

Beacon Lights

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*“And so it was, that, while
they were there, the days were
accomplished that she should
be delivered.”*

Luke 2:6

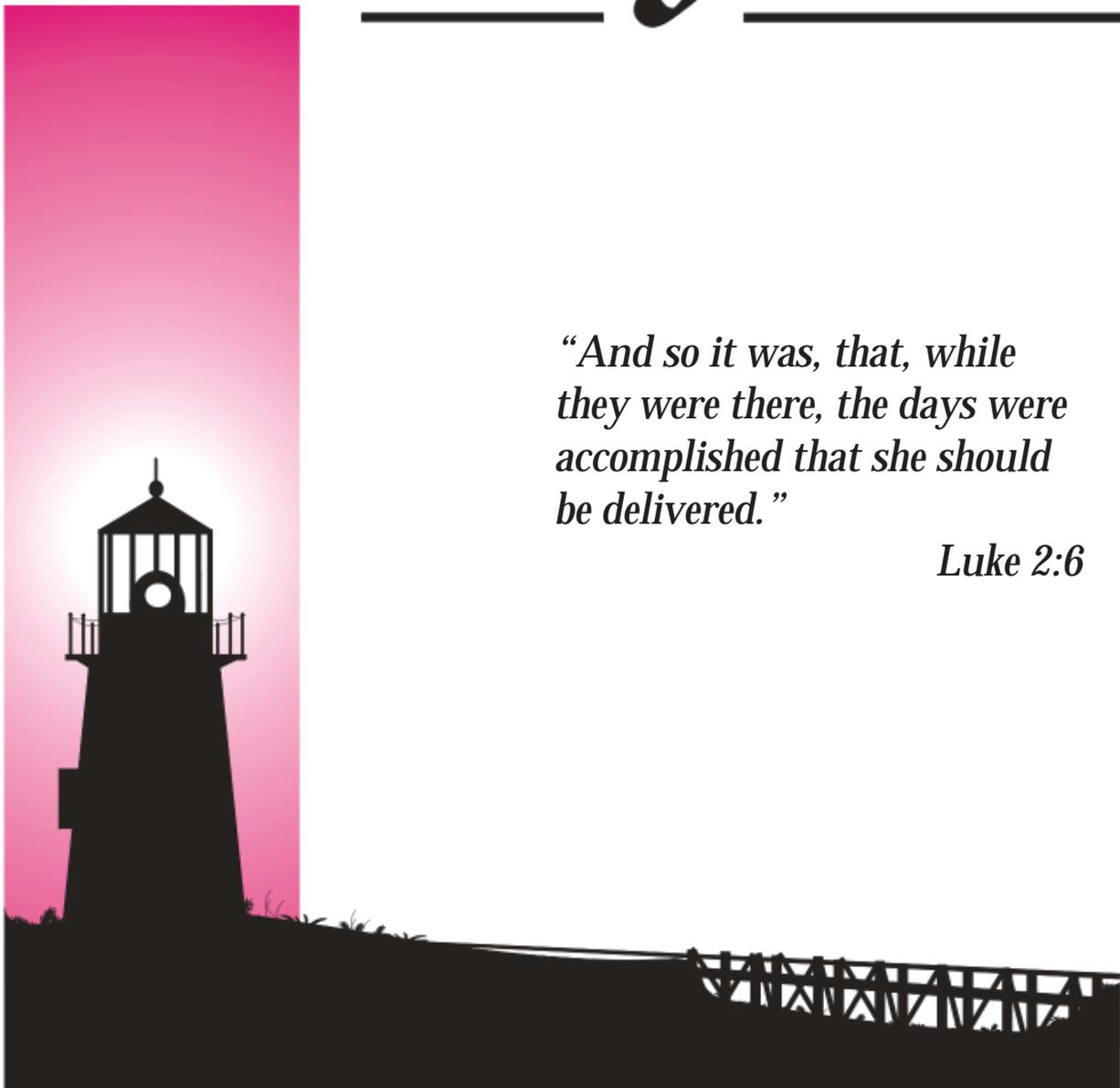


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Jesus: Born in God's Time



by John Huizenga

As God's people waited prayerfully for the promised Messiah, the world seemed to charge ahead with an agenda of its own. Before plunging into a long dark period of some 400 years, God had revealed to His prophets the coming rise and fall of great kingdoms. These kingdoms, however, did not simply exist to pass the time; they were used by God to prepare not just the Jews, but the whole world for the promised Savior.

Three hundred years before the Savior was born, we find a young man, filled with ambition and lust for power, marching east. Nothing seemed to slow him down as he crushed all opposition, always looking for the next army on the eastern horizon which would dare come out to stop him. The mind of Alexander the Great was perhaps filled with pride and his entire being driven by the thrill of war and success. Did he have any idea that he was merely a tool in the hand of the almighty God to sprinkle the seeds of the Greek language that would one day unite the peoples of the known world and vibrate with the Word of God? Perhaps it was that fear of being merely a tool instead of a sovereign himself, that drove him to his drunken rage and young death.

The empire of Alexander fell to pieces after his death in 323 B.C. but the seeds of the Greek language and thought sprouted and flourished. That bed of Greek words and ideas was being carefully molded by God Himself to convey perfectly that Word that God would reveal to His church. Everyone knew Greek, and the intermingling of the Greek language with the Jewish saints further tempered the language to bring a seamless transition between the Old Testament and the New.

About fifty years before the night air rang with the chorus of angels, another man, filled with pride and lust for power drove his armies northward into Gaul and the British Isles. His days were filled with the joyful shouts of victory and the groans of the conquered. His earthly glory surpassed even that of the great Alexander. Julius Caesar stretched the Roman empire beyond the bounds of any empire before.

Though mighty, the Roman Empire with its Caesars was but a tool in the hands of the almighty God. The Romans conquered and stayed. They built great cities and roads from city to city. They established law and order and seemed to conquer fear itself for peace existed from one end of the empire to the other. Travelers and merchants moved unmolested from city to city, and the pride of man swelled to new heights. They combined the free flow of great ideas through the Greek language with the free flow of travel and earthly power.

Into this peaceful and powerful antichristian kingdom, God brought forth His only begotten Son. The vast network of travel and language would soon carry the message of sovereign grace and redemption in Christ alone as no other earthly tool could. Everything had been perfectly planned by God. The kingdom designed by Satan for the glory of man was worked for the glory of God.

The birth of Christ did not go unnoticed and ignored in the great empire of peace. Herod rang the warning bells and in his fury at the invasion into Satan's kingdom, he slaughtered the children of Bethlehem. But even this was in God's council that His Son go to Egypt, the picture of Israel's bondage to sin, and be taken back to His people again.

The saints of the Old Testament may have been troubled when they saw the wickedness of man reach terrifying heights. The saints at the time of the apostle Paul were also inclined to fear. Our comfort comes in the knowledge that God will be glorified in Christ, and Christ will be glorified in us, His saints. “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Thes. 1:7-10). “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). ❖

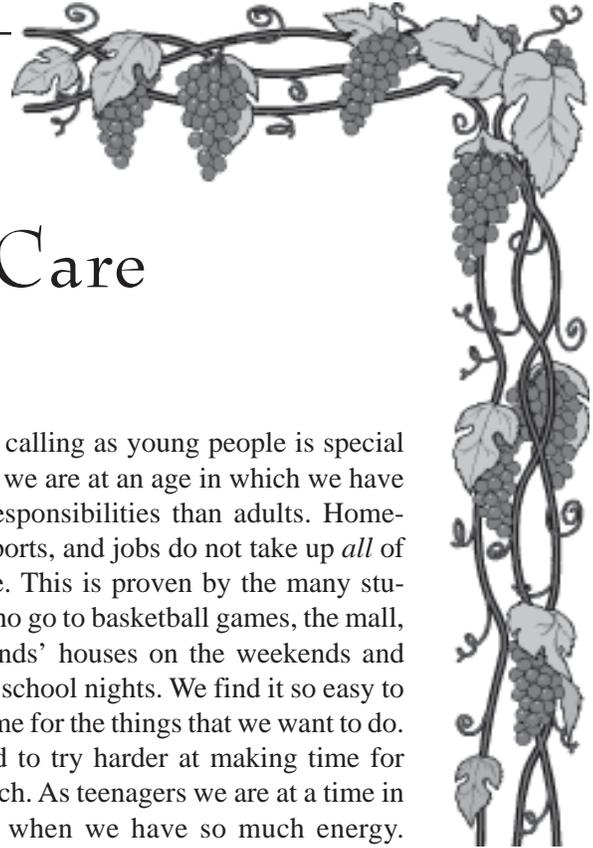
Short Story Writing Contest

Eight Prizes Beginning with 6th Grade

Attention teachers, students, and anyone else who is willing to yield their pen to some prose. *Beacon Lights* is offering a writing contest that has been designed to work with your school writing instruction. Many of the teachers were introduced to some good strategies for writing stories at the last teacher’s convention, and here is some incentive for prize-winning stories. A total of eight \$10 prizes will be awarded: one prize for each grade level (6th through 12th) and one for post high school entries. The prize winning entries may also be published in *Beacon Lights* as well as the second and third place winners. Please contact the business office of *Beacon Lights* for information regarding material for writing stories that was presented at the teacher’s convention.

For this contest, we are looking for short stories having a distinctly Reformed perspective. Entries will not be considered for the contest unless they are between 800 and 1600 words, typed, double-spaced and postmarked by June 1, 2005. All entries must have the author’s name on the first page along with the word count. The entries will be judged according to the following guidelines: originality, believable plot, character development, appropriate setting, and resolution of the problem.

We look forward to receiving your entry. Please mail it to the business office of *Beacon Lights* no later than June 1, 2005. Please follow the guidelines carefully! Start early and plan on doing lots of revisions to polish it and hone it down to the required length. Keep in mind that a typical double spaced page contains about 200 words and your word processor probably has a word count feature.



Taking Time to Care

by Rachel Nagelkerke

The body of Christ has many members, each with a specific purpose. We read of this in Romans 12:4ff, “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith...” There are certain times in our lives when we have more opportunities to serve the body of Christ. When we were children, we were very important to the church, but we were not yet capable of doing large tasks on behalf of the church. Now that we are teenagers, however, we have a special calling in the church—a calling that many of us fail to see.

This calling for young people in the church involves many things, some of which are more obvious than others. Almost everyone agrees that all young people should be involved in society and fundraising for the conventions. This requires more than just showing up for society; we should come prepared and ready to participate. We should be willing to help with the fundraising too, and not come up with the usual excuse, “Sorry, I have to work.” Is that what we say when someone offers us a free ticket to a Red Wings game the same night we are supposed to work? I know I would probably do anything to get out of working so I could go to the game. We should give this amount of effort towards young people’s activities too.

There are other callings for young people besides society. II Peter 1:7, 8 shows that part of being a godly person is helping out other Christians: “And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” Young people should be concerned for the elderly in the church, taking the time to visit them or send a card. Also, some things can be done even closer to home. Helping our family members is a calling many young people forget about. We tend to think that this is the fun time in our life, and we neglect our responsibilities at home.

Our calling as young people is special because we are at an age in which we have fewer responsibilities than adults. Homework, sports, and jobs do not take up *all* of our time. This is proven by the many students who go to basketball games, the mall, and friends’ houses on the weekends and even on school nights. We find it so easy to make time for the things that we want to do. We need to try harder at making time for the church. As teenagers we are at a time in our life when we have so much energy. Much of this energy should be geared toward the work of Christ in the body of believers.

Many of us might be thinking, *I really do not have the time or energy, and I’m tired all the time. When I have some spare time, I would rather sleep or something.* This might be true, but we need to ask ourselves, why are we tired? Is it because we stayed up late with our friends on the weekend, or did not get to bed on time because we were on the Internet or watching television? We as Christians are blessed with many precious gifts, and one of these gifts is time. We need to use it wisely. What about Sunday afternoon? Do we really need to take a nap? We find it so easy to make time for ourselves; we need to stop making excuses and start making time for others.

There are so many areas in which we can aid fellow believers. We can help out at school, church, home, or many other places. Our calling is not limited to just the people at our specific church; it involves the whole body of Christ! Romans 12:13 states, “Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.” So we need to take the time to help our mothers set the table, teach a fellow classmate how to do a difficult math problem, and spend a few hours playing with younger siblings.

The key to our calling is taking the time to be with the people of God and to be aware of their needs. This does not mean that we cannot spend any time with friends.

After all, good, Christian friends are part of the body of Christ too! It is important to do things with people of our same age group, but we need to be careful not to do things that are a detriment to the church. Watching a movie or drinking alcohol are not good ways to fellowship with our friends. These are hindrances to the church, not aids. Instead, we need to talk to our friends or play card games with them. We should not just sit around looking for trouble, because that is when young people easily fall into sin that they will later regret. We should surround ourselves with strong Christians who will keep us on the right track and help us in our calling in the church.

Sure, it is not easy to make time for the church, but it is the right thing to do.

Because God's kingdom is not of this world, we should spend the majority of our lives serving Him and His people. So much of our time is wasted on the things

of our earthly, temporary home. We must strive to be busy, laying up treasures in heaven where they will last for an eternity.

In order to fulfill these spiritual goals we must depend on each other. The Bible shows this in Isaiah 41:6, "They helped every one his neighbor; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage." The young person's calling will only be successful if there is a love for God and a passion to be an active member in His church. We are unique young people, set apart from the world, and by our calling one should be able to see our love for God and His people. ❖

Rachel is a member of Georgetown Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan. This article was written as a senior writing assignment at Covenant Christian High School.

Church Family

Telling a Brother His Fault

by John Marcus

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

Matthew 18:15-17

It happens often in the Church of Christ that a brother (or sister) sins against another. When Matthew 18:15 says, "if thy brother shall trespass" it means to indicate a high probability that such will happen. Because it happens often, a minister or teacher must instruct God's

people, young and old, as to their duty when it does happen. Not only must we teach the duty to tell the brother his fault; we must also give the principles to be followed when admonishing a brother.

The text in Matthew clearly indicates that we have a *duty*; "if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault." God does not give us a suggestion here; rather the words 'go' and 'tell' are both imperatives. Thus, there is a sacred duty to go to the brother who has trespassed against us; that is, the brother who has sinned against us. We may not sit back and become bitter and resentful against the brother for what he has done. Nor may we go and tell our friends and family what they have done to us; for this will only tend to ruin the good name of the brother. Scripture is very clear that such backbiting is sin.

On the other hand, the duty to go and tell the brother his fault does not mean that every time someone does or says something that strikes us the wrong way, we must confront that person. The duty to go to the brother is in force when a brother has trespassed against us. Thus, we must be certain that they have actually sinned against us. This is the first principle of admonition: be sure we are reproofing the brother for sin. This almost goes without saying; but it has happened that one brother reproofs another for what is not actually sin. For example, setting the thermostat too low at church is not a sin unless it was done with an evil intent. The standard of whether something is a sin or not must be Scripture. If Scripture does not condemn their action as sin, then neither may we. In addition, we must be certain that the brother has actually *committed* a sin. For example, we may not judge a person guilty of sin based on what we think they might have been thinking when they made a particular comment. In such a case, if the matter were serious enough, one ought to go and speak to the brother to find out exactly what they meant. But, if an actual sin is not involved, then clearly we have no business reproofing a brother.

Secondly, when it is certain that the brother has sinned, then we must *go to them*. We ought to physically go to speak with the brother. This may not be possible, for example, if they live on the other side of the world; then a phone call will have to do. If that fails, then a letter could be sent. But, the force of the text is that we ought personally to go to the brother.

The third principle of admonishing a brother is that we go *privately* at first. The order set down in Matthew 18 is binding upon God's people. We must go privately first because this is the way to preserve the good name of the brother. Keeping the matter in as small a circle as possible will tend to the greater good of the brother and also the church. If the brother will not repent, then we ought to take one or two witnesses that "every word may be established." But this second step should not happen after our talking to the brother only once. Rather, we must speak with the brother multiple times before proceeding to the next step. Only after we see that the brother is not showing any signs of repenting ought we proceed to the next step.

In the fourth place, when we go to the brother, we must *tell the brother his fault*. That is, we must expose to them their sin in order to convict them of it. This is what Nathan the prophet did to David; he went to David with words that showed David his sin. In order to bring

the brother to repentance, we must show him what he did against us, and that his action is condemned by Scripture. Scripture is the only standard by which we may judge whether someone has sinned. This means that we ought not bring men opinions when we are trying to convict of sin. It will do no good simply to assert that some man thinks what you did was a sin, and therefore you must repent. Opinions of men carry no power or authority. Only the Word of God has the power to convict a man of sin. If we truly seek repentance in the brother, then we will bring to him the words of his Shepherd; His voice he will hear.

The motive for telling the brother his fault is *to gain him*. We may not go with selfish or evil motives; say, to drive a weaker brother from the church whom we don't like. The ultimate goal of telling the brother his sin is to bring him to repentance. The repentance we seek ought to be toward us. But primarily, we seek that the brother be reconciled to God. Though a brother sinned against us, we must seek his reconciliation. This is a motive born out of love for the brother. The brother, with us, is a member of the Church and thus of Christ's body. As both of us have been brought to peace with God, we inevitably desire to live at peace with all God's people. I John 4:20 *If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* If we love God, we will also certainly love the brother, even the brother who has sinned against us. Loving him, we will desire his good. But the good of the brother who has sinned will only come by way of his repentance. Thus, our motive to gain him is accomplished by way of his repenting over his sin.

In the next place, we must go to our brother *in humility*. Though we, with our erring brother, are members of Christ's body, nevertheless sin still wars in our members. Even though the new man rules in us, and is made more and more alive, still the old man of sin remains. The sin of the brother against us, and our own sin, is due to the depravity of nature that always cleaves to God's people. It is inevitable, but that a brother at some point in time will sin against us. The brother who sins against us must be viewed in the knowledge that we are sinners just as they are.

The humility with which we approach our brother means that we will also be ready to confess our own faults to the brother. It is often the case that a brother's sin against us was provoked by our own sin against them. Thus, when we go to a brother, it is good that we begin

by admitting our own sin against them. This also serves the purpose of showing them that we are not coming in pride and to condemn; but rather that we come humbly to restore them.

All the above presupposes that we go to the brother with a willingness to forgive them. This is also the context of the text we quoted above. Peter asks Jesus “How oft shall by brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” (Matt. 18:21). Jesus answers, “I say not thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven” (18:22). Then Jesus gives the parable of the unforgiving servant. Though the king forgave him much, he would not forgive even a little. In the end, the king condemned him. As the catechism puts it, “even as we feel this evidence of Thy grace in us, that it is our firm resolution from the heart to forgive our neighbor” (Heidelberg Catechism Lord’s Day 51). Christ has forgiven us much indeed; how shall we not desire to forgive our brother the relatively small debt incurred by the sin he has committed against us?

Failing to convert the brother from his erring way, after repeated admonitions, we will take witnesses who will be able to judge the rightness of our cause in seeking to gain the brother. Only after seeking the brother’s repentance repeatedly with witnesses, ought we to bring the brother’s case to the church. Always with the motive for going through these steps is to bring the brother to reconciliation with us and with God.

This is the way of Scripture. Following this way is never easy. But, it will bear fruit. It will be a savor of life unto life to them who are God’s people and a savor of death unto death to the reprobate. May ministers and teachers instruct God’s people to follow this way. ❖

John is a member of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church in Byron Center, Michigan. He wrote this article for the Protestant Reformed Scholarship.

Called To Be Saints

*Could there be a greater blessing
Ever given mortal man
Than to know he has a calling,
One that’s even higher than
That of angels, who attend him—
Though they heav’nly creatures be—
They protect sons of the Father—
Sons and daughters—you and me.*

*Oh, how great a love has bought us
While in filth, depraved, we stood.
He has cleansed us through the life-blood
Of His Son, the only good.
What a glorious, holy calling:
To be saints, who sinners are;
Let us strive to walk each moment
Consciously within His care.*

*If we truly seek to serve Him
We will turn from sinful ways,
And the words we speak will ever
Echo our Redeemer’s praise.
Every wicked thought dispelling,
Let’s proclaim His grace abroad,
For we have a high vocation—
Called to be the saints of God.*

Thelma Westra

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Chester Hunter

December 1 Read Obadiah 1:1-4; 17-21

Here in this reading we see the difference between Esau (Edom) and Jacob. We see that one's end is destruction and the other's is deliverance. From where does this difference come? Is it because God looked into the future and saw that one nation would be terrible and therefore must be destroyed? Did He see the good works of the other and delivered them from bondage? No, this is the idea of foreseen faith and can never be the answer. The difference is grace. By grace Jacob was delivered from his sin (and he was a terrible sinner like Esau) and was delivered unto holiness. This is the doctrine of double predestination. Esau was predestined unto destruction and Jacob unto deliverance. By grace we, too, have this deliverance. Let us lift up our voices in praise and prayer for this deliverance. Sing Psalter 99.

December 2 Read Jonah 1:1-10

God's omnipresence is something we know about even when we are very young. Our mothers have told us that God sees us no matter what we do. He knows when we sin even when father and mother are not around. Young people, do you still believe in God's omnipresence? Is He present in your cars as you set the radio station? Is He present in your cars on Friday night as you go about with your entertaining with your friends? Jonah thought he could hide from God by leaving Israel and going into the hold of the ship. What about us? Do we think we can hide from God? We need to consider this attribute of God and live lives that show that we not only know about it but also believe it. If we do not, we can rest assured that our sins will find us out. Sing Psalter 384.

December 3 Read Micah 1:1-9

The people of Judah exhibited many sins which made them worthy of destruction. As we read through the Bible, we can only shake our heads in dismay at their deeds. But wait! Judah is just like us. Our list of misdeeds makes the angels weep every day. We are no better than they. We, too, deserve the destruction of hell. But in spite Judah and our sins, God brings salvation to us. He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross for our deliverance. As we look toward Christmas, we must not just see a babe in a manger. We must ponder the Savior on the cross. It was our sins which put Him there. Let us remember this during this season of the year. Sing Psalter 106.

December 4 Read Nahum 1:1-8

What kind of feelings do you receive about the word jealous? Are they the negative connotations that arise so often because of what we might think another person has done to us? Or are they the positive ideas of protecting someone or their honor as found in the second commandment? Here in these verses we find that God is jealous towards His people. Assyria and its chief city Nineveh had put Israel to shame. Yes, they were the tools in God's hands against His sinful people. But the Assyrians had not carried out their work with God's glory in mind. They had come up against the church as Satan and his hosts like to do. God is jealous for His people. He will stand up for them. He will deliver them from all foes including that foe of foes, Satan. Let us be thankful for the God who is jealous for His people. Let us be jealous for the honor of His name. Sing Psalter 182:1-5.

December 5 Read Habakkuk 1:1-12

The book of Habakkuk was written during the period just before the captivity. The prophet is trying to show that God's ways are best even though it looks disastrous for the children of God. Judah could not understand that God was sending the Chaldeans to fight against them and take them into captivity. How could God do that to them? What about us? Do we rebel against God's ways? Do we think His ways are incorrect? Young people, do you ask the question "Why?" of God, when you think you know better? God's ways are good, people of God. Let us consider those ways and the goodness He shows to us even in those ways. Let us live lives of patience waiting upon Him to deliver us. Sing Psalter 211.

December 6 Read Zephaniah 1:1-7

Are we ready for the marriage feast of the Lamb? Are we ready for the day of Jehovah as spoken about in the seventh verse of today's reading? This will be a day worth waiting for! But it will be a day for which we must be prepared. God will come with the host of heaven dividing the sheep from the goats. All of our works will be manifest to God and to us. Are we watching for that day? Do we wish that day to come? As we live lives on this earth, they must be lives of those waiting for the day of Jehovah. They must be the antithetical life of one whose robe is washed in the blood of the Lamb. How are we living, people of God? How are

you living, young people? Are we ready for the day of the Lord? Sing Psalter 96.

December 7 Read Haggai 1:1-6

What is our zeal for the house of God? This was the question Haggai asked the people of Judah after they returned from captivity. This is the question we must answer each day as we go to God in prayer. What is our zeal for the house of God? Judah had to have a zeal to build a temple because they needed it in order to worship as God had commanded them. We need a different type of zeal. This zeal must be for the spiritual house of God. Were we prepared for church last Sunday? Are we preparing ourselves for church next Sunday? This is the calling that we have towards the house of God. We must be ready to worship, and we must be ready to worship our God in spirit and in truth. Are we zealous for the house of God, people of God? Sing Psalter 350.

December 8 Read Zechariah 1:1-6

One theme which is prevalent in the Holy Scriptures is repentance. God's people of all ages need to hear the call to repent. We must turn from our wicked ways and ask our heavenly Father to forgive us our sins. We need to do this daily. Each prayer that we utter should include a petition that God will forgive those sins that we have committed. Young people, is this part of your public and private prayers? As you pray before you eat do you ask for forgiveness? Do you repent of your sins as you enter God's presence in prayer? Turning from evil ways is necessary for every child of God. Let us turn unto God knowing that He will turn unto us. Sing Psalter 83.

December 9 Read Malachi 1:1-11

One theme found in this final book of the Old Testament is that of proper worship. Worship is an activity which is commanded by God. Worshiping as He has commanded us in His word is the only manner of proper worship. In the church world around us are found many different manners of worship. Some we would call improper worship. But we must examine our own worship. Is it proper worship? Would we rather worship in our own way rather than in the God-ordained manner found in the Bible? Would we rather sing songs which praise man rather than praise God? Israel of old was guilty of improper worship. Let us be careful that this sin be not laid at our door. Let us worship God properly in spirit and in truth. Sing Psalter 137.

December 10 Read Matthew 1:1, 16-25

Matthew 1 begins with the genealogy of Christ and then goes on to tell of His birth. Several of His names are also given in this chapter. First we have Jesus-Jehovah Salvation. What a name full of comfort for us. We have the covenant name of God along with Christ's wonderful work for us. Then we have Emmanuel-God with us. With God with us what do we fear? As we continue in this month of cel-

ebration of Christ's birth. Let us celebrate the birth of the true Christ who saved us from our sins. Let us be comforted that God is truly with us. Sing Psalter 243:1-5.

December 11 Read Mark 1:1-8

Each of the gospels tells about the beginning of Jesus's life in a different way. Here in Mark we see the work of the forerunner announcing that the king is coming. He announces about the work of Christ and that preparation includes the forgiveness of sins. This is not the Christ that many people are celebrating during this season of the year. They like tinsel and holly and not forgiveness and holiness. What about us? What are we celebrating? Would we receive a man dressed in animal skins announcing the arrival of the King of Kings? Let us pray for the return of this king whose coming to this earth was for our salvation through the death on the cross. Sing Psalter 243:6-10.

December 12 Read Luke 1:26-38

Probably the most familiar of the Christmas accounts are those found in the gospel of Luke. Quite often we overlook some very significant facts about the incarnation. Do we ponder on the fact of Jesus's lineage for very long? Do we see what it means for us? I think Mary did. You read that not only here but also in Luke 2. Because of Mary's position in history, she did not understand all which she saw. But she believed the announcement and she saw in her son the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. From our place in history we can see and must understand more. Do we? Sing Psalter 243:11-15

December 13 Read John 1:1-14

In this chapter we find more names for Christ. Here we see Word and Light. How do we receive the Word and the Light? What was our reaction to the Word preached yesterday? Do we seek the Light to show us the correct way through this world of darkness? The world does not want to hear the Word of whom they sing during this time of the year. They have no spiritual joy in the birth of Christ. Their way is not lightened by the true light. What about us? Are we different? Let us remember the true Word and the true light as we go through this season. Sing Psalter 325.

December 14 Read Acts: 1:1-11

Christ's work did not finish with birth. He also lived a life of suffering on this earth, suffered the accursed death on the cross, was buried, and He miraculously arose from the dead. But that was not all. Here in the first chapter of Acts we read that He ascended into heaven. There He sits at God's right hand making intercession for us and preparing for us mansions in heaven. From there He will return on the clouds of glory and take us unto Himself. By faith we must believe all this. Do you, people of God? Do you, beloved young people? By God's grace alone we can believe all this and await His triumphant return. Sing Psalter 183.

December 15 Read Romans 1:1-6

One of the most exciting times in our lives is to be called for something. To hear the call to a good meal. To be called with some good news. To hear a child call for us out of love. These are all good kinds of calls. But there is a better kind of calling. That is the calling of God which calls us out of darkness into His marvelous light. This is the call that we hear with the ear given to us by grace alone. This is the call which gives to us the new life in Christ. This is the call from which there is no turning. Let us be thankful for this call and let us live lives of thankful obedience for such a call. Sing Psalter 330.

December 16 Read I Corinthians 1:1-9

God's faithfulness to us is found throughout the pages of Scripture. This faithfulness is found in Genesis, is repeated over and over in the Psalms, and is found in the New Testament as well. As Paul writes to the church in Corinth and to the church of all ages, he writes of this faithfulness. Because God is faithful, we can be assured in our salvation. This is an assurance that cannot be found in any of man's institutions. This is a faithfulness which is only found in God and in His work of salvation for us through Christ. Let us be thankful as we live lives sanctified by the Spirit. Sing Psalter 241:1-3.

December 17 Read II Corinthians 1:1-7

One gift of God which the child of God relishes is that of comfort. This world is full of misery. There is the misery of death. Even though death is the gateway to glory, it can bring to us misery as the earthly ties to a loved one is broken. There is the misery of sin. Each of us has felt that throughout our lives in its various forms. There is the misery caused by the wicked in the world. The list can go on and on. But amid all of the misery is the comfort afforded to us by our heavenly Father. God is the God of all comfort. He will sustain us in this world of misery. Let us remember that and bring our cares to Him for "He careth for us." Sing Psalter 52.

December 18 Read Galatians 1:1-10

Do we follow Christ's example of being a servant? Christ did that for us. He gave not only of Himself, but He gave Himself for us. Do we give both of ourselves and ourselves for Christ and His work? Are we His servants? There are many ways in which we can serve in Christ's kingdom. It is not only those in the special offices that are called to serve. Each of us is a priest and must serve our God. Let us remember to serve and to even wash our brother's feet as we live our lives of service in the kingdom of God. Sing Psalter 371.

December 19 Read Ephesians 1:1-10

Here in this chapter we have the long introduction which teaches us about the spiritual blessings afforded to us. These blessings are not given to us because we were better than

anyone else. These blessings were not ours because of some inherent goodness in us. These blessings come from the good pleasure of God. These blessings are for His glory and not ours. People of God, do you look for the day in which all those chosen by God in Christ will be together? We should for then we will see the sum of the spiritual blessings given to the elect by our covenant God. Consider the wonder found in this chapter and then we will know the true meaning of Christmas. Sing Psalter 166:1-4.

December 20 Read Philippians 1:1-11

Reread verse six again... Do you have that confidence, people of God? Confidence is a word bandied about by many in today's world. Men put their confidence in many things. Are any of them as sure as the confidence that we have in God? Do we have a confidence that will last a lifetime? We can have that confidence in God because He works that confidence in us by faith. That in itself is a wonder. God worked in us weak sinners a confidence which is unshakeable. Let us thank Him for it now and daily. Sing Psalter 73:1-3.

December 21 Read Colossians 1:1-12

Do we pray for our fellow Christians? Paul in verse 9 makes mention that he prays for his Christian brothers. Do we? What does he pray about? Is it just daily needs? Is it just for help through some difficulty? No, it is more than that. He prays for their spiritual lives and their very salvation. Do we pray for those things for each other? As members of the church of the living God, as members of that living organism, we need to pray for the spiritual needs each of us has. Let us consider each others spiritual needs and let us bring them before the throne of grace in prayer. Sing Psalter 369.

December 22 Read I Thessalonians 1:1-10

Paul in his work with the church at Thessalonica had to work with their ideas about the return of Christ. They had many mistaken ideas about the end times and this was causing problems in their daily lives. In a way this is no different from today. There are those who have false ideas about the end times. It is easy for us to be taken in by these ideas because they give to us a security about what will happen. But it is a false security. It is false because it is not what God has told us in His Word. Let us study and know about the end times. Let us be watching and faithfully waiting for the return of Christ. Sing Psalter 139:1-4.

December 23 Read II Thessalonians 1:1-12

Paul continues with his discussion about the end times. At the close of this chapter he states that the purpose of our knowing and understanding the truth about those times is that so the name of Christ might be glorified. This is the song of the angels. This is the testimony of Scripture from cover to cover. This must be characterized by our lives here on earth. Christ's name is made light of in the world today.

In fact there are places and times in which its true use will bring persecution to the use while blasphemy is accepted. These are all signs of the times. Let us watch and see the signs and glorify the name of Christ. Psalter 352.

December 24 Read I Timothy 1:1-11

How do we treat the Word of God? How do we speak about it with others? This is the topic of much of I Timothy. There were those who brought a false gospel to the church. Timothy in his ministry had to deal with their false teachings. This is our lot in life today. Young people, do you recognize the false teachings around you? Are you ready to defend the true meaning of the Word? Read what Paul has to say in this book to the young preacher and learn to use it as you live in this world. Do not be guilty of twisting the Word to make it mean what you wish for it to mean. Use it in truth and to help you walk in truth. Sing Psalter 322.

December 25 Read II Timothy 1:1-9

Young people and children of the covenant, reread the words of verse 5. As you visit your parents or grandparents today, thank them for the Word which they have taught you or made it possible for you to have taught to you. That which you learned when you were very young embodied the truths found throughout the Bible for most of you. Those early lessons taught you by God-fearing mothers and grandmothers will stand you in good stead in this world of sin and woe. Take time today to thank them for teaching to you about the true meaning of Christmas. Sing Psalter 89.

December 26 Read Titus 1:1-9

Titus is another young preacher to whom Paul instructed in the work of the ministry and in the good order in the Church of Christ. One area in which instruction was given was the work of the elders. As we look toward the new year and, as is the custom for many of us, new elders; it is good that we consider the work of these men which we should esteem highly. Their work is to watch over our souls. Do we receive them in this way? Do we seek out these watchmen and seek their good counsel for our lives? Young people, be thankful for faithful elders. Seek their sound exhortation as you take your place in the body of Christ the church. Sing Psalter 133.

December 27 Read Philemon 1-8

Do we have the same love Philemon did for the saints? Philemon was not only one who knew the doctrines; he lived the doctrines. Do we do that? How about you, young people? Do you reflect the same love that Christ has for you to those around you? Is it reflected to all those who are around you? Christ chose us miserable sinners. Our condition was such that we should be shunned by the perfect One. But by His love He chose us. How do we thank Him? Is it by showing love to all those around us or only to some? Think about that and then go and live a life that is pleasing to God in this matter. Sing Psalter 370.

December 28 Read Hebrews 1:1-8

People of God, in these last days of 2004 are we listening to God as He speaks to us? Do we hear him on the Sabbath? Do we hear Him in His Word? Do we hear Him in creation? Do we hear Christ? We had better hear Him because He is speaking to us. Sometime He uses the still small voice like a quiet breeze. Sometimes He uses booming thunders or volcanoes to speak to us. Do we listen? As we close this year let us say with Samuel, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." Then we will hear His comforting voice saying, "Fear not, I will be with you and will uphold you even unto the end." Sing Psalter 139:1-4.

December 29 Read James 1:1-12

People of God, how patient are we? Are we patiently waiting the day of the Lord? Are we patient throughout all of the trials and tribulations that God has brought upon us in this past year? This is a patience that only a few have in this life. This is a patience that only those who are the called of God have. But this is a patience which must be exercised. It is a patience in which the wisdom of God must be sought and used. But it is a patience which has a beautiful reward. This patience will be rewarded with the crown of life in the new heavens and earth. Let us patiently endure all affliction as we await this reward. Sing Psalter 101.

December 30 Read I Peter 1:1-9

Peter echoes the words of James in this epistle to the church in his day and in ours. He, too, reminds us to be patient as we await the will of God for us. Like all of the Scriptures the message is one. Wait, people of God, wait patiently upon Jehovah. We may have had trials in this past year. We may have trials in the next year. But each of these trials serves to draw us closer to our Lord. Each of these trials allows us to see more clearly Christ's appearing. Let us wait for the end of our faith-the salvation of our souls. Sing Psalter 150.

December 31 Read II Peter 1:1-8

These are good words for us to read as we come to the end of another year. They point out to us the great value which comes from the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a knowledge that can be found in any college in this land. This knowledge will not come from any occupation devised by man. This knowledge will not be gained though any sort of entertainment. This knowledge comes only from God. This is a knowledge given only to those who are washed in the blood of Christ. As we end this year let us seek this knowledge and let us walk in it until Christ returns. Sing Psalter 72.

A Solitary Advent, Not Lonely

by J. P. deKlerk

Ruth had almost forgotten that during the last day at school she had entered her name for giving moral support to patients in the local hospice. Therefore when there was a telephone call for her this chilly winter morning she did not expect this sudden request at all. She stammered, “Yes, indeed madam, Ruth Van der Laan speaking, but...oh, yes, of course, I will come...yes madam, three o’clock this afternoon suits me...yes, oh, very well. And thank you.”

She was not prepared to fulfill this request just before Christmas Day, though it was possible. If you made a promise, you had to face the consequences, whenever that would be. Of course.

Outside it snowed, and a strong wind howled around the house in Arnhem. Her father was upstairs working on his sermons, Mother and Ruth’s sister Lea were busy in the kitchen.

The message had been simple. There was a young Christian woman in the hospice, all alone in a room. She was going to die of cancer. Dina Klinkenberg had no parents anymore, no brothers or sisters, no other relatives or friends. She had been in an overcrowded hospital and was sent to De Aronskelk where the staff was used to “these cases.”

Ruth did not want to disturb her father by asking for his advice. A bit nervous, she stood before the window biting at her lower lip, looking at the snowflakes that began piling up on the windowsill. The light was strange and grayish.

Ruth got her rubber boots ready and took her pocket Bible from the music stool. She took two candles and a piece of holly, which she had picked from the garden yesterday.

She prayed and asked God to give her wisdom.



“Your visitor is here,” said the nurse and stepped aside. Ruth entered and closed the door behind her.

She saw a snug room and gazed at the sound face with a kind smile. The patient had a guinea pig on her lap which was nibbling on a piece of salad. How many people might have considered that this young woman might be lonely—one or two perhaps? Ruth could not move indifferently through a world where people suffered and were forgotten.

She looked at the half closed curtains, and then she met the eyes of Dina Klinkenberg.

“Don’t think that I have pain,” she said. “I know that the Lord is waiting for me, and I will forever be with Him. I don’t know when it will happen. Pity, I cannot take this lovely creature with me. Do you mind taking care of her when I have to leave?”

Ruth looked surprised at her, swallowed quickly and said, “Yes, of course, I will do that. By the way, my name is Ruth Van der Laan.”

“I know. I’m glad they found someone my age willing to sacrifice time for me. Everyone who I knew has gone. I have more time to think about what was going on. I have a tumor in my head and I have had two operations. They cannot do more.”

Ruth was dumbfounded for a moment, but took her vanitybag and grabbed in it until she found the two candles, the holly and a piece of ribbon.

“I don’t know what you are used to and I am not handy, but I thought I should at least give you something. Would you like it if I put this somewhere in your room?”

Dina nodded, obviously grateful. Their eyes met with great tenderness. Then she said, “Ruth, that is very thoughtful of you. There is an empty candleholder on that cabinet in the corner. If you want to light the candles, there is also a matchbox there.”

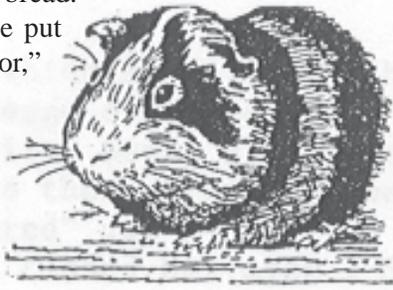
Ruth fought to keep her feelings under control, but her fingers



trembled. It was clear to her that she could have been Dina facing death. In theory she knew it all so well, but now she was suddenly confronted with the reality of life and death. Dina looked so content, so calm, so happy. Would she be able to act like that? She lit the candles and put the holly next to it. Then she looked into the wooden box filled with hay and straw that was on an old chair. She saw baskets with water, mixed grain, a carrot and a piece of brown bread.

“She must not be put too close to the radiator,” said Dina. She likes to keep herself warm.”

Ruth took her coat off and asked, “Can I sit here, opposite you?”



“Oh, of course, I have bad manners. Go ahead, sit in that easy chair,” answered Dina. The little guinea pig licked her fingers.

From the corridor came the sound of muffled footsteps.

“I was in training to become a nurse, but I often became dizzy and I got headaches,” related Dina. “For some time I had a boyfriend, but I noticed he was not really a Christian. He stopped going with me to church, and he started to criticize everything that had to do with religion. So, I had to break up with him. Do you have a boyfriend?”

“No,” answered Ruth. “I am in my first year studying law at the university. My father is a minister. I know some boys and girls, mainly because I am a member of a youth society of the church. I am the secretary and organize some of the events. I joined a choir, but I discovered that my voice is not good enough and I did not want to pull the others down with my poor efforts.”

Dina smiled and shook her long brown hair. “My head is bald, because of the treatment, but they gave me a wig—close to my hair color and style.... Ruth, sorry, I feel tired and would like just to rest a while on my bed. Keep talking. Could you put my little companion in her house?”

Ruth did as she was asked. The guinea pig quickly started drinking some water. Ruth stroked her gently with a finger over her head. Then she went back to the chair. She noticed that Dina was lying on her back on the bed in the middle of the room, with her hands folded.

With a light trembling in her voice she said, “Would you read Luke 2 for me? My eyes have not been very good for the last couple of weeks.”

“Of course,” answered Ruth, and took her pocket Bible out of her bag. The guinea pig gave a peeping sound.

Ruth felt a strange tension and cleared her throat. She was not yet in what many people called the Christmas mood. Never before had she been in such a position as at this moment. She started reading:

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered...

Ruth looked up and she saw that Dina had closed her eyes. She continued reading:

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

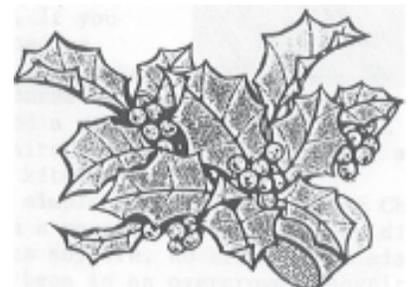
And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night...

She stopped. She thought that if Dina had fallen asleep, she should not disturb her by talking. But, somehow she wondered...

Ruth went to the bed, felt Dina’s pulse...but there was none. She quickly pushed the alarm bell on the wall.

It was clear what had happened. Dina Klinkenberg had gone home. ❖

J. P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from Ashhurst, New Zealand.





The More Sure Word

by Rev. Angus Stewart

Last time we saw that the Bible is God's mighty sledgehammer which He uses to shatter the rock in pieces (Jer. 23:29). Over the next few months we shall consider some of the qualities of the Holy Scriptures from the book of II Peter.

In II Peter 1:16-18, Peter writes about Christ's transfiguration. The effulgence of Christ's face and garments speak of the "majesty" (16) and "honour and glory" (17) that is His as the incarnate Son of God (cf. 17). This majesty, honour and glory shall also be manifest at Christ's second "coming" (16).

Peter tells us that he was an eyewitness (16) of Christ's transfiguration. He saw Christ being transfigured with his own eyes (16-17). He heard, with his own ears, the voice from the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (17). Peter was a credible witness. He had preached of Christ's glory for thirty or so years and was willing to die in this faith (13-15).

There are only two options. Either Peter (and Matthew, Mark and Luke who record Christ's transfiguration in their gospel accounts) made the story up simply in order to magnify Jesus—and then the scoffers whom Peter was opposing were right, the transfiguration is only a "cunningly devised" fable (16) —or Peter is telling the truth. By the Holy Spirit, we receive Peter's eyewitness testimony as trustworthy and sure.

But, writes Peter, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy" (19). Peter's eyewitness account is sure, but there is another testimony which is even more sure. This is the "word of prophecy" (19) or "scripture" (20), namely the Old Testament, especially, in this context, as it prophesies Christ's glorious second coming.

How is it that the Old Testament is more sure than Peter's witness of Christ's glory at His transfiguration? Perhaps there were some who might still have had some doubts regarding Peter's memory, for example, that there was some detail which he had forgotten or recalled incorrectly. On the other hand, there are absolutely no pos-

sible mistakes in Scripture. Scripture was infallibly written by men borne along by the Holy Spirit (21), so the very idea that it could err is to be abominated. Therefore no matter how sure Peter's recollection was—and since it was recorded in the Bible it must have been completely accurate! —the Scriptures are even more sure. If Peter wanted to consider Christ's glory, he could recall that day on the holy mount or he could turn to the law and the prophets. For Peter, although he trusted his recollection of that wonderful day, the Scriptures were even more sure.

Now if Scripture (and the Old Testament at that) is more sure than seeing Christ transfigured in the presence of Moses and Elijah and hearing God's voice from heaven, then Scripture may fairly be said to be more sure than anything else. Thus God's Word is absolutely true and trustworthy.

Higher critics slander the Bible as being filled with myths and errors, as if it consists of "cunningly devised fables" (16). Evolutionists consign Genesis 1 to the realms of pre-scientific legends. Let God's Word be true and unbelieving man a liar!

Many are convinced that the virgin Mary has appeared at Fatima or Lourdes. "People have seen her," they exclaim. Some claim that they receive direct revelation from God, outside of and apart from the Bible. "The Lord told me to do such and such," they declare. Others maintain that the worship of idols brings them nearer to God. "I have experienced this," they say, "and I ought to know!" But the Bible is more sure than man's experiences and when the Bible contradicts man's experiences, they are spurious.

We often exalt our feelings to a position above that of the Word. We say, "I won't pray because I don't feel like it." But the Bible says, "men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). We attend faithful preaching of the Word, but stop going because we think that we are getting nothing out of it. Scripture, however, commands us to "desire" the Word (I Peter 2:2). The Bible is

more sure than our feelings and so the Bible, and not our feelings, must determine what we believe and do. If your feelings determine your obedience you will be crippled as a Christian.

If your feelings determine your obedience you will be crippled as a Christian.

Scripture is also more sure than even the church fathers and Christian leaders. Ministers and elders may err but the Bible never errs. Martin Luther rightly said

that one layman armed with the Scriptures is more to be believed than all the popes and councils without the Scriptures. Nothing can be more sure than the Word of the true and living God who cannot lie. The Bible is “more sure” than all the learned books and all the religious feelings and experiences of man which are contrary to the Scriptures. Having this “more sure word...ye do well that ye take heed” (19). ❖

Rev. Stewart is a missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches to the Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Northern Ireland. This series is being reprinted with permission from the Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship website, <http://www.cprf.co.uk/>.

Consider the Creation

When I In Awesome Wonder... Michigan's Golden Coast The Battle Front: Water by Deane Wassink

One of the greatest changes in the ecosystem of Lake Michigan, and of all the Great Lakes, has occurred in the makeup of the animal life of the lake. Many different species of animals including fish, mussels, and micro-organisms have disappeared over the last two hundred years. For example, I have read about the great blue pike, long jaw cisco, deepwater cisco, and blackfin cisco, all of which are now extinct in Lake Michigan. Another species on the edge of extinction is the sturgeon. There are old stories of the gatherings of the sturgeons, those large, ancient looking whiskered monsters of lakes and rivers. They lay like logs in the river mouths so that you could cross over on their backs. Now, the sturgeons have survived, but, they are so rare that it is reported in the newspaper when they are found. They have almost disappeared because of overfishing and loss of habitat.

Many invasive species have had a tremendous negative impact on the lakes by destroying or displacing the native plants and animals. One such animal is the lam-

prey eel. It migrated up the St. Lawrence Seaway from the Atlantic and decimated the indigenous lake trout population by attaching its suction cup-like mouth to their bodies and literally sucking the life out of them. There has been an extensive and effective effort by the fish biologists to control them with sterilization, barriers, and chemicals that kill only the young eels.

Other invaders that have gotten out of hand are the zebra mussels, alewives, and gobi—to name a few of the most obvious ones.

The zebra mussels are small organisms that cling to plants, pipes, boats, driftwood—almost anything solid in the lake. They have taken over the lake and cost millions of dollars per year to deal with, especially in the water pipes of filtration plants. An interesting “benefit” is that they have filtered the water of Lake Michigan to a level of clarity that is harmful to the plant life—although it is beautiful.

As a teenager, I remember huge piles of dead and stinking alewives on the shore. These too were invaders

from the sea. Sick as it may sound, we could pop their air sacks by stepping on them and could do so without hitting the ground for hundreds of feet on the beach. As a control, salmon were brought in to eat them. This was so successful that a whole new sport fishery was born. Interestingly, the population of salmon is maintained by the yearly stocking of millions of young fish raised in special hatcheries, since it is incapable of sustaining itself.

Also, there is a new invading fish, the gobi. It is small (under six inches) bony, spiny, inedible, and highly aggressive. Its impact is only just beginning to be felt. However, it appears to be displacing the perch population. On a recent fishing expedition to the Port Sheldon pier with my boys, the only things we caught were gobies.

I could go on about cormorants, rusty crayfish, spiny water fleas, carp, and micro-organisms. I think you get the picture. It is claimed that there are now almost 170 exotic species in the Great Lakes. The fear is that we are importing foreign species when boats that sail international water take on water for ballast in one place and dump it out in the waters of the Great Lakes. The lake has changed in amazing ways—and mostly not for the better. What is done now will affect the lake for generations to come, if the Lord taries.

I am reminded of the fact that false doctrine destroys a church in much the same way as invasive species can destroy a lake. As a false doctrine multiplies by being accepted and applied in new ways it destroys the living organism of the church as it feeds on the truth of the Word of God. The church, like the water of the lake, can become corrupted and polluted, capable only of supporting invaders, destroying the truth handed down in the generations of believers. May God grant that our “water of life” may remain pure and unpolluted by the works of man.

The Battle

*The battle, Lord, we fight.
Against the lie and for the right.
We care not how the costs may grow.
Only your glory we seek to show.*

*We fight for your name's sake.
Though all our resources it may take.
We fight in love for God's only Son.
We fight for the honor of the blessed One.*

*The works of man's hand we do disdain.
We on ourselves bring only shame.
Only grace and mercy freely given,
Saves from the death for which we've striven.*

*Forgive me when I rude may be,
Thinking your glory depends on me.
As if my fight alone your glory sustains.
As if only in me your praise remains.*

*Indeed, the fight is only thine,
You alone cause your glory to shine.
A thankful heart to me, please give,
Humbly in your presence let me live. ❖*

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

Church History

Iraq—Did You Know?

Just in case you might think of Iraq only as an oil-rich nation, ruled by an evil dictator for 30 years (whether it has been supporting terrorists or not may

not be very important), here are a few important facts regarding the important history and roles that this nation has played through history.

1. The garden of Eden was in Iraq.
2. Mesopotamia which is now Iraq was the cradle of civilization!
3. Noah built the ark in Iraq.
4. The Tower of Babel was in Iraq.
5. Abraham was from Ur, which is in Southern Iraq!
6. Isaac's wife Rebekah is from Nahor which is in Iraq.
7. Jacob met Rachel in Iraq.
8. Jonah preached in Nineveh—which is in Iraq.
9. Assyria which is in Iraq conquered the ten tribes of Israel.
10. Amos cried out in Iraq!
11. Babylon which is in Iraq destroyed Jerusalem.
12. Daniel was in the lion's den in Iraq.
13. The three Hebrew children were in the fire in Iraq. (That's good news to know that JESUS has been in Iraq too as the 4th person in the fiery furnace!)
14. Belshazzar, the King of Babylon saw the "writing on the wall" in Iraq.
15. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, carried the Jews captive into Iraq.

16. Ezekiel preached in Iraq.
17. The wise men were from Iraq.
18. Peter preached in Iraq.
19. The "Empire of Man" described in Revelation is called Babylon which was a city in Iraq!
20. Abraham came from a city in Iraq—Genesis 11:31 and Acts 7:2–4.
21. Isaac's bride came from Iraq—Genesis 24:3–4 and 10.
22. Jacob spent 20 years in Iraq—Genesis 27:42–45 and 31:38.
23. The first world empire was in Iraq—Daniel 1:1–2 and 2:36–38.
24. The greatest revival in history was in a city in Iraq—Jonah 3.
25. The events of the book of Esther took place in Iraq—Esther. ❖

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10. Publication of Statement of Ownership (Publication required unless exempt from the requirement. Check one.)			
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14. Form 3526, October 2004		15. Form 3526, October 2004 (Required)	

15. Publication Title		16. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below	
BEACON LIGHTS		October 2004	
17. Extent and Nature of Circulation		18. Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		1,250	
b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation		1,250	
<input type="checkbox"/> Paid (Include paid distribution outside the United States)		739	
<input type="checkbox"/> Paid by County (Include items mailed on Form 3541 (Include publisher's paid postage copies))		212	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution		—	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS		39	
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b(1), (2), (3), (4) and (5))		1,005	
19. Free Distribution Outside the United States		98	
<input type="checkbox"/> Outside Country (List on Form 3541)		92	
<input type="checkbox"/> In County (List on Form 3541)		9	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS		17	
20. Free Distribution Outside the United States (Carriers or other means)		1	
21. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 19a and 19b)		127	
22. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 21)		1,132	
23. Copies not Distributed		118	
24. Total (Sum of 15a and 23)		1,250	
25. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 24, rounded to nearest percent)		89%	
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17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner		18. Date	
John Hutzenza Editor		10-25-2004	

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

What Am I?

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

The color of a sunset
Or dawning of a day,
I flow, but not in rivers,
I run, but not away—
Although once down the Nile
I held the current's course,
And in the moon's last hour
I'll be its shining source.

I have no mouth for speaking
And so make not one sound—
Except my cry to heaven
From righteous Abel's ground.
Of feast before the freedom
Of slaves, I was a rite,
To paint me on their doorposts
Would keep them safe that night.

I filled the bowls and basins,
As temple vessels hold,
And yearly I was sprinkled
On mercy's seat of gold.
But one day in a fury
They called me on their head.
"Be on us and our children!"
Indeed, 'twas as they said.

I covered them completely,
as ransom I suffice.
A gift no greater given—
For sin I am the price.
Though infinite in value,
I paid for only some:
The ones who God elected
Before all time to come.

So now the picture's different,
No animals are killed.
The sprinkling is of water,
By wine a glass is filled.
You drink me by believing
The Word, and signify
My spiritual presence.
Now tell me, what am I? ❖

Unscramble the words of the following verse:

"ROF TISH SI YM DOBOL FO HET WEN
"-----
NATSEEMTT, CHHIW SI DSEH RFO NAYM
-----,
ORF EHT NOISERMSI FO NISS."
-----"

Matthew 26:28

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



BEACONLIGHTS

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Randolph, WI 53956

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(UPSS046-840)

Church News

BAPTISMS

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Mark 16:16

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Josiah Calvin, son of Mr. & Mrs. Sean Hanley—
Ballymena, Northern Ireland
Julia Faye, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Russell DeVries—
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
Hayden James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bill VanOverloop—
Faith, MI
Matthew Herman, son of Mr. & Mrs. John DeVries—
Grandville, MI
Dana Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mitchell Kamps—
Grandville, MI
David Aaron, son of Mr. & Mrs. Aaron Cleveland—
Hope, MI
Jessica Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Morris—
Hope, MI
Callie Dawn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Nathan DeVries—
Hope, MI
Easton Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff VanMeeteren—Hull,
IA
Paityn Raeann, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Evan Brummel—
Hull, IA
Luke Michael, son of John and Cheryl Vlietsra—
Kalamazoo, MI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Romans 10:10

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

Rachel Elzinga—Byron Center, MI
Stacy Mingerink—Byron Center, MI

Stephanie Adams—First, MI
Jordan Eldersveld—First, MI
Tina Bodbyl—Grandville, MI
Anna Corson—Grandville, MI
Jonathan Kooiman—Grandville, MI
Lenora VanderKolk—Grandville, MI
Kerri Keizer—Hull, IA
Joel Westra—Hull, IA
Megan Bruinsma—Kalamazoo, MI
Stacy Feenstra—Kalamazoo, MI
Sonja Heys—Loveland, CO
Matt Ezinga—Loveland, CO
Dominick Gendill—Loveland, CO
Justin Griess—Loveland, CO
Raphael Neff—Lynden, WA
Emily DeJong—Peace, IL
Melissa DeJong—Peace, IL
Katie VanBaren—Peace, IL
Jacob Wiersma—Peace, IL
Luke Wiersma—Peace, IL
Deanna Meelker—Redlands, CA

MARRIAGES

"...and they twain shall be one flesh."

Matthew 19:5

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Steve Huizinga and Miss Carrie Gunnink—Byron Center, MI
Mr. Tim Hop and Miss Jill Noordhoek—Grace, MI
Mr. Brad Schut and Miss Amanda Bodbyl—Grandville, MI
Mr. Nathan Haak and Miss Michelle Engelsma—Hudsonville, MI
Mr. Todd VanBaren and Miss Beth Kooiker—Hull, IA
Mr. Jared Looyenga and Miss Jeanine Boeve—Southwest, MI