vain if her natural mother didn’t want to see her. 
But her resolve to continue grew by the day. Faith had 
come to realize that her adoption was a very special and 
significant part of her life; it had meant she was brought 
up in a Christian home. God had chosen this for her.

Months after starting the search, a reply came from 
an adoption agency confirming Faith’s natural mother had 
used their service. The agency would try and locate her 
and inquire on Faith’s behalf whether a meeting was pos-
sible.

“Progress at last,” thought Faith. It was up to her 
mother now.

When Denise received a visit from the adoption 
agency, she listened in near disbelief at their request. 
She had not been prepared for this and didn’t know how 
to answer at first. Denise was stunned that after all these 
years, her daughter had made the attempt to find her. All 
the memories that had subdued over time came flooding 
back. The tears of joy and sadness mingled together as 
she cried.

Denise agreed to see Faith but, despite the fact she 
was excited about meeting the daughter she abandoned 
all those years ago, she also felt apprehensive about fac-
ing up to the past again. As Denise prayed, it became 
clear that God had brought Faith onto her pathway and 
that she had the opportunity to make up some of the lost 
ground from years ago; a chance to try and explain. But 
a question that kept on surfacing in Denise’s mind was 
“Could it be possible that my daughter is a Christian?”

The agency had arranged the meeting in a private 
room at a local restaurant. Faith had asked her husband 
to drop her off as she felt too nervous to drive. There 
were so many questions that went through her mind. But 
one that kept on returning was “How do I witness about 
my beliefs to my mother without frightening her off?” 
Faith had thought her mother was probably not a Chris-
tian. As Faith entered the room she saw Denise sitting 
by the window. Their eyes met; they were the same color.

Mother and daughter talked for hours. They shared 
each others lives. They cried together, laughed together 
and prayed together. Christianity was the link between 
them. Blessed be the tie that bind.

This is all in the past now. Faith is still as enthusiastic 
as ever, but she has her quiet moments of reflection. She 
stands in the open doors of the living room and looks with 
thankfulness out into the garden where her husband is 
tending the home grown vegetables. She has received all 
she has asked for. The children are always glad when 
their grandparents come to visit.

From behind the shadows of the willow trees, two 
white doves gently sail towards the golden horizon.

J.P. de Klerk is a journalist and author from the 
Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand.

Gem of the Month

Sorrow

In sorrow lies despair, which lurks around 
The atmosphere like fog descending near 
A meadow fair and lurking near the ground. 
It tears apart the heart and leaves a fear 
That makes us mourn when troubles 'round us swell. 
It makes the mournful eyes shed out the tears 
Which in the battles marsch, to lead with bells 
That call us all to all that we shall hear.

It makes the soul to bleed and cry to God, 
Who reigns forever most majestically. 
It makes the voice to cease its joyful laud. 
The bending knee it brings so faithfully
To stoop before our King Who takes away 
Our most beloved, whom in their graves we lay.

by Michelle DeBoer
Book Reviews

Here is a list of some books for Summer reading that deal with the concept of friendship. Call your local book store or check the library if you are interested in these books.


This is an easy to read, very practical down to earth guide to the art of interpersonal relationships. It gets to the little details which are easily overlooked but which have a big impact on friendships. For example, Mc Ginnis writes: even when our mouths are closed we are saying a lot. When people speak to you, they are receiving lots of messages about how interested you are. Remember: the surest way to be interesting is to be interested, and the intensity of your interest can be measured by the way your body talks.

Eye contact is one the surest indicators. If you are staring at the wall or glancing at other people, the speaker gets the strong impression of how little you care about the conversation. On the other hand, if you look a man directly in the eye as he speaks, you will be amazed at how quickly he gets the complement.

This book is not written from a distinctly Reformed point of view and must be read with some discretion.


C.S. Lewis looks at relationships from a more philosophical point of view. He is more difficult to read, but has some valuable and penetrating insights. In connection with friendship he brings up the scenario: if, of three friends (A, B, and C), A should die, then B loses not only A, but A’s part in C, while C loses not only A but A’s part in B. In each of my friends, there is something that only some other friend can fully bring out. By myself I am not large enough to call the whole man into activity; I want other lights than my own to show all his facets. Now that Charles is dead, I shall never again see Ronald’s reaction to a specific Caroline joke. Far from having more of Ronald, having him “to myself” now that Charles is away, I have less of Ronald. Hence true Friendship is the least jealous of loves. Two friends delight to be joined by a third, and three by a fourth, if only the newcomer is qualified to become a real friend. . . . Friendship exhibits a glorious “nearness by resemblance” to Heaven itself where the very multitude of the blessed (which no man can number) increases the fruition which each has of God. For every soul, seeing Him in her own way, doubtless communicates that unique vision to all the rest.

A book like this may be useful to stimulate some in depth discussions on the concept of friendships.

Your convention has the theme “Godly Friendships.” Most books just speak about friendships. What precisely makes a friendship “godly?” Our Protestant Reformed Churches have developed a distinctive view of the covenant as an essentially friendship. If you don’t already have the RFPA publications having to do with the concept of the covenant, you may want to get them and study this fundamental concept. - ed. ✩
Watching Daily At My Gates


June 1
The man to whom this Word is directed had a great task to accomplish. Paul had left him alone on the Island of Crete where he had brought the gospel so that Titus “should set in order the things that are wanting,” and quench the lie of the Cretians. But before he could admonish others he must himself be a good example and therefore the calling comes to Titus and to us: “In all things show yourself a pattern in all good works.” No one may lay the demand aside. Neither must we forget that when we sin in word or deed, we are a stumbling block for others. Christ has left for us an example to follow so that we might begin to walk in that righteousness which He has purchased for us and be a witness to the world.

June 2
We know a tree by its fruit, and also then recognize that love without dissimilation, that is, the genuineness of Christian love in her character of self-denial, self-sacrifice and devotion. Anything that comes forth to bring honor to self is false and no fruit of love. But we must not forget that true love is the keynote of the Gospel and the highest law in the kingdom of Him who died to make us holy. The apostle deliberately adds immediately “abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.” Unfeigned, holy love is divine and makes itself known not through a flabby indulgence but esteems righteousness and honors God’s good pleasure for our life. How do we stand in our personal life? Do we abhor evil? We do well to remember that the highest love will also sanctify those who draw near to Him.

June 3
Psalm 18; Proverbs 18:1a.
The world thinks entirely different from us, as Solomon experienced. He had experienced the dissatisfaction, disappointment and bitterness of this passing world. The people, however, who seek themselves, and whose heart is hard to eternal things think that the separation is boring and that solitude makes one sullen. It is no wonder that they do not seek the unity of God’s congregation. And yet we and all who have experience say “he who separates himself strives after and seeks some desire.” Certainly in the solitude, if all the tunes of the earth are silent, if the sounds of its music do not reach our ears, then the ideas of men toward us are blocked out. If our troubles and earthly cares are laid aside, then the things of the soul call loudly, then the heart thirsts for eternal things and we are satisfied by God’s Word.

June 4
Numbers 12; 12:3.
What a fine temperament this meekness is. It is found in Moses in a time of his life when he was faced with haughty rebels. It gave him courage to be still when misunderstood, patient under oppression and gentle in his judgment. This temperament has nothing to do with cowardice or fear of men, but is the daughter of true humility which esteems another better than himself, like a clear calm stream wherein the light of God’s grace is reflected. It is the necessary fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is well for us that we adorn the inner man with a humble and quiet spirit which glorifies God and not man. The Lord shall teach the humble His way and give them His peace.

June 5
Acts 27:1-25; v. 23
A whole life is revealed through a single word of the apostle Paul spoken in the hour of greatest peril while the waves surged high and tossed the frail ship where he found himself with an unbelieving crew. Yet Paul stood firm and calm in this danger and spoke with this wonderful confession: “I am the property of the Lord.” In this confession lies the secret of our peace and our courage, our calm and our security. In danger and in all our walk we do not stand alone. The fruit of belonging to God can not fail to come. We read “and whom I serve.” When we know that we
belong to Him, then we are willing to serve Him who puts His law in our heart.

June 6
Hebrews 11:1-16; v. 13.
“They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth.” This is written of the patriarchs, the venerable men of faith, who in their lives had experienced God’s faithfulness and who were the bearers of so many rich promises and were the caretakers of the world. Yet, in spite of so many good things in the earth, their riches and God’s blessed covenant fellowship, they confessed that this earth was not their fatherland. The same confession lives in the heart of all who learn the insignificance of this world and what it has to offer in itself. We who are believers in Christ look for the eternal fatherland where death no longer reigns and where the riches of God’s covenant fellowship is perfect and eternal.

June 7
There comes a time in the life of the child of God when God regenerates him and begins to work conversion in his soul. Sometimes it is the day of sickness and trial, sometimes already while on the knees of a godly mother. When God comes near unto His people through the preaching of the word and works in their hearts, they must respond in thankful obedience and seek Him diligently. Today He is nearby in the preaching of the word, and we must seek Him with our heart and grow in our knowledge of Him while He may be found.

June 8
Hebrews 4; v. 9.
Perhaps it is a restless heart that reads these words of the text. Perhaps it is someone who is driven to and fro on the sea of life by many changes, in sickness, in danger, in frequent temptation, alone in the world. Does not this word sound like music for the heart that is jolted from every side: there is rest, eternal rest, in the Fatherland above? Look upward then in your distress. When the rest of our eternal inheritance is come, we will stammer: the half was not told me!

June 9
Mark 9:14-29; v. 24.
In our time of struggle in belief and unbelief in this world, seldom is there a time that the unbelief holds influence in such a broad proportion, where at the same time the belief secures a mightier force and speaks out against it. The people of God have always had these struggles. Christ found men in this frame of mind when He walked on this earth. Certainly there has been a day in your life when you could rejoice in your faith: “I know that my Redeemer lives; in life and in death I am secure in Him.” And then there comes the darker hour in which the eye of faith is clouded. It is well for us in such an hour when we come like this distressed father: “Lord, come to help my unbelief.” Our Saviour hears and says “I will comfort the sorrowful.”

June 10
Philippians 1:1-30; v. 6.
Is that a word for the wavering, the melancholy among us, or is it really a word for everyone of us? All who confess Jesus Christ as High Priest should behold Him willingly. When we see our sins and weakness, our little faith and unthankfulness, our grumbling and complaining, then we despair of the goal of a believer and sigh “that is not for me, I will never reach it, I have received much grace of God but the world in me and around me shackles me.” To such a sigh says the Word of God: He who works faith is faithful, He does not lay aside the work of His hand, what He has begun He will continue until the great day of the Lord.

June 11
Matthew 5:1-19; v. 6.
So long as the heart of men is not dead in sin there is a hunger and thirst to be satisfied and filled. Natural man seeks satisfaction in earthly things, but the new man in Christ finds no bread or water in this world to satisfy his hunger and thirst. The satisfied and self sufficient have no need for the King of heaven. Do you have a thirst for God? Does your heart hunger for His peace? Those who come to Him, He will in no wise cast away. They shall be filled.

June 12
Romans 8:18-32; v. 32.
These words of the apostle contain a beautiful truth. It is as if there is some doubt in us that must be put down, that the earthly things will not turn out all right. But how can you still doubt the readiness of your God to do good if you stand at the foot of the cross and can say with determination “God so loved me a poor sinner that He gave His only begotten Son in order to cover my guilt.” Will He withhold any good from us who has given over the Highest thing for us? Though our needs are very great, He shall grant all things necessary and good.

June 13
The knowledge by which the sorely tried man of God speaks here goes far above all earthly knowledge. Our age boasts of great knowledge but they know nothing of the knowledge of the soul because the world is blind in sin. Do you know with the experience of your soul that your Redeemer lives? When the people of God live through times that plow deep furrows in the soul, times when the rod is not spared, then they are best able to understand the significance of this text. It remains hidden to the worldly wise because they do not seek the Redeemer; this knowledge is to the simple who live by grace.
Psalm 27; v. 5.
The Lord our God gives such rich promises for His children and the experience of the people of God in the Old Testament was always that God is faithful. Certainly there are many bad days in a man’s life and dangers surround him all the time: dangers of sickness and injury, temptations and wicked men. The Lord does not say to His children: “you will never come into danger any more! You will never be brought into temptation!” But rather, when the evil days come you can take shelter by Me, your Refuge and Comforter, and learn to put your trust in Me.

Psalm 84; v. 11.
When one considers the metaphorical language in this psalm, then he finds a living spring of consolation. Think of a wanderer hurrying through a hot wilderness. The caves serve as his place of rest and thirst and hunger follow close behind. Yet he experienced in the anxious days and confessed that in the chilly mountain caves “the Lord is my Sun warming me with His love; and when the hot arrows of the enemy fly at me, the Lord is my Shield.” The Lord also fulfills our needs, lightens our path, and in grace sends an abundance of spiritual blessings when we walk in thankful obedience to Him.

Jeremiah 14:7-9, 19b-22; Psalm 27:4.
These are the last words of a psalm which may truly be called a song of faith. It comes at a time when he is nearly exhausted. Can we also stand on the hilltop and sing “though an army besieges me, I will not fear because the Lord preserves me in the day of evil?” And do we on another day sigh “O Lord, do not forsake me in the day of evil, preserve me in my faith, and assure me of your nearness and strength”? Wait upon Him in prayer and expect Him and you will see that your heart is strengthened by grace and His word strengthens your faith.

There is always something attractive in a new challenge. There is always enthusiasm of attainment before one even begins. That attractiveness and enthusiasm makes it easy to be diligent and sing out “With my God I can charge through the foe, with my God I can leap over a wall.” When the victory itself seems distant, the difficulties greater than we can endure and we sigh in despair, then God promises the crown of life to those who endure to the end. Knowing this promise we find new enthusiasm to endure and live for the glory of God.

Psalm 10; v. 14.
How often in life do we realize that God sees, hears and knows all things? Already as children we learn this and acquire a childlike impression of this truth. Later we often speak of the truth but do not live accordingly and put our trust in Him. The Lord gives us this word of comfort to place us in His hand and see that there is no salvation in anything else. Indeed, we shall experience in our own life that He does not only help carry the load, but he carries us through the wilderness of this life.

Isaiah 26; v. 4.
To trust in someone’s word is one of the marks of the simple heart. The worldly-wise will surely say with a scornful laugh that one should trust no one because people always turn out to be frauds. Yet with childlike faith we trust the word of God who is and remains the everlasting Rock of strength. It is true that men may fall upon us to our hurt when we put our trust in man. How good, then, is this word of our God in Whom is no shadow of turning.

Psalm 9; v. 10.
“They that know thy name,” says the psalmist, “will be those who put their trust in thee,” even when death takes a loved one, or the whole world is against you. What a judgment over our heart and life if we do not know that Name above all names in the hour of despair! The meaning is certainly clear: to know the name of our God is to know Him as the Strength of our life and our Salvation, as Mercy and Grace. Those who have learned the name of our sovereign God are also those who seek Him in thankful obedience.

II Corinthians 4; v. 17.
Faith places a man on a high mountain from where he learns to see eternal things. How our souls can be stooped within us and we bow under the griefs and sorrows of life, the persecutions of those who do not fear God, and the sins in our own heart. When we, however, see our life in the light of eternity, then all the afflictions of this time look different. We believe that each dark shadow which falls upon our path is good and works eternal life in Christ.

It was king David who spoke so after the years of fighting, of the most unjust pursuit and deepest humiliation. In many of these difficult times it was his experience that in the darkest hours the Lord was nearest and that he had placed his whole trust on the Rock of his strength. He learned that God saves in the way of
hardship and judgment. That is why he confesses with grateful acknowledgment how God had lifted him up in so wonderful a manner. So is it yet and forever will be the confession of God's children: "God is my rock and my power."

June 23
Isaiah 1:1-20; Joel 2:12, 13.
Do we have in mind the meaning of the Psalm "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me," that says so clearly to us how God's eyes see to the bottom of our heart, even to the hidden corner that we ourselves do not even see? Would not more truth come into our personality, more harmony between our deeds and words in the motives of our heart, if we understood the reality that we have to do with a God who desires truth in the innermost depth of the heart? God will have all or none! He will not be satisfied with an outward show of sorrow for sin that does not reach the heart.

June 24
I Peter 5; v. 7.
Do you have a place to lay aside your cares and burdens? Perhaps you look around and see some people you can trust and will stand by you in a time of need, but that is not enough because an hour will come in which you stand all alone. Certainly we can and must help each other, but only Christ can take away our burden of sin. Let us then cast our cares upon our God who loves us in His Son Jesus Christ.

June 25
Jeremiah 29:11-14; v. 13.
What might the reason be that our spiritual life sometimes becomes so dry and dead? Where does so much slackness, slowness and dullness come from in the believing confessors of God? God gives the same answer to all these questions. God is not hiding Himself. He is the same God which said to Israel "you shall find me when you seek me with all your heart!" The song must be in our heart "my soul thirsts for God, for the living God." When God puts the new life of Christ in our heart, then we must respond in thankful obedience so that we grow in our knowledge of Him.

June 26
Psalm 145; v. 18, Jeremiah 5:3.
The Lord is nearby! That is indeed the unfailing confidence of those who know and love Him as the God and Father of their lives. He is nearby in whatever trouble, distress, sadness, temptation or struggle we encounter. He comforts us when we call upon Him. He does not hide Himself from His children because He finds in them the truth. When prayers are only an outward formality, and words vain janglings He hears them not because there is no truth in them. When the Spirit of Christ brings life to the dead sinner, then the truth is in him and he begins to speak and pray in truth.

June 27
Micah 6:6-9; Psalm 42:2.
In each soul there is a thirst for its source. Natural man thirsts for forbidden fruit which brings bitterness and death; he seeks those things which satisfy only his own selfish desires and pride. Only those who are given a new heart in Christ thirst for God who implants that new heart. The child of God who is created in His image finds no rest, no peace, no happiness outside of Him. Despite the continuing thirst of the old man within us for the forbidden fruit, we are victorious in Christ and are able to confess with the psalmist "my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

June 28
Isaiah 41:1-20; Jeremiah 3:23.
Do we think that this word no longer applies? Do we think that because we know clearly now that salvation is of the Lord that the plaintive tone of the prophet is no longer appropriate for us? We are by nature prone to find salvation in some other way than in Christ alone. God says to us "I alone am your Lord and Saviour; I alone have an arm of might. By Me alone is peace, through Me alone is salvation: give up then today once and for all the help of men and earthly might."

June 29
We have in the woman who persisted in her request of the Lord an example how one can break through the curtain of cloud. We must look first at our own sinfulness for the origin of our spiritual darkness. Usually it is our own guilt that breaks our fellowship with God. Confess everything in your prayers to God, then the cloud vanishes away.

June 30
Psalm 85; v. 8.
From all sides we hear voiced about "here is Christ or there, in this is your salvation, in that is happiness!" And as a result, the hearts of many men are cast to and fro by every wind of doctrine. We begin our days so often with various plans: I will finish this work, begin this journey, go to hear this speech, etc. Today follow the godly counsel which the psalmist brings: "hear what God the LORD will speak." Read the Word of God with diligence and prayer.
The Crouching Lion

by Rev. C. Hanko

You know the story of Cain and Abel, the first two children born in this world. Abel had the grace of God in his heart. Cain did not. Abel brought a humble sacrifice to God. Cain brought a sacrifice that revealed the pride of his wicked heart.

Cain was angry. He had given so much, and yet God was displeased with him and his offering. Still worse, Cain was jealous of his brother, whose sacrifice God accepted. At the same time he was filled with hatred against him. Abel was so pious, so righteous. Even Abel’s warnings turned him off completely. His pious brother did not have to preach to him.

Here already was the antithesis, faith and unbelief, the true church and the false church at war with each other. It is exactly for that reason that God warns Cain: “If thou dost not well, shalt thou not be accepted? but if thou dost not well, sin lieth at the door.”

What a powerful warning! If thou dost not well, sin lies crouched like a voracious lion at your door eager to pounce upon you and to devour you.

How true that was in the life of Cain. He became so angry with his righteous brother Abel, and so filled with hatred against him that he killed him. He went out from the presence of the Lord as a vagabond on the earth. He brought forth a wicked generation, which produced a Lamech who boasted to his wives of his evil
deeds. Giants arose who were filled with evil, so that the first world under God’s righteous judgment was destroyed by the flood.

James teaches us in his epistle, “If any man is tempted, let him not him not say, I am tempted of God.” How readily we say, as modern psychology teaches, That is the way I am. It is only natural for me to sin, for I simply follow my natural impulses. This is another way of saying that God made me what I am, He causes me to sin.

James warns us, Don’t you say that. God cannot be tempted, nor does He tempt any one. “But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:13-15).

Sin lurks as a cruel monster at the door of your heart and mind. As long as you keep that door shut to evil you have no problem. As long as you say “NO” to the very suggestion of evil you are safe. That is the wise thing to do. Flee from evil!

If you open the door of your heart and mind to evil, even just a wee bit, that monster springs upon you and overwhelms you.


There is a dutch saying that warns, “A moment of recklessness can cause years of tears.”

At the time it seems so innocent. It is done often in fun, spurred on by others. You don’t want to be a wet blanket. Or it may seem so entirely proper. What can be wrong with it? Or maybe the desire is so overwhelming that it is virtually beyond control. Famous last words: Just once can do no harm.

Whatever the reason may be, that Sin-monster could not touch you, except for the sinful lust that James talks about. Sin wars in our members. We are evil, born in sin. A baby enters this world with a covetous nature, and covetousness is the root of all evil. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are present in each and every one of us.

As soon as we open the door, give heed to temptation that sin-monster leaps upon us and overpowers us. In bold self-confidence we may say, “I can handle it.” Or, “I know where to draw the line.” But then you are playing with fire.

James speaks of being drawn away by our own lusts and enticed. He then uses the figure of a woman who conceives and bears a child. The name of that child is Sin. He says, “When lust has conceived it bringeth forth sin.” When our lust is aroused, a child is born, an ugly, evil child, a sinful act. We make ourselves guilty of sinning against God.

But that is not the end of the matter. We cannot stop there. Sin has taken dominion over us. More sins follow, each a little worse than the one before. For he who sins is sin’s slaves. He is in the bondage of sin and death under the righteous judgment of the living God.

We may refuse to admit it, and we generally do. But the fact remains that sin breeds even greater sin. Do you remember when you were a child you kept your Sunday School money? Do you recall how it burned in your pocket and you thought that everybody could read on your face that you were a thief? But the next time your conscience did not speak quite as loudly. Sin has a way of silencing the conscience, even to the extent that we can reason away our guilt and justify our sinful deeds.

The last thing an addict cares to admit is that sin has him in its power. He tells himself, “I can quit any time.” But when faced with the question, “Why don’t you?” He must admit. “No, I won’t. I can’t.”

And the end? If the grace of God does not deliver us from the bondage of sin, we end in death, the death of hell.

Only the grace of God can deliver us from that ugly, powerful monster: Sin. Only by the grace of God can we experience a godly sorrow that brings a true and lasting repentance.

The warning comes to each of us: Keep the door of your heart and mind tightly closed and always be on your guard against the presence of evil and the Evil One.

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[H] - Happiness

allegro con spirito

by Tom Bergman

Happiness is a wonderful gift among God's saints. Within the church family, one of the greatest times to share that happiness is in congregational singing. The moment to spread your joy is during the singing that is such an integral part of the worship service. Together we sing songs of praise and thanksgiving to our God and Maker. The focus this month is on the fact that the body of Christ should understand singing this way: we sing with one another and to each other.

In the sanctuary, we sing with each other before God. The aim is the honor and glory of His most holy name. Also, we sing to each other. The goal is to have each other's needs in mind, hoping to nurture fellow members in the care God has graciously provided.

Accomplishing this through singing is done with the Psalms. In singing these songs of Scripture, our faces should never appear careless and bored. Instead, our faces will shine with thoughtfulness and devotion, promoting brothers and sisters around us to do the same. If we understand what we sing and what we are so happy about, members around us will notice.

The thoughtfulness we need for this comes from knowledge of the Psalms—an understanding of the words we sing to music. When the meaning is taken to heart, the music from our lips must fit. Joyful words require a joyful tune. Solemn words require a solemn tune. Plaintive words require a plaintive tune. Often in music, an Italian phrase or expression is given to communicate the tempo or style necessary. In order for the music to be suitable for the Psalm, we need to be conscious of the tempo and style we are supposed to sing. Singing, congregational singing, is such a grand avenue for portraying Christian happiness— but only if we sing happily.

Therefore, we can take a closer look at some of the versifications we sing along with a description for each.

Affettuoso (with warmth):

"When in the night I meditate on mercies multiplied, my grateful heart inspires my tongue to bless the Lord, my Guide." — Psalter #28

"The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want; He makes me down to lie In pastures green; He leadeth me The quiet waters by." — Psalter #53

Adagio (slowly):

"On the good and faithful God has set His love; When they call He sends them blessings from above."
— Psalter #8

"Rest in the Lord with quiet trust, Wait patiently for Him; Though wickedness triumphant seem, Let not thy faith grow dim." — Psalter #100

Largo molto (very slow and deliberate):

"While I kept guilty silence, my strength was spent with grief, Thy hand was heavy on me, My soul found no relief; But when I owned my trespass, my sin hid not from Thee, When I confessed transgression, Then thou forgavest me." — Psalter #83

Largo molto e legato (slow, deliberate, and smooth):

"Thy lovingkindness, Lord, is good and free, In tender mercy, turn Thou unto me; Hide not Thy face from me in my distress, In mercy hear my prayer, Thy servant bless." — Psalter #187

Piantando e piano (plaintively and softly):

"To Thee I lift my soul, In Thee my trust repose;
My God, O put me not to shame
Before triumphant foes.” — Psalter #60

Allegramente (brightly):
“Amid the thronging worshippers, Jehovah will I bless;
Before my brethren, gathered there, His Name will I confess.
Come, praise Him, ye that fear the Lord, ye children of His grace;
With reverence sound His glories forth and bow before His face.” — Psalter #51

Allegro (lively):
“Because He is righteous, His praise I will sing,
Thanksgiving and honor to Him I will bring,
Will sing to the Lord on whose grace I rely,
Extolling the Name of Jehovah Most High.” — Psalter #13

“Uplifted on a rock
Above my foes around,
Amid the battle shock
My song shall still resound;
Then joyful offerings I will bring,
Jehovah’s praise my heart shall sing.” — Psalter #71

Allegro con brio (lively, with vigor):
“The voice of Jehovah, the God of all glory, rolls over the waters the thunders awake...
His voice makes the mountains and deserts to tremble...”
— Psalter #76

“Thy power has set the mountains firm,
O God Almighty, girt with strength;
At Thy command the waves are still,
The nations cease from war at length.” — Psalter #176

Allegro con spirito (lively, with spirit!):
“For grace and mercy ever near,
For foes subdued and victory won,
All nations of the earth shall hear
My praise for what the Lord has done [!]” — Psalter #36

“My grief is turned to gladness, to Thee my thanks I raise,
Who hast removed my sorrow and girded me with praise;
And now, no longer silent [!] my heart Thy praise will sing;
O Lord, my God, forever my thanks to Thee I bring.”
— Psalter #77

Often we will find two or more moods expressed in the same Psalm. These require added study and appreciation. For example, sing #140, verse 2 affanoso (sadly), “I have sinned against Thy grace and provoked Thee to
Thy face...” But sing verse 3 more aspiratamente (aspiringly), “Thou alone my Savior art, teach Thy wisdom to my heart.”

When you open to #69 in church, slowly and solemnly sing the first verse- grave. “Be Thou my judge, O righteous Lord; try Thou my inmost heart...” But, bring enthusiasm to verse 7 and singing allegramente. “Re-deemed by Thee, I stand secure in peace and happiness. And in the church, among Thy saints, Jehovah I will bless.”

“Among Thy saints, Jehovah I will bless.” What a wonderful way to summarize our thoughts here! To sing anything affretando (in a hurry) would be disgraceful to God’s Name. Expressing happiness does not allow for vivace (fiercely fast). In praise to the Lord of our lives, avoid pianissimo (very soft). No group has the corner on pianissimo like a young people’s afternoon mass meeting. And that should not be. We have reason to be happy. Being happy requires happy singing! These are weaknesses to fight.

But the most subtle, and most harmful tendency is to sing everything andante (moderately).

Andante... everything the same way,
andante... always moderately,
andante... no change in voice
andante... no change of expression.

No Psalm calls for this kind of “happy” singing.
“Among Thy saints, Jehovah I will bless.” The purpose is to sing with and to the other members—all in praise to God. Congregational singing is such a blessed occasion to show your happiness. Why are we putting our happiness to music?

“Come, hear, all ye that fear the Lord,
While I with grateful heart record
What God has done for me.” — Psalter #175

“Among Thy saints, Jehovah I will bless.” Sing it and share it! Sing, sing, sing!!! When we sing out our Christian gratitude, other members need to be able to hear it in our voices. It has effect on those around. This especially applies to allegro con spirito. In plain language, allegro con spirito could be described: friends around us even feel good when we sing it lively, with spirit. With respect to the Christian brethren we love, that is quite a blessing from heaven. So sing it, show it, and share it.

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IN DEFENSE OF WOMEN (2)

by Jeff Kalsbeek

Last month, we looked at the false views concerning the place of women in the Church, and saw that the basic assertion is that it is not, nor ever was, God’s will that woman be in submission. We now continue by looking at the Reformed position.

The true Reformed position holds the headship of the man and submission of the woman, in marriage as well as the institutional life of the Church, as being the revealed will of God.

The woman’s subordination to the man, was set forth by God as His will already in the beginning. Before there was sin in the world, in the woman’s highest state, she was created to be a help to the man. I Corinthians 11 helps us to understand this truth. Here, the apostle Paul explains why the woman is to have “power” on her head (sign of submission) by seeing of the original creation of the woman by God. “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man” (vs. 8, 9). By creating her from the man and out of the man, God shows His will that the woman is to be subordinate to the man. Man “is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man” (vs. 7). I Timothy 2 also gives insight into the woman’s subordination as being from the beginning. Here Paul is showing why the woman is to have no authority in the congregation gathered for worship, and in verse 13 he bases his instruction, in part, on the order of creation; “For Adam was first formed, then Eve.”

A second evidence of God’s will to have woman in subjection is His declaration after the fall of man. After the Fall, though the woman had usurped authority over the man in the Garden, God in Genesis 3:16 reestablishes her subordination and pronounces a sentence on her. Part of that sentence upon her was that even her own will and desires would now be subject to her husband; “...and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”

Thirdly, we can better understand God’s will, concerning the woman’s place in marriage and the Church, when we see that the headship-submission relationship is not exclusive to the man-woman relationship, but is a common principle. Besides the woman being subject to the man, scripture also tells us that the man is subject to Christ, and Christ to God. I Corinthians 11:3 reads, “...the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” There are many other examples of this common principle; children in submission to parents, younger to elder, common people to their rulers, all saints to one another. Connected to this, the true Reformed view holds that this universal law of headship-submission is not done away with at the coming of Christ, as some would suggest. This was seen earlier with the appeal to Gal. 3:28 (May issue, p. 21); the parent-child, man-woman, and all other such relationships remain to the end of time.

There is significance to this issue. There is significance for the woman, for the Church, and God Himself. This is serious business; it is not just a matter of Christian liberty, but something that will have an effect on all areas of life.

First of all, it is significant for the woman, in that the false view of non-submission is detrimental to her. The advocates of women-in-office are no friends of women, as concerns their eternal well being. The true Church of Christ on the other hand, concerned for her beloved daughters, teaches, in faith, the submission of the woman. God purposed this with the welfare of the woman in mind. This reality is stated in the book “Far Above Rubies” page 157, 158. When speaking of misrepresentation by the women-in-office advocates, of the Churches position, as being one that is “against” women, it reads,

...But this is not a position against women, but a position “for” women, really the only position “for” the woman. The Bible is “for” women, that is, the Bible has the woman’s own best interests in view and prescribes what is best for the woman herself.
Exactly because the Church is motivated by the good of the women themselves, the Church must be committed to adhere to the Bibles' teaching on the question of women in office.

God always wills what is best for His people, God determines how He will sanctify His people, He has sovereignly determined that His elect daughters be sanctified in the way of submission to the man in marriage and in the Church, and ordinarily with a life of childbearing and rearing (I Timothy 2:15);

Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

In the way of submission she remains humble; in the way of bearing and raising she sees the need to go to Christ, to depend on her Lord. This is God's determined way.

The unbelieving woman of this world wants none of this. To this command of God she says, NO! The way of submission? No! The way of childbearing? No! She will serve God and enter heaven on her own terms. Says this woman, I will serve God in the way of ruling in the Church, I will be saved in the way of preaching the Gospel. Childbearing? A few, as long as they're not a nuisance, or make my way hard; as long as they do not hinder my "career": a working mom is much more productive, I will be "saved" my own way. And the unfaithful, apostate church agrees and encourages the woman in her path of folly, declaring the women-in-office issue not a matter of salvation, and proclaiming that the Bible is unclear on the matter. By the grace of God, Christ’s Church protects her daughters from this evil, and they are sanctified.

There is significance for the church as well. The Church is blessed in her obedience to God's will. In the Church, the covenant seed are reared by faithful parents, and a mother who, in faith recognizes her calling as given to her by God; a calling too, for which God has blessed her with gifts suited for that purpose. In the way of the woman’s faithful submission, in the church and in the home, the covenant children see and are instructed in their own submission to each other, to parents, and to God. The covenant home is the foundation for the Churches preservation. God is pleased to use the faithfulness of godly mothers, obedient to God’s will, to preserve His people in their generations (Psalm 103:17, 18).

It is also true that churches who are disobedient to the will of God fall under His condemnation. Those churches that allow, and encourage the usurping of authority by the woman, cannot be blessed. Instead, they will experience the effects of their disobedience in being cut off from God’s fellowship in their generations. While this is true, we as young people, should also see that this issue is a consequence of earlier departure.

In the case of the Christian Reformed Churches, the false doctrine of God’s giving a common grace to all men, has had its effect. Because of this heresy, the separation between the Church and the world is no longer there, but instead, the church takes what the world says about the suppression of the woman, and gives it more credence than God’s revealed Word. Where would we be if God had not seen fit, before we were even born, to preserve us from such false doctrine? We are grateful for God’s mercy.

Thirdly, there is significance in this issue in that the true reformed position of the woman’s submission, in the home and in the church, glorifies God. Those who deny the submission of the woman attempt to exalt themselves above God and His will. God’s will for the woman is clear, and He is only glorified in the way of His people willingly obeying His command. This is the great joy of the Church; that God’s name might be exalted and glorified. Also as seen in a faithful marriage relationship, the headship of Christ and the devotion and submission of His bride, the Church, is pictured in its beauty. Never does the Church usurp authority over Christ, or even stand as an equal partner with Him, but is in loving submission, and it is of this truth that we are a picture. In the submitting, covenant family, the submission of Christ to His Father, and the loving unity of the Triune God is displayed. In all these, God is seen in His glory.

Christ’s Church faithfully heeds God’s will. The believing woman submits to God, though the way is difficult, thankless, and despised by the world. It is, for her, the way to glory. It is, for God, the way He is given the glory due His name.

“The statutes of the Lord are right...in keeping of them there is great reward.” —Psalm 19:8, 11

Jeff is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Tulips in a Crumbled Castle (2)

by John Huizenga

In our study of the history of Pella, we have noted the reasons why Reformed believers wanted to leave the Netherlands. In addition to persecution, the farmers suffered from a severe potato blight. What makes Pella unique is the man who led the Reformed believers out of the Netherlands and to the plains of America. Scholte was a cultured Reveil man, yet he had a dream which he could fulfill only if he severed his ties and plunged into the uncivilized land of America.

We already noticed that he was ready to leave provided the conditions were right. Now he was at odds with the Afgescheiden and his congregation was dwindling due to emigration to America. Then on “May 3, 1846, A. Hartgeringk had written his now famous letter to Brummelkamp and Van Raalte, reporting the glories of a possible colonial venture.” Although conditions did not warrant flight, with the idea of a glorious colonial adventure in his mind, Scholte imagined that conditions would most likely become worse. For good measure, he predicted that God would soon visit the Netherlands with horrible judgment. Now he was ready to go. He destroyed the bridges behind him and marched forward with Pella in his eyes.

Confident that he should leave the Netherlands, Scholte worked together with Van Raalte and Van der Meulen to make plans for departure. They decided (among other places such as the East Indies, Africa, and South America) that North America was the place “where they sought to establish a ‘Pella,’ the land where they could establish a free school alongside a free church.” Meetings were then arranged to stir up interest among those who wished to emigrate and to prepare for the journey.

Notice that the leaders stated “a free school alongside a free church” as grounds for leaving. In large measure the leaders were spiritually motivated, but Scholte makes it clear that he was also motivated by social, economic, and political factors. Many of the people left primarily for economic reasons. Bratt points out that of the people emigrating, spiritual motives were secondary to economic motives. Especially was this true with Scholte. He admits that “the reason of emigrations was principally the conviction that the social conditions in the old country was such that there was no opportunity for the honest poor.” His refuge was not to be a spiritual refuge, but also a refuge from the evils of society, economics and politics. This is not to criticize the emigrants, for many were very godly men and women, who looked forward to establishing free churches and sound Christian schools.

During this time of preparation, two schools of thought formed over the question of where in America to settle. Scholte favored Iowa and Van Raalte favored Wisconsin. As was mentioned earlier, it made more sense to settle somewhere around Lake Michigan because that is where earlier Dutch emigrants had settled. But Scholte was above all else an individualist and would have found it difficult to play a role that was subsidiary to another person, which might have been the case had he located in Michigan. He also opposed the idea of “transporting a Dutch church to the new land,” whereas Van Raalte envisioned a church that would adhere strongly to the religious traditions and practices of the Netherlands. Furthermore, Van Raalte was interested in establishing a kind of theocratic society in which the church would play an important role in the government—an idea that Scholte abhorred.

Scholte wanted a refuge from traditionalism. This is already evident when he advertised for interested emigrants. He wanted those who would be attracted to a congregationalist, not Reformed style. Society members must “consider themselves bound in truth by the revealed Word of God, in such a way that they will agree most
nearly with the Congregationalist.” He did not want to be bothered by the other leaders. His independentism is one reason for Pella’s unique location far from any other Dutch settlement.

On October 2, 1846, Scholte sent a “scouting party” of eight families before the main body. They arrived at New York on November 19, and from there the main body of the Utrecht Association departed in the following spring in four sailing vessels expressly chartered for the purpose. Carrying about eight hundred emigrants and loaded with household goods and farm machinery, these vessels arrived in Baltimore in late May and early June.

Scholte, who, with his family, made the crossing by steamship, arrived a few weeks before the main body of immigrants. While awaiting their appearance, he visited New York, Albany, and Washington to secure information on possible settlement sites. Upon hearing of the arrival of his followers, he immediately went to Baltimore and soon had them on their way west. After three weeks of travel by rail, canal boat, “mountain car,” and steamboat, the main body joined the vanguard group at St. Louis. Here they remained while a committee of five land-seekers, headed by Scholte, searched for a settlement site.

By now Scholte had found a number of more objective reasons to support his subjective reasons for settling in Iowa. He argued practically “that the Michigan colony was too far north, lacked good roads, and was too distant from other white settlements. He especially criticized it for being forested,” it was too much work to cut down all the trees and clear out the stumps. I doubt whether Scholte had much experience clearing trees, or even farming for that matter, but the arguments made sense, supported his dream, and eventually proved to be true.

Through connections with a Baptist preacher, Scholte learned about some desirable land, only slightly inhabited, in Marion County, in southeastern Iowa. After investigating this region on July 29, 1847, he and his committee decided the location and soil were good, and proceeded to purchase over eighteen thousand acres of government land and partially developed farms. Shortly thereafter, most of the immigrants who had been waiting at St. Louis departed for their new home.

Because Scholte had purchased whatever houses and crops happened to be on the land, the Pella settlers were better off than the Michigan colonies, but still had a great deal of work breaking the sod and preparing for winter.

While the settlers were taking care of their own business, Scholte was working to mold the community into his idea of a Pella. Noteworthy are the street names he wanted. Symbolic of their sole allegiance to America, the streets included such names as “Columbus, Washington, Franklin, Liberty, Union, Independence, and Peace.” Symbolic of the spirit of Pella, the avenues included such names as “Entrance, Inquiry, Perseverance, Confidence, Expectation, and Accomplishment.” On September 17, 1857 about 200 of the men vowed to eschew all allegiance to foreign powers and pledged their allegiance to America. He did not want Pella “to be the church, but [rather] the world, in which God’s people would be found, together with unbelievers.... He wanted the town to be a decent habitation but not a new Jerusalem.”

The congregation that was formed within Pella also reflects Scholte’s independentism. Article 2 of the constitution reads as follows:

All those who confess for themselves to believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and do not contradict this confession in their actions, can be accepted and recognized as members of the congregation and shall share in the privileges and duties of the congregation. The women shall only be excluded from discussion and voting about public matters, except in cases of recognized necessity.

Within this congregation the elders could all preach. Scholte preached sometime but was generally so involved with other things that he did not have time. He was involved deeply in politics and gave the nominating speech at the convention which nominated Abraham Lincoln.

His church, however, was not impressed with Scholte’s political involvements. His increasing lack of involvement with the church, especially in the preaching, began to cause some problems. The congregation wanted him to preach more and to disentangle himself from his extensive financial dealings. Scholte paid little attention and eventually his congregation told him to give an account of his finances and preach more or else be kicked out of the church. Scholte agreed to preach once a Sunday and was allowed to stay in the church.

But that was not the end of the problems. The congregation was still upset with Scholte’s haphazard involvement and shady financial dealings with the people and the church. In addition they did not like the mixed marriages that were taking place in the church and were dissatisfied with the inadequate preaching of some of the elders. Finally in 1854 the congregation forbade fellow-
ship with Scholte and took him to court over the financial
matters.

Scholte started up his own church with his followers
but it disbanded a year after his death. This put an end to
Scholte's experiment and Pella could develop from then
on like the other Dutch communities. On September 9,
1856 the original congregation united with the church in
Holland Michigan and was now called the "Protestantsche
Gereformeerde Hollandsch Gemeente te Pella."

From Scholte's point of view, his dream was shat-
tered. Instead of producing a community free from Dutch
heritage, he produced a community that today out-Dutches
the tulip festivals in Michigan and "wiscouisin combined.
His church backfired, and blew him out the door. About
the only one who gets very excited about Scholte and his
dream today is the tourist guide at the information office
in Pella. Nevertheless, the faith of those who were led to
Pella continues in the thriving Reformed community found
there today.

John is a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed
Church in Grandville, Michigan.

The Juliana Church
by J.P. de Klerk

The Dutch governmental city of The Hague
became soon after the Reformation a center
for all those who had chosen for the Reformed
Churches in the Netherlands. The Roman Catholic mag-
istrates of the day were not happy with that and several
Reformed preachers were put in prison, and some even
killed.

The whole situation changed when the House of
Orange and its advisors decided that the leadership of
the country had to be founded in The Hague.

Prince Maurits gave the Reformed Churches a boost
in 1617 when he turned himself against the Remonstrants.
After 1685 came many Hugenots from France and started
a new life in The Hague.

Many churches were built, but in the past thirty years
many of them have been closed, sold, broken down or
even replaced by a mosque.

The Juliana Church is one of the latest victims. It is a
big church, built in 1925 by the Reformed State Churches.
As a young member of a choir, I once sang there on a
Christmas morning. I made the drawing during the war,
in 1943. It was used for picture-postcards. The Christian
school was next door.

The remnants of three churches still went to the
Juliana Church; only about twenty people, till the doors
were closed. There is nobody left to pay the bills.

J. P. de Klerk is a journalist and author from the
Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand.
Church News

BIRTHS  "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord..." Ps. 127:3.

BYRON CENTER, MI
  Mr. & Mrs. Leo DeVries rejoice in the birth of a son, Nicholas James.

FAITH, MI
  Aaron Christopher was born to Mr. & Mrs. Tim Talsma.

HOLLAND, MI
  Chuck & Heidi Doezema were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Katherine Marie.

GRANDVILLE, MI
  Daniel Jeffrey was born to Jeff & Jodi Baker.
  Paul & Elizabeth Vink were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Katherine Marcel.

LYNDEN, WA
  Mr. & Mrs. Herman Boonstra Jr. rejoice in the birth of a son, Stephen Dean.

HOPE, MI
  Shon & Brenda Griess were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Jesse Lynnae.

SOUTHEAST, MI
  Kevin & Terri Pastoor were blessed with the birth of a son, Trevor Scott.

BAPTISM  "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16:16.

DOON, IA
  Shelby Jo, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Altena, was presented for baptism.
  Baptism was administered to Nicole Joyce, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Craig Vander Veen.

GRANDVILLE, MI
  Mr. & Mrs. Roger Compagner presented their son, Mason John, for baptism.
  Charity Hope, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tim Rus, was presented for baptism.

FAITH, MI
  Mr. & Mrs. Tim Talsma presented their son, Aaron Christopher, for baptism.

HOLLAND, MI
  Baptism was administered to Katherine Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Charles Doezema.

HUDSONVILLE, MI
  Allison Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tom Miedema was presented for baptism.
  Mr. & Mrs. Bob Prins presented their children, Andrew Henry & Alicia Joy for baptism.
  Baptism was administered to Arend, son of Mr. & Mrs. Vern Haveman.
  Jessica, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dave Miedema, was presented for baptism.

LOVELAND, CO
  Baptism was administered to Amanda Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Scott Bonzelaar.

LYNDEN, WA
  Jamison Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Mark Hystek was presented for baptism.
  Mr. & Mrs. John Hystek presented their daughter, Lisa Renae, for baptism.
  The sacrament of baptism was administered to the infant child of Mr. & Mrs. Rick Span.

RANDOLPH, WI
  Baptism was administered to Jenna Lyn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Lyle Van Ravenswaay.

CONFESSION OF FAITH  "...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:10.

RANDOLPH, WI
  Erin Braaksma and Stephanie Key made confession of their faith.

TRANSFERS OF MEMBERSHIP
  Membership papers of Steve Coleman were received by our Holland, MI congregation.

Thank you to those who faithfully sent in their bulletins. We continue to look for more news. If your church isn’t represented, please contact your young peoples’ society or send your bulletins yourself to:

  Melinda DeMeester
  1171 Sunset Hills
  Grand Rapids, MI 49544
The Book of Nature

A boy. A bike. A beautiful afternoon. Brandon hopped on his Huffy and pedaled down the road. The wind felt good on his face. He pedaled faster. He wondered if a bird felt like this when it soared through the air. He pedaled some more.

But birds get tired. So do boys. Brandon stopped near a secluded creek. He left his bicycle near the path and stepped through fallen branches and brush to get to the water’s edge. Sunlight filtered through the treetops and made the murky water twinkle. Brandon chose an inviting tree trunk to settle down against and rest.

Alone. Silence. He was aware of the stillness. The *plunk! plink! ca-ca! SWOOSH!* A frog. A beetle. A crow. A gust of wind through the trees. He was not alone. It was not so silent. It was not so still.

Brandon looked from side to side as first one creature fluttered and then another scurried or swam. He studied the rows of rippling circles that grew like exploding fireworks whenever a fish touched the surface of the water. He felt the cushion of moss that had blanketed itself over a rotting log. What an amazing place! What a wonderful world! Brandon blinked as a bit of sunlight found its way into his eyes. Then a thought occurred to him. Could there be more to these things than he realized? Might this all be a living picture of other things—things even more wonderful than this world? He found himself humming a tune he knew so well—and the words to the melody made him smile:

*The spacious heav’ns declare the glory of our God,*

*The firmament displays His handiwork abroad;*

*Day unto day proclaims His might,*

*And night His wisdom tells to night.*

Brandon looked around again. How could anyone ever decipher all the truths that nature tells? But wait—Scripture speaks of God’s wisdom and might. In the light of Scripture it can be done!

Brandon wished he could stay here all day, but it was time to go. Perhaps he had begun to understand at least a little about nature.

Indeed, he had begun to open the pages of a most elegant book.

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Connie is the mother of 5 children and attends Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.

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By what means God is made known to us.

We know Him by two means: first, by the creation, preservation and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book.... Secondly, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word....
1996 Young Peoples' Convention

Godly Friendships

Hosted by:
South Holland Protestant Reformed
Young Peoples' Society

To be held:
July 29 - August 2
On the campus of Wheaton College
(not a function of Wheaton College)

Speakers:
Rev. Bruinsma: Church Friendships
Rev. Van Overloop: Personal Friendships
Rev. Gritters: Friendships in Dating and Marriage

All interested in being a chaperone
please call Jann Bruinsma (708) 672-5634

Plan Now to Attend!