

# Beacon Lights

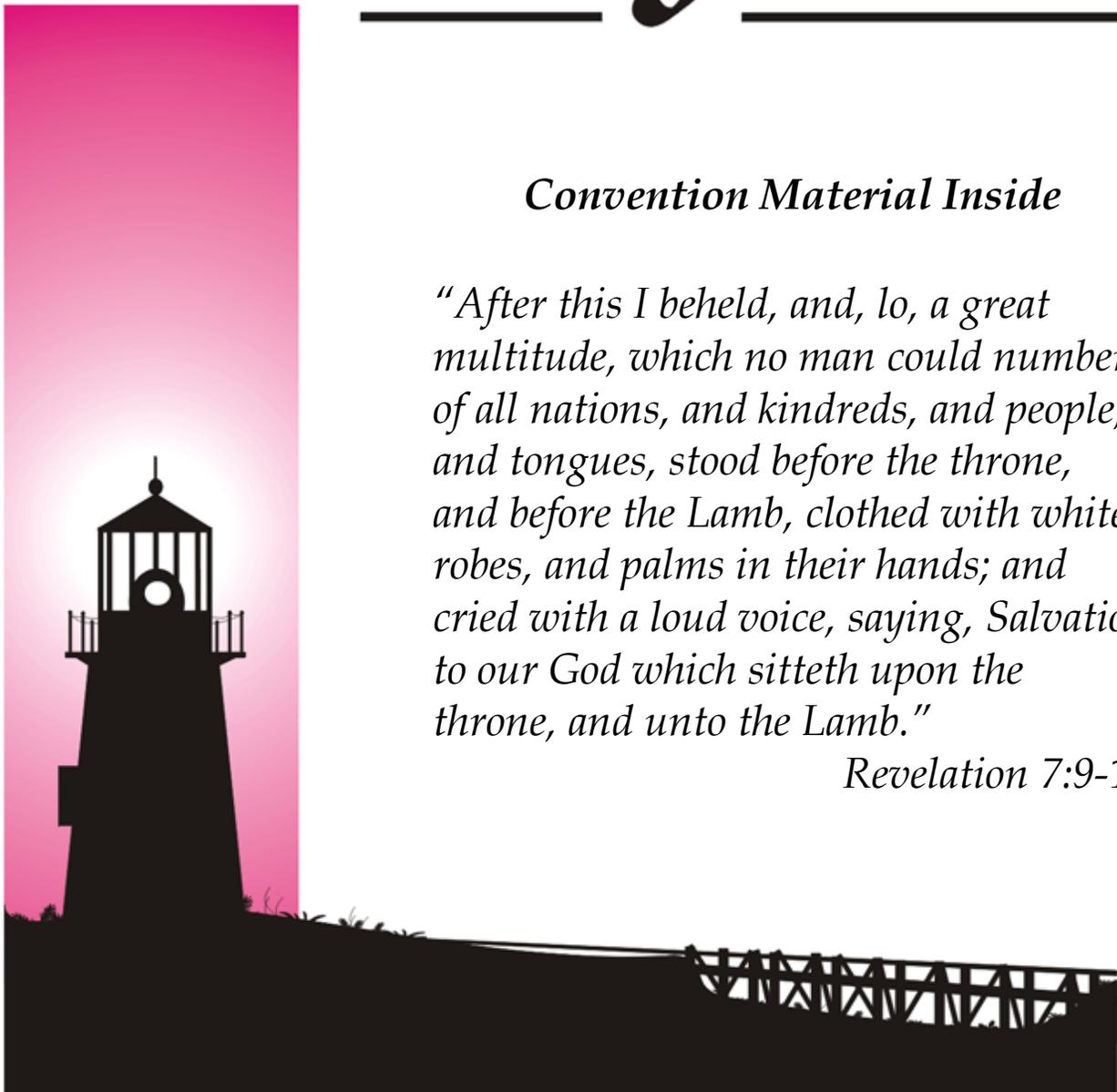
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## *Convention Material Inside*

*"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."*

*Revelation 7:9-10*



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# Editorial Note

by John Huizenga

**N**ext year, the Lord willing, will be the 70th Protestant Reformed Young People's convention. Looking back at all the conventions is to look back at a rich assortment of themes which have served to nourish our young people throughout the history of our churches. What a blessing this has been for the church. This issue includes a list of all the conventions as they have been advertised in *Beacon Lights*. We have also included some articles relating to past conventions. May the Lord bless your meeting again this year and bring forth fruits in the years to come. ❖

## Preparation for Convention 2009

by Rev. Heath Bleyenbergh

**T**he 2009 annual PRC Young People's convention is right around the corner! Trinity PRC will be hosting the convention August 17-21 on the beautiful grounds of Lake Williamson, Illinois. Are you planning to go? Maybe this is your first convention. Perhaps it might be your last. Whatever the case...are you ready?

For many of you (conventioner and chaperone alike) the past few months have been full of preparation. There have been all the fundraisers you and your fellow young people were involved with in the past year. Perhaps you've had to work more overtime this summer to help pay your way to convention. If you live out of state you need to arrange transportation to Grand Rapids.

And then there's the necessary planning immediately before you leave for convention. What do I need to pack? You look at the PRC Convention website and you see that you need to bring your Bible along. Don't forget your ball glove. You're going to need a towel to dry yourself off after a dip in the lake. Bug repellent is a must. If you plan on sleeping, a pillow and sleeping bag are required. Do you want a souvenir? Don't forget to bring along a little extra spending money.

Finally, the list is checked off! We're prepared! We're ready to go!

Or are we?

If our preparation includes only the above mentioned

items, we still would be ill-equipped. If our preparation consisted exclusively in having our registration money ready and our suitcase in hand...we would be utterly *unprepared* for convention this summer!

What's missing?

Spiritual preparation!

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**Without preparing  
ourselves *spiritually*, the  
convention will be an  
absolute waste of time.**

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Without preparing ourselves *spiritually*, the convention will be an absolute waste of time.

So let's prepare ourselves.

The first thing we must do is pray. Prayer is absolutely necessary if we plan to have a week of good fellowship with other believers our age. Before you leave for convention pray that God would grant that his name be glorified by the behavior of the conventioners. Thank God that you have the privilege of attending a convention with hundreds of others of like mind and like faith. What a blessing! Pray that God would bless the word from the speakers so that all are built up and spiritually edified. Pray that friendships may be made, friendships

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that may last a lifetime! Pray that you, personally, may be holy and godly in word and in deed. Pray for divine guidance and care over all the activities of the convention. Has not God promised that all things work together for our good? Ask of God, and in the way of our asking him he is pleased to provide.

The second way to prepare spiritually is to familiarize yourself with the theme of convention. This year's theme is *A Church Gathered From All Nations* taken from Revelation 7:9-10: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

The text gives us a description of the church of God from the beginning to the end of the world. Notice that the members thereof are "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." The church is catholic, i.e., universal! Jesus Christ is a universal Savior and Lord. He is not a Savior of one people, but of all peoples! Not of one kind of human being (poor and oppressed) but of all kinds of peoples! And with regard to this church, according to the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 21 you and I confess, "I am, and for ever shall remain, a living member thereof."

These are the kind of people that surround you at convention! Yes, most of us are of Dutch heritage but you'd be surprised if you could look far enough back in one's ancestry. Take time to meet others of the universal body of Christ at convention. Venture off into uncharted territory and strike up a conversation with someone who is different from you. Remove yourself from your close quarter of friends for a while and befriend someone from

across the country. And this should be an easy thing to do.

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**Venture off into  
unchartered territory and  
strike up a conversation  
with someone who is  
different from you.**

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Why?

Because you have this in common—you confess the same thing! What is this confession? Revelation 7:10 pictures to us this great throng crying out with one voice, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

In preparation for convention, resolve to speak to one another of the common salvation that belongs to the Lord, which he has freely given to us in Jesus Christ. Do that in your study groups. Do that in your devotions at night. Do that as you interact with others throughout the day.

Parents, help your young people prepare for convention. Help them prepare spiritually! Go over the rules of convention. Discuss with them the theme of convention. Impress upon their minds and hearts that convention is a time for spiritual fellowship! That fellowship may consist in games and activities, in eating and dining, in swimming and canoeing...but fellowship nonetheless.

Convention is right around the corner. Are you ready? Don't forget the toothbrush. Remember the flashlight. But remember this—prepare yourself spiritually—and you will have a convention you'll never forget. ❖

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*Rev. Bleyenbergh is pastor of Providence Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.*

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Where We Stand

## Missions Abroad

by Rev. B. Woudenberg\*

**S**ome years ago in Vancouver, B.C. I conducted a Bible class in a bookstore owned by a Mr. Don Robertson, an elder in the Free Presbyterian church there. One day as we were talking he told me how as a

little boy in Scotland his father had taken him to the seashore when the tide was out. There before them stretched the great tide flats with little pools of water scattered here and there; and his father said, "Donald, my lad, do you

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see those pools of water? That is what the church of God is like today, like so many pools of water scattered about over the earth. But some day the tide will come in and then ‘the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.’”

What this story reflects is the postmillennial view of the old Scotch Presbyterians; but it also serves to point out this text, Isaiah 11:9, with its great importance in the mission of the church, which again relates rather closely to our subject for tonight.

### **What Mission Work Is**

To begin with, we are going to have to settle in some way on what we mean by mission work. I do this somewhat hesitantly because I realize that others will follow me, and they may have their own ideas as to just exactly what mission work is. Each of us, however, is going to have to have some idea as to what precisely we have in mind; and in fact, I would urge that you listen carefully to each of the speeches with this question in mind, what does this speaker consider mission work to be?

In my own personal life, few questions have concerned me more than this. When I first received the inner call to enter the ministry, it was as a missionary that I sought to serve. After I entered college the first term paper I wrote was on the subject of missions; and about all I remember of it is that when all my study and writing was through I was still uncertain what set mission work apart from the other ministries of the church. And then I entered seminary; but at that time the DeWolf controversy was preoccupying the churches, and all of our efforts were put into maintaining and reestablishing the churches. There was little opportunity for mission outreach of any kind.

But still the concern remains and always with it that elusive question; what is mission work, and how is it distinct from the work of an ordinary minister?

I have suggested this question hundreds of times to others, I think, usually to fellow ministers, but few if any have tried to answer it. For the most part, I suppose, they have not taken it seriously, assuming me to be facetious; after all, we all know what mission work is, and no seminary graduate should be unable to give the definition. And it is true, I can too; but just because one can give a formal definition doesn't mean that he understands the essence of a thing or can delineate its proper extent. And so the question continues to endure: Do we really know what mission work is?

We are all agreed, of course, that mission work is the gathering of the elect church of God through the means

of the official preaching of the Word from all the nations of the world; but how does the practice of it differ from the work of the ministry within the church and within the bounds of the already established covenant, how is the work of missions distinct from the ordinary function of the ordinary pastoral ministry of the word?

I can remember at the time Rev. DenHartog had received the call to Singapore, we had a farewell for him with the ministers in GR. That night I didn't have a lot of time to talk to him personally, but I did find the opportunity to ask him this one question, Now that you are a missionary, how will this differ from being a pastor? He looked at me somewhat surprised, it seemed, and answered to the effect that he would give it some thought and write me about it later.

I suppose that in the flurry of following activities the question was forgotten. In any case, I never heard from him again on that; but a few weeks ago, when he was here on furlough, he did speak briefly for the ministers, and he gave one of the finest speeches on missions I have yet heard within our churches.

As I recall it from memory, he made three basic points:

1. Mission work must arise out of the spiritual life of the church.
2. Mission work must involve all the offices of the church, not just ministers, but also elders and deacons.
3. Mission work must include preparing all the members of the church for Christian witness.

Which finally brings us back to that question of what mission work is. I'm still not ready to give a comprehensive definition of mission work, but there are several things which can be pointed out.

1. Mission work must arise out of the working of the Holy Spirit in the organic life of the church, and that is more particularly, out of the spiritual desire of the church to be participant in the conversion of sinners. You know of how Jesus said that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety and nine who need no repentance; that same joy and longing should lie in the heart of the church, and out of it mission work must proceed. A missionary is not something unto himself; he must be sent out of the commitment and prayers of the church.

2. Mission work is the unconditional proclamation of the unconditional gospel. We all know, being Reformed in our conviction, that the gospel is the proclamation of the unconditional promise of salvation to God's elect people in Jesus Christ; but do we understand this to mean also that this gospel must then be unconditional

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in its proclamation, that is, when we go forth to preach the gospel, we are not to be asking beforehand whether those to whom we preach are the kind we think will make good Christians or good church members before we are willing to bring the gospel to them? This judgment is God's and not ours to make. Whenever a person enters our life, and that is not just into our church services of worship, but also into the life of any one of us who are members of the church, he is put there by the providence of God. And it thereby becomes our duty to witness to that person of God, and of the responsibility of sin and repentance, both in word and in the example of our deeds, always with the hope and prayer that that person may be brought to repentance and into living fellowship with the body of Christ.

3. The chief and only means of mission work is the preaching of the word, only we must realize that when it comes to mission work this preaching is not always, and maybe not usually, the formal preaching of sermons in services of worship. Back in my seminary days, Rev. Ophoff often would make the point that preaching is much broader than delivering sermons in Sunday worship, it is also to be found in the ministry of teaching catechism classes, sick visits and family visitation, in pastoral counseling, discipline calls, etc. And if we examine the life of Jesus and the apostles, it would seem that the greater part of their ministry was conducted on that level. Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, Lydia, the Philippian jailer, etc., had to be dealt with individually in light of their individual needs in life. In fact, when it comes down to it, there are very few formal sermons recorded in the New Testament Scriptures, exactly because the church of that day was very much involved with missions. And I think it was the point of Rev. DenHartog that all of our church office bearers should be ready and available to do this work when contact is made by members in the church. In turn, this should be the chief area of activity for every missionary, he should be busy providing individual and often informal instruction in the teachings of Scripture, recognizing that it is the word purely taught which is the power of God unto salvation.

4. The organizing of churches is the result and not the means of mission work. It is in this area particularly, I think, that we need to do some hard thinking. We tend to think, it seems, that mission work is the gathering of a group of people into little worship services with the hope and prayer that they will grow into a church. Now there is nothing wrong with those on the mission field doing this, it would seem that Paul did so too, but that is not mission work; the mission work is the going out

and contacting new people, calling them to repentance and life. It is from this that the organizing of a church will be the result.

### **The Scope Of Missions**

But what has this to do with missions abroad? What do we mean with that? And with this we may well go back to the text in Isaiah 11, to that beautiful promise that "the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea," for in this we have the heart of New Testament missions.

The old Scottish gentleman of whom we spoke was reflecting the classical Presbyterian concept of postmillennialism. These people were firm believers in the sovereignty of God and the principles of the Reformation. They believed in the power of the word of God as the means by which God gathers his elect people as firmly as we do. They also believed, however, on the basis of this text and others, that as time went on more and more people would be saved until this world would be dominated by a majority of Christians and thus for an extended length of time would live on earth in that beautiful state described in verses 6-9. What they failed to note was the parallel teaching of Scripture that, as the church develops through history, the powers of sin are to develop also until the final conflict in the days of the Antichrist.

Nevertheless, what we must not fail to note and appreciate is the great wonder which is pointed out by this text and by other similar prophecies—this was the wonder that came about by the coming of the rod out of the stem of Jesse.

In Old Testament times there was no such thing as mission work, that is, the sending of the church to gather people of God out of the realms of darkness. In those days God kept his covenant only in the narrow line of Abraham's descendants, all of the rest of the world was held in darkness by the deceit of Satan. But now this power is broken and the knowledge of God goes forth into all the nations of the world.

This is the great wonder that always rejoices the people of God. There is something about the subject of missions that ever captivates Christians; and it should, for it is this, the turning of sinners to repentance, the gathering of men out of darkness into light, in which the hosts of heaven ever rejoice. It is the pleasure of God and certainly must be also of his people with him.

And we in the Protestant Reformed churches during recent years have had some great and wonderful opportunities to be participant in this.

For several decades now we have had opportunity

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to work in missions in Jamaica. Although there has been much discouragement in this work, and we have often failed to pursue it with the dedication we should, nevertheless, it holds, I am convinced, a great deal of interest and support from the people in our churches. In turn, in recent years we have had the wonderful opportunity to work with the saints of Singapore. Here is a new and different thing for us, a group of over 100 young people pursuing the spread of the gospel with a joy and dedication which we can only covet and admire. And now, in more recent time yet, there has come the work in New Zealand, North Ireland, England, and also the possibility of work in Ghana.

Take just the last few months. In April, we had with us Rev. Rawson of Bransley, England telling us of his battle to defend and maintain the truth in one of the great historical bastions of the Reformation—where today less than 10% of the people can be called Christians in any sense of the word. In June, Rev. Hutton was here from North Ireland, a land which fights very much the same battle, to meet with us and to establish sister-church relations between his church and ours; and we have Deane Wassink back from Ireland where he has worked now for a year in Christian education. And then we had Rev. DenHartog in our midst giving his report on the work in Singapore and helping in establishing a sister-church relation with the young congregation there.

In turn, all of this seems to make peculiar demands upon us as Protestant Reformed churches. Although small and in many ways insignificant in the place we fill, there is one particular heritage God has given us, an unusual grasp of the scope of Christian doctrine based directly upon the word of God. And it is this particularly which all of these call upon us to share with them; certainly a unique opportunity for service in gathering the church of God.

### **The Responsibility**

All of which leaves us with a peculiar responsibility before God. Stop to look once at the striking contrast between those contacts which are laid before us—between the working of the gospel in Europe and in Singapore. In England, the battle is with a smug spiritual deadness that has settled over the land. There in that land of rich Christian history the churches are small and struggling; everything is cold and indifferent. One can hardly get people to listen or to bother. One can walk through streets where great saints of history walked and were used in great ways for the gospel, but few care any more. One can visit libraries where great volumes of some of the

richest writings of spiritual truths are stored; but few care to read them now.

And over against this there is the work in Singapore with those young people going out in zealous pursuit of spreading the gospel amidst heathen people, who meet them with concern, sometimes of open opposition, often, as Jesus promised, from their own families.

And in the middle of this we stand, a small unrecognized group of churches with an unusual responsibility. God has given to us this heritage with its riches of a sound biblical truth, and with it comes the responsibility to use it to build his church.

But what can we expect from this? We have noted the old Presbyterian view that the day would come when the whole of the world would be Christian. The problem, as we have noted, is that it is a view which did not allow for the development of sin in the world as Scripture indicates also. In turn, as we look about us we do not see sin giving way to righteousness; but rather the world is becoming ever more exceedingly sinful.

But there is also another phenomenon taking place around us, before our eyes. On the one hand there are those like Rev. Hutton and Rev. Rawson which tell how Christianity is waning in those very lands where once it showed its strength and promise. But at the same time there is what may well be the opening up of a whole new area of possible growth and development in Singapore with the possibility of a whole new era of development in China, Asia generally, and maybe even Africa.

And how are we to understand it? Maybe Rev. Hoeksema brings it out as well as any in his *Reformed Dogmatics* (p. 784), concerning the white horse of Revelation,

He did not travel at random, but had his course mapped out, from Jerusalem to Antioch, from Antioch to Macedonia and Greece and Asia Minor, from there into the very heart of the Roman world, where he hastened on over the mountains and plains of Europe, and when the time was ripe, crossing over into the Western Hemisphere. In general, therefore, the white horse ran in a westerly direction.

It may well be that we stand at a point of juncture today at which the gospel is about to make a great leap across the Pacific to a great last stand in the heart of Asia. And in it we are called to serve, to take the heritage we have and to use it both in strengthening that which remains in the land of our fathers and in promoting as we can the future hopes and promises which we see unfolding before us.

How we may best do so individually I leave to your

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further speakers; only remember this, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.” ❖

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*This article was a convention speech given at the 1985 convention which had a theme similar to our convention this year.*

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Consider the Creation

# Sawbill Lake Reflections

## Part 2

by Stephanie Van Engen

**A**nother time of reflection comes to mind as I remember our family’s little trip into northern Minnesota. As you will recall from the previous *Beacon Lights* issue there were some lessons learned from our trip that I would like to share with you.

One beautiful afternoon we were down by the lake relaxing and enjoying the unique stillness that is particular to Sawbill Lake. In awe of the stunning beauty all around us we just sat and looked at the still waters, the island in the middle of the lake, the hundreds of trees all around us and the loons bobbing in and out of the water. The view was just so different than what we see everyday where we live. The beauty was astounding, and we were thoroughly enjoying our vacation and the change of scenery it provided for a few days.

About this time I happened to look down for a moment, and there on the ground very near to my feet was a dirty used band-aid. Gross! I curled my legs up in disgust of being so close to touching that germ infected bandage. I was thoroughly disgusted and felt appalled. It was repulsive, and it spoiled the moment for me. (I felt like a loon with my feathers ruffled!)

After calming myself down, I started to think that sinners are like a dirty band-aid. God in his holiness is repulsed by our sin. We are nothing more than rotting infection, and he is perfect and lovely in every way. It gave me pause to wonder that he would love us. We, who have marred God’s beautiful creation with our sin

and even enjoy our sins, are the object of his love. That is amazing to think about.

God in his amazing love showed us how much he loved us by giving up all of his glory and taking on the punishment of our putrid sins for us. He loved us in our rottenness, and claimed us as his own children. He redeemed us with his blood, and made us heirs in heaven with him. “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:3-7).

There are other verses of course, too, which tell of God’s great love for us and how our sins have been forgiven. Many places in the Bible tell how we have been washed clean and are made new creatures in Christ. We are no longer the disgusting band-aid in God’s eyes. We are his children. We have become precious to him. We, his people, have so much to be thankful for. Praise be to God our Savior, who has redeemed us from our sins! ❖

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*Stephanie is a member of Hull Protestant Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa.*

# I Remember Herman Hoeksema: Personal Remembrances of a Great Man (10)

by Prof. David J. Engelsma

## Vignettes of a Seminary Training

*Vignette* (vin-yet): “a short descriptive literary sketch;” “a brief incident or scene” (*Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*).

**H**erman Hoeksema was an old man when I was in seminary (1960-1963). Born in 1886, he was seventy-four when I entered seminary and seventy-seven when I graduated. After my graduation, he had only two more years to live. Naturally enough, he had lost something, even a great deal, of the liveliness of the days of his great powers. He informed me once, after his criticism of my sermon at a practice preaching session, that he had “mellowed” over the years. (I breathed a silent, heartfelt prayer of thanks that I had been born opportunely.)

But he was still in possession of all his faculties, especially his theological and exegetical faculties, and he was still Herman Hoeksema.

One may have his own opinion about the merits or demerits of the ironclad law that is now in place retiring professors of theology at the Protestant Reformed Seminary at age seventy. But I bless God that no such law was yet in place from 1960 to 1963, depriving me of studying under Herman Hoeksema.

Although I was the only student the first two years and one of only two students the last year, the classes were conducted as formally as though there were a student body of a hundred. Hoeksema lectured, sticking strictly to his subject and determined to cover all the material. There was no wasting of time, or implicit diminishing of the seminary, by idle conversation.

Mostly, the lectures consisted of his reading and commenting on his own published syllabi or printed outlines. Hoeksema had the fascinating habit of reading over a glaring grammatical error in his manuscript, which in those days, before copy machines, was printed in a

primitive form, only to stop, suddenly, in his reading, in order to ponder the grammatical barbarity aloud. His tone of voice as he repeated the grammatical blunder was that of an inquisitor gravely evaluating some horrendous heresy. Invariably, he would shake his head sadly and conclude that the crime was that of some student copyist.

Of special benefit to me were the New Testament exegesis courses. The Rev. Herman Hoeksema, first and foremost a preacher of the Word of God, was a brilliant exegete (interpreter of the Bible). Upon good exegesis, he never tired of reminding me, good preaching depends. Often, the worth of the dogmatics class was enhanced by his careful interpretation of a passage of Scripture upon which the Reformed doctrine he was explaining was based. The format of the exegesis courses was that Hoeksema gave his exegesis of a passage in one class (which I wrote out word-for-word in my notebook). I read my exegesis of an assigned passage in the following class. Hoeksema would then critique my exegesis. The benefit of the course was especially the student’s observance of Hoeksema’s exegesis, not only the content of the passage, but also the way in which he went about interpreting it.

One year, he was working his way in class through the book of Philippians. I give a sample of his exegesis. Hoeksema worked with the Greek text and sprinkled his comments with the Greek words and phrases. In this sample, I use the corresponding English words and phrases. The text was Philippians 2:3: “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

The word “strife” originally was used to indicate those who ran for public office and courted popular applause by trickery and low arts. It comes from the verb meaning “to spin wool” as the attribute of a hireling. In the New Testament it has come to mean “a desire to put one’s self forward,” “a partisan and factious spirit which does not disdain low

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arts,” “rivalry,” and “ambition.” Its close associate is “vainglory,” “groundless self-esteem,” “empty pride.” In fact, ambition has its roots in vainglory. The latter is the basis of the former. Every man burns with esteem of his own worth. He values himself far above all others and thus would advance himself by any and all means to the forefront, where attention is his. And thus he envies the success of everyone else, strives with others in bitter jealousy, and rejoices at the failure and trouble of others. Such a condition among men, such concern for one’s own advance, and such magnifying of one’s own self simply are incompatible with love, sympathy, and likemindedness. Where true, spiritual love is, there will be found no factiousness and no vainglory. And it is, we notice, vainglory, glory that is mere illusion, empty pride, pride that has no content, thus no reason for being. If there were even a basis for that pride in self, it would be something. But there is no basis because all glory of man is like “the flower of the field” (Isaiah 40:6). All the esteem of a man for himself is folly, for man is a depraved creature. Only one glory has worth, only one glory provides a basis upon which man can act and which can regulate all man’s activities, and that glorying is the glorying in God. That alone is not “vainglory” but “real-glory” (here, Hoeksema did some word play with Greek terms, creating a Greek word meaning “full glory” to contrast with the Greek word translated “vainglory” in the text, which literally means “empty glory”).

Exegesis serves preaching. Hoeksema was determined to give the churches good preachers and good preaching. One requirement for good preaching, he insisted, is that preachers preach series of sermons, and not jump around in the Bible from isolated text to isolated text. Series preaching is the Reformed tradition. But Hoeksema’s reason for urging the preaching of series is intriguing. “Preaching series of sermons is preferable to random preaching,” he said. “In this way the preacher can say ‘Amen’ conscientiously.”

Prof. Herman Hoeksema welcomed questions from his student and the discussions that ensued. Questions often resulted in responses, which, though interesting, were not those that were expected. I asked him once about Erasmus’ book, *The Praise of Folly*. I had just read the book and enjoyed the humanist’s satirical attack on the Roman Catholic clergy. I expected a blistering condemnation of the Roman Catholic Church and, perhaps, some praise of Erasmus. Nothing of the sort. “Erasmus,” Hoeksema replied, “I know him. But I don’t like him. I don’t like him because, although he knew that the Ref-

ormation was right, he remained in the corrupt Roman church. And this he did for his own convenience. Men like him, I have not much use for.”

On one occasion, discussion turned a dogmatics class into a fiery debate. I was not involved. It was in December, 1961. The debate featured Hoeksema and the Rev. Prof. George M. Ophoff. Ophoff had retired in 1959. But he was still interested in theology. Twice a week, he would visit Hoeksema’s dogmatics class—alert, discerning, enjoying, and, when necessary, participating.

In this particular class, Hoeksema was lecturing in Christology. The topic was the incarnation of the Son of God and the virgin birth. Concerned to safeguard the deity of Mary’s child, as well as the sheer grace of the coming of the Son of God into the world, Hoeksema denied that Mary’s part in the conception of Christ was the production of a “seed.” This caught Ophoff’s attention. Concerned to safeguard the true humanity of Mary’s child, Ophoff insisted that something of the woman is “fructified” in the intercourse that results in conception. But Ophoff had the misfortune to call this “something” a “seed.” This put Hoeksema instantly on his guard against transgressing Scripture’s teaching that the male was excluded in the conception of Jesus Christ.

Biological confusion having been firmly established from the outset, the battle was joined. For the entire hour, the exchange was hot and heavy. In frankest terms, the two theological giants, close colleagues, and old friends delved deeply into the physiological intimacies of conception. “Seed,” “*sperma*” (so, reference was made to “sperm”), “*ovums*,” “*zygotes*,” and “*embryo*” flew back and forth across the classroom like so many bullets in warfare. Although I was the only student, for whose theological benefit, presumably, the debate was raging, I was as forgotten as though I had been on the moon. The debate became heated. Ophoff was excited, and not a little irritated. Finally, Hoeksema called a halt. “George, George, we should stop this.”

The debate had its hilarious moments. I confess that at one point in the debate I could not refrain from laughing out loud (which went completely unnoticed).

But in the minds of the antagonists, the issues were doctrinal, and deadly serious: on the one hand, the Godhead of Jesus and grace; on the other hand, his genuine humanity. I did not miss this. Everything is theological, and sound theology is essential.

The tenacious Ophoff did not give up after one inconclusive battle. Hardly had we settled into our seats at the next class than Ophoff returned to the matter of “*sperma*” and “*ovums*” in regard to the conception of

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Christ. He had been thinking and studying. This time he carefully avoided calling the “something” Mary contributed to the conception of Jesus “seed.” Ostensibly respecting his position as a guest and visitor in the class, he couched his carefully crafted argument as a question. But the question was, in fact, a long argument in favor of his position, concluding with the assertion that the Holy Spirit “took the place of the male organ” in the conception of Jesus and with the pointed question, whether the Spirit also supplied the ovary. Hoeksema did not rise to the bait. He declined to go into the matter any further, and headed off another heated debate, with the soothing words, “It is a mystery.” And so it is. Ophoff yielded.

Spiritual descendants of those two men have doctrine—*sound* doctrine—(and controversy) in their bones.

Hoeksema’s criticism in practice preaching was incisive, helpful, and sometimes biting. He may have mellowed by my day, but he retained a tang. Criticizing my sermon on I Peter 1:3, Hoeksema remarked that my pauses were too long. “I wondered if you forgot your sermon.” Concerning my delivery in delivering myself of a sermon on Isaiah 40:1, 2, he said, “When you hold out your big hands, you spread your fingers. Shut your fingers.” (I had not thought of this criticism for forty-five years, until I read it in an old notebook in preparation for writing this article. To my amusement, I am inclined to think that what I am told is a habitual gesture of mine—raising a hand with the fingers tightly closed—is the lasting, odd effect of Hoeksema’s ancient advice.)

And then the criticism that is devastating, sending the seminarian home in a reflective mood. Critiquing my sermon on Isaiah 43:1, 2, Hoeksema noted that “you had opportunity to speak about the cross, but never did.”

Herman Hoeksema’s criticism of my sermon on Proverbs 3:33 occasioned a delightful exchange between him and his son, Prof. Homer Hoeksema. Herman Hoeksema usually was the last critic. He had the final word. One of his criticisms of my sermon on the proverb was that it had only two points. (Proverbs lend themselves to two points to the inexpert and inexperienced preacher.) Herman Hoeksema proposed three points. Homer Hoeksema then did something unusual. With filial reverence and professional courtesy, he invariably deferred to his father. This time, he spoke up, coming to my defense (which endeared him to me). Addressing his father, he said, “You preached on this text once, and you had only two points.” Herman Hoeksema considered this discrepancy for a moment, and then responded: “Well, when Dave has been a minister for forty years he also may preach it with only two points.”

Hoeksema’s instruction was not limited to the classroom, or to the subjects in the curriculum. He regarded all aspects of seminary training as properly his concern. He was teaching with a view to the lifelong ministry of his student. And he was observant.

Occasionally, I would speak a word of edification as a seminary student in the old First Church at the corner of Fuller and Franklin in Grand Rapids. This was daunting. Hoeksema would be prominently in the audience. The church was historic. Even the vast, impressive auditorium was intimidating to a seminarian. Late one Sunday afternoon, living away from my mother and as yet without a wife, I dressed for my appointment in First Church in an appropriate black suit and, without giving the matter any thought whatever, in a pair of white, athletic socks.

The next morning at the seminary, over coffee, Hoeksema matter-of-factly remarked, “Your sermon last night was good, but I would not wear white socks on the pulpit, if I were you.”

Shortly after I began seminary, Hoeksema made it clear that he strongly disapproved of seminarians marrying while in school. “It detracts from their studies.” During my last year, with a studied casualness that did not fool me, he indicated that he did not think it wise for a seminary graduate to take a charge unmarried. He spoke vaguely of the possibility of “talk.”

Did he stop to consider that his program for the marriage of a seminary student gave the student a brief, four-month window to carry out the marital program—some time between early June, when he graduated, and early October of the same year, when he would be ordained?

Did it enter his calculations that a young woman would necessarily be involved, who might have a program of her own?

And a mother-in-law?

Probably not.

His timetable was the best for the ministry and, therefore, should be followed. Furthermore, he had done it.

I could assure him that I would be married in the prescribed period. His hearty congratulations did not quite hide his relief.

Then there was the memorable last class of my last day at seminary. He did something he had never done before. He ignored the subject matter. But he did not engage in frivolous talk. He had important things to say at our parting. Among them were two exhortations, one carefully, but unsuccessfully, disguised, the other blunt.

“David,” he said, “you will soon graduate and be eligible for a call in the churches. You will receive a number of calls.” (There were many vacancies in those

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days, not long after the schism of 1953, and I was the only graduate.) “I must not advise you where to go, of course (of course, this was exactly what he was doing, and we both knew it), but I like Loveland [Colorado], and they have a great need. They are a new congregation, and they have been vacant quite awhile.”

His advice was good.

And then this, as his last word, a kind of blessing:

When you become a minister in the Protestant Reformed Churches, do not preach dogmatics. Do

not preach my dogmatics. (Picking up a Bible and holding it in his tremulous hand), preach the Word. Preach the Word. And if the churches put you out as a heretic for preaching the Word, preach the Word.

Ah, yes, I remember Herman Hoeksema. ❖

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## Poem

# Jehovah

by Kelsey Kooima

*Jehovah  
The Alpha, Omega  
The Beginning and End.  
My Lord, my Friend.*

*The Giver of Salvation,  
The Author of Life  
The One who leads me  
Through sorrows and strife.*

*My Strength, my Rock,  
My fortress sure  
His mercy and love  
Forever endure.*

*My God, my Prophet,  
Priest, and King  
His praises forever  
I will sing.*

*My Guidance, my Counselor,  
My life, my song.  
My heart and soul  
To Him belong.*

*He knows my thoughts,  
And words and deeds  
From sin and death,  
He has set me free.*

*For He has sent  
His Beloved Son  
To save His many  
Chosen ones.*

*Each day I will praise Him  
For this wondrous gift.  
To Him my prayers  
I will lift.*

*He is my Light,  
My Cornerstone.  
I belong to Him  
And to Him alone.*

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

# Watching Daily At My Gates

by Chester Hunter

## **July 12 Read I John 1:1-5**

After Christ ascended into heaven, his disciples, also called apostles, began the work of spreading the Gospel throughout the world. Some of them in their work wrote epistles or letters to various churches and people of God. John spent time working in Asia Minor, and it is supposed that he wrote this epistle to churches in that area. We see that his experiences with Jesus lend to the authenticity about believing Christ. We see this in verse one. John states that there is joy in believing in God and Jesus. He then states that God is light and there is no darkness in him. True joy is walking in the light and not in the darkness. Experiencing the things of the world might seem to give us joy, but it is not true joy. Let us walk in the light that we may have the only joy there is in this world and the world to come. Sing Psalter 71.

## **July 13 Read I John 1:6-10**

John gets right to the heart of our Christian lives. We must walk in the truth and the light. This cannot be done superficially; this must be done every day and all the day. Walking in the light is the only way to have true fellowship with fellow believers. The question is not whether we sin or not. We do. The question is, "What do we do when we sin?" If we confess our sins, we will find peace with God, ourselves, and our fellow believers. Let us walk in the light and in the knowledge that we are cleansed from sin only by the blood of Christ. Sing Psalter 83.

## **July 14 Read I John 2:1-6**

Here we see the relationship between faith and works. We show our faith by keeping his commandments. There is no other possibility. To walk in the truth is to do the truth at all times. To do anything else is to walk in the lie. If we want to have the confidence and the assurance of faith, we must strive each day to keep his commandments. But knowing we have the old man in us, John tells us about our advocate. This was the message of John's gospel, and he reminds us of that message in this epistle. Let us find confidence in Christ, but let us strive daily to keep his words. Sing Psalter 38.

## **July 15 Read I John 2:7-11**

John writes several admonitions to the churches of his day and the church of today. The admonition to love our brother is one to which we should take heed each day. We cannot say we love God and hate our neighbor. You might remember that this was Christ's word to his disciples in the upper room the night before his death. John carries out his work of bringing that message to God's people. Do we heed that word? Do we work at loving our brothers? Let us do that because this commandment is not of John but of God. Sing Psalter 369.

## **July 16 Read I John 2:12-17**

The Bible contains personal messages for each of us. Here we have one that specifically shows to us that it is personal. Because it is the love letter from our Father, elder brother, and bridegroom, there is a message for each of us on each and every page. The main message in this portion of Scripture, is found in verse 15. We are commanded to not love the world. This seems very straight forward, but in our lives sometimes it is hard to put into practice. The last two verses of this section give to us the reason for the commandment. The basic reason is everything of this world will pass away, but God's people will have eternal life. Do we need any other incentive? Let us love God, and ask for grace to not love the world. Sing Psalter 271.

## **July 17 Read I John 2:18-29**

One of John's themes in his epistles is the end of the world. The last times began when Christ ascended into heaven. Since then he is coming. Since then the church must live by watching and praying even as Christ taught them. John could see in the world around him that the wicked were trying to cause the church to sin. John's message to the church was that they had to be patient and to live in Christ. This is the message to us as well as we wait for the second coming of Christ. The wicked wish to do us harm. Today it is not the physical harm like the time of the Roman Empire, but the wicked wish to do us harm nonetheless. Let us pray for the grace to abide in him and wait patiently for the day of his coming. Sing Psalter 99.

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**July 18 Read I John 3:1-6**

John wishes to point out the quality of love that God has showed to us. It is a love unlike any love that a person on this earth can exhibit to anyone, even to God himself. It is a love that is completely giving in nature. It is a love on which all love must be patterned. Do we attempt to show that kind of love to those around us? Are we grateful for the love that enables us to inherit eternal life? This is the love which make us sons of God and heirs with Christ. Let us walk in that love and seek not to walk in the sins of the world. Sing Psalter 24.

**July 19 Read I John 3:7-10**

In these verses John is not saying that the regenerated child of God is perfect while on this earth. That would contradict Scripture in many other places. But John is saying that the child of God does not fall away from his regeneration by sin. Before God we are without sin because of the blood of Christ. This is the doctrine of justification. This is a great comfort, but it should also be a great warning in how we must live. We must be like Joseph when tempted in Egypt to say, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” Therefore, because we are justified by Christ we are also sanctified and must live lives free from sin. May this be part of our prayer each and every morning. Sing Psalter 336.

**July 20 Read I John 3:11-16**

In the gospel according to John, Jesus told his disciples about a new commandment which was that we ought to love each other. John, in his epistles, carries out that theme often. Here we see it explained. We also see that we should not expect love from the world. If we do, we will not be walking in the truth. John reminds us the love of God is an absolute love. He loved us so much that he gave his life for us. This is the love after which we must pattern our love for those in the church of Christ. This is not easy, but it is what we must do. Sing Psalter 371.

**July 21 Read I John 3:17-24**

John continues expounding the theme of the works of love. Love means that when we see a brother in need we help him. We do not evaluate his social standing, his economic standing, or the political gain it may give us. We help him. This is a plain and simple truth. We do it because it shows that God's truth is in us, and it is pleasing to our heavenly Father. We show love in this way because this is Christ's commandment to his church. Notice how John uses what he learned in the upper room that night before Jesus's death. Jesus taught him that he may teach us. May we learn the truth and walk in it. Sing Psalter 25.

**July 22 Read I John 4:1-6**

First of all, notice John's address. It is one of his favorites. He calls the church beloved. He has expended much love and energy towards them, and he feels close to them. This must be the sentiment of not only officebearers but also of each member of the congregation. We must truly be able to call each other beloved. Secondly, see the admonition to try the spirits. As we go throughout this world, there are many spirits of religion and even life around us. Most of them are not of God. Our enemy, Satan, will use any spirit to tempt us into falling away. We must test those spirits using the test of God's word. This is important as we walk the walk of sanctification in our lives. Sing Psalter 276.

**July 23 Read I John 4:7-16**

John goes back to one of his main themes—that of love. He points out that the only true love comes from one who is loved by God. God loved first, and then we reflect that love back to him and to one another. John saw firsthand that love when he observed his friend dying on the cross. He not only shared in that sorrow on that Good Friday, but he also shared in that joy on Resurrection Sunday. After the Spirit was poured out on Pentecost, then John understood how great that love was. Let us love one another even as God loved us. Sing Psalter 370.

**July 24 Read I John 4:17-21**

John continues on in his theme of love. We see that our love must be perfected and made complete by God in Christ. There is a reason for that complete love. That completeness is so that we may be bold for God's sake. We need not fear the world because God loves us. In fact, we can only love because he loved us first. This is quite often forgotten by many. God's love is a sovereign love whereby he causes all things to work for good for his people. Finally, John finishes his theme by returning to the premise that we must show our love for God by loving our brother. Do we do this? Do we do this everyday? Sing Psalter 26.

**July 25 Read I John 5:1-5**

These few verses have some very sobering truths. First of all, we know we love our brother when we keep God's commandments and love him. The three are interconnected. We cannot do only one or only two of those activities. Secondly, God's commandments are not grievous. Sometimes we might think that it is hard to obey God. In the idol-filled world of John's day, obeying God might seem much easier. The idols are around us today though they are more subtle. We still must obey God. Finally, to believe is to exercise our faith and overcome the world.

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We are not in this alone. We do not live without any help. God, who gives us faith, helps us to overcome the world. Sing Psalter 41.

**July 26 Read I John 5:6-12**

Notice in these verses that the truth of the Trinity is expressed. There are many places in the Bible where we find the three persons of the Trinity described. Here we see the unity of those three persons. Because of the truth of that unity, our salvation is sure, and we have eternal life. John wants the church of his day to know this truth, and the church of this day needs to know it as well. It is a blessed comfort to know that our salvation is sure, and that there is only one way to that salvation. May God give to us the grace to believe that truth and to live out of it from day to day. Sing Psalter 391.

**July 27 Read I John 5:13-21**

John speaks of the great confidence that we can have in prayer. We can know and believe that God will hear and will answers those prayers that are according to his will. Then he goes on to say that we can pray for the erring brother. This is a great comfort to the believer. He can have the assurance that God will care for the brother who walks in sin. It is not wrong for us to pray for that; in fact, it is our duty to show brotherly love in this way. John ends this epistle with one final admonition to the church of all ages. To follow after idols is to not follow God. May we, in whatever circumstance we find ourselves, pray for our brother and his salvation and to follow the one true God. Sing Psalter 72.

**July 28 Read II John 1:1-4**

In John's final two epistles we see a new theme as well as an old one. First of all we see the theme of love once more. Secondly, we see admonitions concerning truth. Jesus had told his disciples that true worship was done in spirit and in truth. Walking in that truth must be our goal from day to day. This is not man's truth, but rather the truth of God found only in sacred Scripture. We must diligently search the Scriptures daily to learn of that truth. And then when we have found that truth, we must live only out of that truth. This is a daily calling. May God give to us the grace to walk in and out of that truth. Sing Psalter 333.

**July 29 Read II John 1:5-13**

Notice verses 10 & 11. John warns the church of his day about fellowshiping with those who do not confess the doctrine and commandments of Christ. As he stated earlier, the members of these churches were his spiritual children. He cared for them, and he worried about them even as an earthly parent does for his children. He was

concerned that they would be led from truth. We need this admonition today. How often do we fall prey to the idea that we should accept anyone? That was not John's teaching. That is not Christ's teaching. Let us be wary of those who bring another gospel. Sing Psalter 366.

**July 30 Read III John 1:1-7**

For parents, office bearers, and teachers nothing is more precious than to hear that their children are walking in the truth. These may be the physical offspring or spiritual children of the church. When a report comes in saying that someone's child is walking in the truth of God, it is cause for great joy. Quite often the reports are of some wrongdoing or concern, and these bring sorrow to the parents. John had heard a good report about a man named Gaius. Gaius was showing that he loved the truth of God's word by caring for those in need. As James tells us, we must show our faith by the works that we do. Let us walk in the truth for the purpose that others may be brought to Christ. This is the testimony found in the book of Proverbs, and this is the testimony of the Heidelberg Catechism. Sing Psalter 325.

**July 31 Read III John 1:8-11**

In contrast to Gaius who was full of Christian love, John speaks words of rebuke to a man named Diotrephes. All that we know about this man is found in these few verses. He may have been an officebearer, but he was an officebearer without the quality of showing hospitality to those who needed it. He also used his office to lord it over others that the Church Order of Dordt expressly forbids. John ends this section with an admonition for the church not to follow evil but to follow good because true goodness is from God. What about us? How are we walking towards the brothers in the church? Are we following good? Sing Psalter 379.

**August 1 Read III John 1:12-14**

At the end of this short epistle, John mentions another man. Once again, like Gaius, he is one held up for the church's example. Demetrius had a good report of all kinds of men and also and more importantly the truth. As we walk through this world we seek these kinds of reports. As far as a report of men, we seek for a good report not for our glory but for God's. It is not so that we become popular, but that the gospel be not harmed. And then, of course, we must have a good report when compared to the utmost standard, God's word. How do we measure up? What will God say about us in the Day of Judgment whenever it comes? Let us seek to walk like Gaius and Demetrius and not Diotrephes. Sing Psalter 360.

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## **August 2 Read Revelation 1:1-3**

As we open the last book of the Bible, we see the necessity of reading it not just once but often. John, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote this book to show to us the things that must come to pass. No matter what our age is, we have seen things which have come to pass and point to the return of Christ, One truth that we must always remember about this book is that all things must come to pass. Until the whole counsel of God concerning his Son's return is fulfilled, Christ will not return. The time was at hand during the days of John and the time is even more at hand today. Let us hear the words of Scripture found in this book, and let us keep them. Sing Psalter 183.

## **August 3 Read Revelation 1:4-8**

Here we have the salutation from John that begins this most prophetic book. Notice that most of the salutation speaks of Christ. This was John's message in his gospel as well as in his epistles. His purpose in his writings was to show Christ our Savior and his work on earth, in heaven, and in his return. In that work He has made us kings and priests because of his love for us. As we wait for the return of Christ, let us only confess the true Christ as shown to us in his word. Sing Psalter 387.

## **August 4 Read Revelation 1:9-16**

John was now a very old man. He had fought for the gospel and now had been exiled to this island for that gospel. It is while he is here that he was privileged to have the visions that led to the writing of Revelation. While he was worshipping within himself, Christ appeared. John realized that this was Christ in all his glory as is evident from the description that he gives. John wants the beloved saints in those seven churches to know exactly what he saw and what it meant. The essence of this part of the vision is that Christ is king over his church as it is manifested in the local congregations. It is to this king that we must bow in worship each and every Lord's Day. Sing Psalter 264.

## **August 5 Read Revelation 1:17-20**

John knew his Lord, and John knew what Jesus had done for him. His reaction was perfectly natural. Jesus reassured John to not let his heart be troubled. Christ has a new task for John. Jesus would show to him new things, and John would have to transmit them to the church of his day and to the church of all ages. These things would surely come to pass because Jesus was God, and because these things would come to pass they would bring utmost comfort to the individual child of God and to the church of Jesus Christ. The seven churches were actual churches,

but they were also pictures of the church of all ages at any time in history. These words are a comfort and a guide for us. Let us fear not because Christ is Alpha and Omega. Sing Psalter 261.

## **August 6 Read Revelation 2:1-7**

Christ now commands John to write messages to each of those seven churches of Asia Minor. He starts with the church where the gospel was first brought, Ephesus. This was also the church that John ministered unto for a time. This church had many trials and tribulations, and it had worked hard for the gospel's sake. But this church was leaving that first zeal. They were becoming complacent in the faith. Does this characterize us? Have we, as churches of the Reformation, forgotten from what we have been delivered? Have we, as individuals, become complacent in our worship of Jehovah? Let us hear what the Spirit said to Ephesus ... and to us. Sing Psalter 246.

## **August 7 Read Revelation 2:8-11**

The church of Smyrna is one in which nothing negative is pointed out. Does that mean she is perfect? Of course not, but rather what characterizes her is her strength in the day of persecution. That day will be ours as well. Even today we face persecution. It is subtle, as Satan knows that the church grows stronger in the face of overt trouble. But there are temptations to not follow God's word. This is our persecution. How do we face it? We may have the confidence of the crown of life when we are faithful. Let us be found faithful today and at his coming! Sing Psalter 224.

## **August 8 Read Revelation 2:12-17**

One of the most damaging things that Satan did to the church of the Old Testament was to introduce the doctrine of Balak. In this doctrine Satan encouraged the people of God to mingle and have fellowship with the people of the world. He encouraged the marriage of the sons of light and the daughters of darkness. When the two married, the partner who came from the dark brought the child of God into that darkness with disastrous results. Satan is still spreading that doctrine today. He does everything he can to bridge the gap between the different sides of the antithesis. We must fight against this temptation knowing that the reward of a new name in heaven is far greater than any earthly pleasure can be. Let us not fix our eye on this life but on the life to come. Sing Psalter 184

## **August 9 Read Revelation 2:18-29**

Here we have another picture of the church of all ages. Christ uses his name Son of God while speaking to this church. He has serious charges to bring against them. While they have good points as seen in verse 19, they

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have a serious flaw. Not only do they allow a wicked woman to abide in the church and to cause many to sin, they refuse to discipline her. Christian discipline is one of the marks of the true church. The church that refuses to exhibit this mark will eventually lose its candlestick or place in the church of God. We must always seek to remain where the true marks of the true church of Christ are exhibited and held to. Sing Psalter 102.

**August 10 Read Revelation 3:1-6**

The name Christian is a very beautiful appellation. It is a badge we should wear proudly. It is a name that is full of life, for it designates one as a follower of him who rose from the dead. Are we alive spiritually? Do those around us see that life in us? This was the problem in Sardis. They did not live up to their name. We must be like those who kept their garments unspotted from the filth of this world. When we walk this sanctified lively walk, then the assurance of our salvation will bubble out of us and be evident to all those around us. Sing Psalter 69.

**August 11 Read Revelation 3:7-13**

The church at Philadelphia had to fight off the Jews who said they had the gospel but really perverted it. This is a hard fight. It is a fight that we must face every day. But because we have strength, not of ourselves we must understand, we will then win that fight. That strength is of Christ himself. This church also was a witness to the world around them. Are we witnesses of Christ wherever we are placed? There is a beautiful promise for those who follow the example of this church. Let us hear what the Spirit says unto us. Sing Psalter 65.

**August 12 Read Revelation 3:14-22**

Throughout the new dispensation there are times in which the church becomes lukewarm in its doctrine or in its love for God and his word or both. Actually the two are connected. You do not have one without the other. Out of that church God calls his people to come and repent. This is what happened during the great Reformation of the 1500's and this is what has happened many times since then. We, too, must make sure that we are not lukewarm in our faith. We must show an ardent zeal in our love for God and his word. The reward is great; let us hear him and heed him. Sing Psalter 27.

**August 13 Read Revelation 4:1-5**

Throughout the rest of the book John is given visions of what will be. These visions are for the instruction of Christ's church as well as its comfort. The church of John's day was enduring increasing persecution from the godless Roman Empire. The church throughout history also received and will receive persecution of various

degrees. John sees the throne of God. The picture is more glorious than any that he has seen on this earth. He sees representation of the church of both dispensations in the twenty-four elders. He sees them as they have been victorious in the battle of faith. Do we await this day? We must fight the battle in the confidence that the victor's white robe and crown will be ours. Sing Psalter 22.

**August 14 Read Revelation 4:6-11**

In this glimpse of heaven we see that the members of the church see that they must give to God all the glory. What a difference from life on this earth! Here, men try to take the glory for themselves. There, all including the world of brute creation will see that only God is worthy of all glory and honor. Are we living lives now to prepare ourselves for that scene in heaven? Do we seek to honor our God in all things, or do we try to preserve even a small piece of glory for ourselves? *Sola Deo Gloria!* Sing Psalter 318.

**August 15 Read Revelation 5:1-7**

What man of the world really would say that he is not worthy to do something? By nature we really do not like to say I cannot do a certain chore. But by nature really there is little that we can do much less open the book that contains the whole council of God. Man does not want a sovereign God much less a Christ who has to carry out the whole plan of salvation for them. When we come to this realization, we are brought to tears because we are helpless of ourselves. But there is the Lamb! Glory be to God! Again, man would say what could a slaughtered lamb do? But the Lamb of God has prevailed over Satan and has taken away the sins of the world. What joy is ours! Sing Psalter 408.

**August 16 Read Revelation 5:8-14**

In heaven all creation is represented. All creation is interested in the unfolding of God's counsel as it works out to give to him all glory. Because Christ, the Lamb of God, is God, he is worthy to reveal to us that counsel. Man would not make the slain Lamb worthy; man cannot make the slain Lamb worthy. All we can do is to give him all the glory and honor due to his name. Each day we must fall down and worship God. Each day we must sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." This is not a task for a well-trained choir. This is the task of each one who has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Sing Psalter 405.

# Past Conventions

YEAR	HOST SOCIETY	THEME	YEAR	HOST SOCIETY	THEME
1939	South Holland	Attitudes	1976	Southwest	Called as Shining Lights
1940	Fuller Avenue	Thoroughly Equipped	1977	Hudsonville	Seeking the Lord
1941	Oaklawn		1978	South Holland	Remember Thy Creator in the Days of Thy Youth
1942	None		1979	Redlands	Redeeming the Time
1943	None		1980	Hope	Appreciating our Reformed Faith
1944	Fuller Avenue	Christian Liberty	1981	Southeast	Signs of the Times
1945	South Holland	Steadfastness	1982	Doon, Edgerton, Hull	Our Changeless Calling in a Changing World
1946	Hudsonville	The Strength and Beauty of Youth	1983	Lynden	The Youthful Sojourner Saved
1947	Fuller Avenue	Fellowship in Christ	1984	First	Walking in Newness of Life
1948	Holland	Faith of Our Fathers	1985	Hudsonville	All Whom I Have Chosen
1949	Pella & Oskaloosa	Redeeming the Time	1986	South Holland	Being Reformed in 1986
1950	Second	The Power of Godliness	1987	Loveland	Lessons from the Life of David
1951	Kalamazoo	The Last Hour	1988	Southwest	Jehovah's Covenant With His People
1952	Hull	Trilogy—Faith, Hope, & Love	1989	Grand Rapids	Contentment
1953	First	The Armour of God	1990	Redlands	Love, The Bond of Perfectness
1954	South Holland	The Antithesis	1991	Byron Center	Reformed Young People Living in the Last Times
1955	Hudsonville	The Gospel of the Promise	1992	Faith	What is a Christian
1956	Doon & Hull	Exalt the Lord	1993	Doon, Edgerton, Hull	Spiritual Youth in a Carnal World
1957	Fourth	Our Calling to Obedience	1994	Lynden	Victorious Through Faith
1958	Hope & Creston	Hold That Fast Which Thou Hast	1995	Grandville	Courageous Christian Youth
1959	Oak lawn	Christ, Our Life	1996	South Holland	Godly Friendships
1960	First	Faithful Today	1997	Hudsonville	Knowing My God
1961	Loveland	The Beauties of Holiness	1998	Southeast	Living the Antithesis
1962	Hudsonville	Friendship	1999	Redlands	Ready to Give an Answer
1963	Edgerton	More Than Conquerors	2000	First?	Living out of Our Heritage as Young People
1964	Hope	Be Ye Holy	2001	First of Holland	Christ—Our Guiding Light on the Sea of Life
1965	South Holland	Preserving Our Heritage	2002	Georgetown	Youth, Examples of Godliness
1966	Southeast	Faith	2003	Loveland	Surrounded by God
1967	Hull & Doon	Soli Deo Gloria	2004	Michigan	Drawing Near to God
1968	First	How Great Thou Art	2005	Faith	Royal Citizens of the Kingdom of God
1969	Redlands	The Greatest of These	2006	Doon, Edgerton, Hull	Running the Race
1970	Hudsonville	Strangers in a Strange Land	2007	Grandville	Living Sacrifices of Thankfulness
1971	South Holland	Disciples of Christ	2008	Byron Center	Safe From the Snare
1972	Loveland	Come Lord Jesus	2009	Trinity	A Church Gathered From All Nations
1973	Hope	Soldiers of Christ			
1974	Doon, Edgerton, Hull	Serve the Lord With Gladness			
1975	Grand Rapids	God's Covenant Faithfulness (50th Anniversary)			

## Resist The Devil

*The scripture says if we resist  
The devil and his pow'rs  
That he will surely flee from us;  
The vict'ry then is ours.  
But how do we accomplish this?  
The task takes much persistence,  
For Satan doesn't just "let go";  
We'll meet with great resistance.*

*To steadfastly obey our Lord  
Requires a prayerful life,  
For human nature does not want  
To face this awful strife.  
We much prefer the easy way  
To drift along in sin—  
Enjoying pleasures of the flesh;  
Foregoing discipline.*

*But as God's children we will pray;  
The Spirit works within  
And strengthens our oft weak desires  
That we the conquest win.  
We thank the Lord for giving us  
The faith to trust and pray;  
May we seek first our Father's will  
And walk in wisdom's way.*

Thelma Westra

# Conventions

## A Quarter Century Later

by Agatha Lubbers

The house-cleaning season is both frustrating and amusing. When one engages in the annual ritual called housecleaning, the boredom and drudgery of the activity can be somewhat lightened by intriguing discoveries. In remote corners of closets, in neglected boxes, and in fragrant cedar chests one finds old hats, out-dated shoes, musty scrap books and treasured photo albums which seem to have been saved and stowed away for just such a time as this.

Humorous anecdotes are rehearsed and retold accompanied by gales of laughter as old hats and antiquated shoes are fitted and returned to their dust-gathering storage spots. Photo albums are fondly examined and each picture extracts an additional comment and reminiscence or chuckle.

As I prepared for this article, I did some house-cleaning and collating to refresh a memory gone stale because it has been several years since I last attended one of the highlights in the Protestant Reformed young person's life. That highlight is the Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention. One of the speakers at this year's convention called it "the focal point of the society year" when he wrote the annual message from the president's desk to the conventioners in 1960.

The 35th Annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention will convene in August, 1975, and my mind must travel back to the year 1947 to remember the first convention I attended as a naive, tender teenager. That was the 7th annual convention. Now it is about three decades or 28 conventions later. That really dates me, doesn't it?

I won't easily forget that convention because I was only 15 years old then, and I had just finished my first year in high school. I was going to be a sophomore in high school. I also won't easily forget this convention because I was one of four delegates, who had traveled in my father's forest green 1935 Chevrolet from Randolph, Wisconsin to Grand Rapids, Michigan. I had been to Michigan, the place of my birth many times

before, but this was my first trip to attend the Annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention. John De Vries, member of Hope P.R. Church, and Gerry De Vries, member of S.E. P.R. Church, and my sister Greta (spelled Garretts Lubbers in the convention booklet of 1947), now Mrs. Thomas Newhof, Jr., and member of the host church this year, were the other delegates from the Young People's Society of the P.R. Church in Randolph, Wisconsin. The host societies that year were the Young Men's, Tabitha, and Esther Societies of the First P.R. Church of Grand Rapids.

This was a memorable year for the Protestant Reformed Y.P.S. of Randolph because one of the proposals from the Federation Board to this convention was that the Y.P.S. of Randolph be granted membership in the P.R.Y.P. Federation. Doon, and David Society of First P.R. Church also became members of the Federation that year.

For a teenager from one of the small Western churches, a trip to attend a first convention is both a spiritual and exhilarating experience. I will always remember the inspirational mass meeting that year. That mass meeting was held in the spacious confines of the First P.R. Church in Grand Rapids. It was one of those typical warm August evenings in Michigan, when the locusts had been singing all day. Throngs of people poured from Bates Street, Worden Street, Neland Avenue, toward the corner of Fuller and Franklin where they would fill every corner of a structure that could seat nearly 1300 people. The building was packed. Additional chairs had been set up in aisles and spare corners.

Another convention that I will personally not soon forget was the convention that was sponsored jointly by the societies of Hope and Creston P.R. Churches. The theme of that convention was, "Hold Fast to That Which We Have." The theme of this convention was based upon Revelation 3:11, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." This convention held in 1958 had several unique features. The inspirational mass meeting was held at the Zeeland City

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Park. Zeeland City Park was a central location for many people of Western Michigan and those who came could hear the late Rev. H. Hoeksema speak for the 16th time, but this time under the open sky. Rev. Hoeksema spoke on the theme: "Holding Fast to the Truth."

The outing of this 18th annual convention was held at Long Lake and the program included a debate and a survey of the history of the P.R.Y.P. Federation and of *Beacon Lights*. This historical survey was entitled "This Is Your Life." Several, although certainly not all, of those who had been instrumental in the founding of the Federation and Beacon Lights were invited to this meeting and were introduced to the young people assembled in the shelter house at Long Lake. I remember particularly that Mr. Homer Kuiper, member of Kalamazoo P.R. Church, and first president of the Federation could be present at this meeting.

I said that we could have some but not all of those who had given leadership in the Federation. This is true because 1953 preceded 1958. 1953 was the year of the most disturbing split in the Protestant Reformed Churches. This split seriously affected our Federation too.

The Federation president, Edward Knott (Rev.), had written in the convention booklet of 1947 as follows: "It is also a pleasure to be able to write seventh annual. And although annual is not quite correct due to the fact that we were unable to meet for a few years during the war, the seventh is correct, and for it we rejoice. For it means that we are no longer an infant organization, but by the grace of God are growing up."

That was 1947, my first convention.

But the convention of 1953 was drastically affected by the doctrinal controversy which had been waged and which swept across the Protestant Reformed Churches as a denomination. This doctrinal controversy resulted in a split which decimated the numbers of people who had previously called themselves Protestant Reformed. When the roll was called at the convention hosted by the First Protestant Reformed Church, some societies could not send all of their delegates, and some societies were simply not represented because they would not attend this convention.

I remember vividly and with sorrow the events of this year. I became the secretary of the Federation in the midst of these distressing circumstances and had to correspond with society secretaries to determine the exact status of the Federation that society year, 1953-1954.

Doctrinal controversy and the serious matter of being Protestant Reformed was on the minds of the members of the host society and the conventioners at that 13th

annual convention in August of 1953. The program plans included a debate on Thursday morning with the resolution: "Resolved that Doctrinal Controversy is Healthful for the Church of God." The afternoon session of the same day featured an essay on the topic, "What is Protestant Reformed?"

Two decades have passed since the wounds inflicted by the split of 1953 were first felt by the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. These wounds also affected the united and federated cause of P.R. young people. Those, who were members of the host society of 1953, the same society that hosts the 35th annual convention, and other members of the Federation have become parents of many of those who will attend the convention this year. God has been good to us. He has established His covenant with us and with our covenant young people.

As we celebrate the Jubilee Year of our Churches, we are particularly reminded of God's unchangeableness and His faithfulness in the midst of the strife and the turmoil of the times in which we live. We feel a profound affinity with the poet, who wrote Psalm 48. "Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments. Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death."

In this year of Jubilee we, who see our sons and daughters, our nephews and nieces, become active in these important areas of Christian living, say with Joshua, "...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Covenant young people of 1975, the torch has been passed! Run with it. As you run, REMEMBER! Don't forget and don't merely remember the past but "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh." "Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

Have a blessed 35th Annual Convention! This is my prayer for you. ❖

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*Reprinted from the June, 1975 issue of Beacon Lights on the occasion of the 50th anniversary celebration of the Protestant Reformed Churches.*

# Heaven

## Discussion Outline for 2009 YP Convention

by Rev William Langerak

### A. Its origins

1. When was heaven created and by whom? (Gen. 1-2; Psa. 8:1-4, 33:6; Col. 1:16-20)
2. Can heaven be merely a state of being or feeling? (Eph. 1:3, 20, 2:6, 3:10)
3. Scripture speaks of heavens (plural).
  - a. How many there are? (Deut. 10:14; Neh. 9:6; 2 Cor. 5:2)
  - b. What are their names—biblical, common & scientific (Gen. 1:8; Deut. 10:14; Luke 23:43).
  - c. Why is there more than one heaven? (Luke 8:10, John 3:12; 1 Cor. 15:47-49; Rev. 21:2).

### B. Its nature and life there:

1. For the physical heavens noted above, discuss the following:
  - a. The creatures God created to live or exist there (Gen. 1:14-20, Isa. 66:1).
  - b. The various blessings or judgments God sends to earth from there (Gen. 8:2, 27:39, Exo. 16:4; Josh. 10:11; 2 King 1:10; Isa. 55:10; Luke 21:11; Act. 14:17; Rev. 8:10).
  - c. From your own experience and knowledge of the physical heavens, discuss their many attributes and list adjectives that describe it, e.g. spiritual/physical, far/near, vast/small, over/under, etc.
2. Discuss what the above qualities of the physical heavens teaches us about the spiritual heaven.
  - a. Its spiritual inhabitants and the quality of their life
    - 1) God (1 Kings 8:22-54; Psa. 57; Psa. 68; Psa. 89; Isa. 6:1-6, 66:1; Zech 12:1)
    - 2) Human beings—saints (2 Cor. 5:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:39-49; Heb 10:34; 1 Pet 1:4; Luke 16:26).
      - a) Are the human beings who live there, spiritual creatures or physical? (1 Cor. 15:50)

b) Are there any living in heaven in their bodies? (Matt. 17:3; Heb. 11:5; Acts 7:55-56)

- b. The spiritual blessings and judgments God sends from heaven (Mal. 3:10; Eph 1:3; Psa. 57:3, 85:11; Rom. 1:18; 2 Chr. 6:21; Psa. 76:8; Matt. 5:12; Matt. 6:20, 13:44-46, 19:21; Rev. 19:1)
  - 1) What is the primary spiritual blessing God has sent from heaven? (John 3:13, 6:58; 1 Pet 1:12)
  - 2) What does Jesus do in heaven? (Matt. 28:18; Acts 3:21; Rev. 8:4; Eph. 4:8; Rom. 8:34)

### C. Its end

1. Did Satan ever live in or have access to heaven? Does he now? Why or why not? (Job 1:6-7; 1 Kings 22:19-22; Jude 1:6-9; Rev. 12:1-12)
2. Will all the heavens continue to exist in their present form forever? If not, what will happen to them and why is this necessary? (Matt. 24:29-36; Isa. 13:5-13; 2Pet. 3:7-13; Rev. 6:13-14)
3. Heaven itself should not be confused with the new creation of heaven and earth.
  - a. What are some differences between them? (Isa. 65:17-25; Rev. 21:1-2)
  - b. What happens to humans living in heaven when Christ returns? Where will they live after he returns, and will they live only in their souls? (Rev. 19:14; Jude 1:14; Rev. 21:1-2).
  - c. What will be the new relationship between the new heaven and the new earth? (Luke 16:26; Eph. 1:10 & 2:14 1 Cor. 15:28; Rev. 20:11; Heb. 10:19-20; 2 Pet. 2:10-13).

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*Rev. Langerak is pastor of Southeast Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

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# The Antithesis

## Discussion Outline for 2009 YP Convention

by Rev. Daniel Kleyn

### References

- OT – Gen. 3:15; Deut. 33:28; II Chron. 18:1-3, 19:1-2; Psa. 139:21-22; Amos 3:3
- NT – Matt. 7:13-14; II Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11; Jam. 1:27; I John 2:15-17; Rev. 18:4

### Discussion Questions

1. What is the antithesis?
  - a. What does it mean to live an antithetical life?
  - b. What light do the above passages shed on this?
  - c. When did the antithesis begin? Who put it in place? (See Gen. 3:15)
2. What doctrines form the basis of the antithesis?
  - a. Genesis 17:7, along with James 2:23
  - b. Romans 9:13 and Ephesians 1:4
  - c. John 3:3 and Titus 3:5
3. Would it be helpful or even preferable for us to live in isolated communities (e.g., start a separate Protestant Reformed community) so that we are protected from the ungodliness of the world? Or would such an attempt fail? If so, why?
4. How should the admonitions of Rom. 12:2, II Cor. 6:14-17, etc., be applied to the following? That is, how should you as young people be obviously different from the world in these areas of your lives?
  - a. Entertainment (Music, Movies, Video games, etc.)
  - b. Alcohol
  - c. Work
  - d. Finances
  - e. Clothing
  - f. Friendships
  - g. Dating
  - h. Family life
  - i. Any other areas?
5. Discuss how living antithetically should be evident in our use of the Internet.
  - a. What may we look at? What must we never look at?
  - b. Are there wrong ways to use social networks (Facebook, MySpace, etc.)?
  - c. What can we do to protect ourselves from the evils on the Internet?
  - d. Discuss how Job 31:1 and Psalm 101:3 can be applied to our use of the Internet.
6. How can young people help and encourage each other in living the antithetical life?
7. God's people are called to fight a spiritual battle (Eph. 6:10-18).
  - a. Where does the battle begin? That is, what enemy must we fight first of all?
  - b. How do we go about fighting the devil and the world?
8. What is the only possibility of our being faithful to this calling?

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*Rev. Kleyn is a missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches to the Philippines.*

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# Your Use of the Internet and Cell Phones

## Discussion Outline for 2009 YP Convention

by Rev. Rodney Kleyn

### A. What's Going on in your Life?

1. Are the internet and cell-phones necessities in life, or just tools? Answer this from the point of view of your life; how much are they part of your life and how would you do without them?
2. What are some of the positive uses of the internet and cell-phone in your life?
3. How would you rate yourself as an internet user and phone texter? Are you amateur, proficient or expert? How well do you know the internet? Can you text with your eyes closed?
4. What are some of the main places you go on the internet? How often do you use these sites?
5. How much do your parents know about your use of the internet?
  - a. Are they aware of the sites you visit? Do they filter/monitor your internet use?
  - b. Are they aware of your social-networking on places like facebook?
  - c. Do you think they should be? Why/why not?
  - d. How would you view a "very involved" Dad in this department—as nosey, or as one who cares?

### B. What are some of the dangers of what's going on?

1. What are some of the dangers of the internet?
  - a. Physical dangers? Is it smart to post pictures and personal information on-line?
  - b. Spiritual dangers? How can what you read or see on the internet be spiritually destructive? Are you able to get images out of your mind?
  - c. Have you been exposed to any of these dangers? What are some of your experiences?

2. What are some of the dangers with social networking sites like facebook?
  - a. How much is your self-esteem influenced by your social networking?
  - b. Have you heard of internet-bullying and what is it?
  - c. How many "new friends" have you met and made on facebook? Who are these friends, and what is their background? How can this be harmful to you?
  - d. Where do you find it easier to communicate? In person or over the internet or email or your phone? How can this kind of communication be detrimental to developing good communication skills?
3. If you have a cell-phone, does it have internet or video capability? In what cases would this be useful/necessary? What might be some of the dangers? What is the porn industry doing to target iPod and cell-phone users?

### C. We live in a changing world, and yet God's Word never changes, and really the issues of life are always the same. The use of technology has much to do with our relationships. Answer these questions from your Bibles, and take these passages with you into the modern world of technology

1. The "antithesis" describes our relationship to the world.
  - a. What does the word "antithesis" mean?
  - b. What does James 1:27 say about your relationship to the world?
    - (1) What spots or blots are there in the world of internet and phone technology?

- (2) Is it possible to use this technology without being exposed to these spots? (Think of spam email)
- (3) Does exposure to sin (e.g. pornography) make us more immune to that sin (so that we lust less), or more likely to commit that sin?
- c. The other side of the antithesis is consecration to God. How much do you use the Bible, in comparison to phone and internet? What does Psalm 119:9&11 teach about this?
2. There is also our relationship to each other.
  - a. What does 1 Timothy 4:12 say about young people?
    - (1) Do you need to be examples too? Who might see your example? Can we be a bad example or influence over the internet?
    - (2) Being an example includes admonishing one another. Have you ever, or are you ready to, admonish others about their Facebook site, their textings, etc?
    - (3) Can you help each other, positively, in your use of technology?
  - b. Read Romans 12:9-12
    - (1) To love “without dissimulation” means to “be real,” not to fake it. How is this important for internet communication?
    - (2) “be kindly affectioned”—how can phones and the internet be rude interruptions to face to face relationships?
    - (3) “not slothful in business”—how can these forms of technology become our masters, and time-wasters?
3. There is also our relationship to our inner self—what goes on in the mind. Read Philippians 4:8.
  - a. Why is what we think important? How does it influence our behavior?
  - b. This verse tells us that we should think—meditate. How much time do you have for this? Do you like it, or when you’re alone, are you grabbing for your phone or computer?
  - c. Discuss each word in Philippians 4:8 in light of the internet.
4. There is also our relationship to God.
  - a. 1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.
  - b. Is it clear to others who come into contact with you over the internet that you are in contact with God, that you are doing “all” to the glory of God?
  - c. Is God glorified in the conversation, music, pictures, videos, etc. on your site?
  - d. Can you argue that these are just the innocent things of youth?
  - e. In conclusion, Read 1 Peter 2:11-12

*“Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11).*

*Rev. Kleyrn is pastor of Covenant of Grace Protestant Reformed Church in Spokane, Washington.*

**Dear Editor,**

I would like to comment on the reprinted article of Marvin Kamps in the April issue of *Beacon Lights*, the title of which was “Is the Center of My Life the Church?” Basically what was written is certainly true, but I believe a little more could be said. So in regard to this I would like to quote what Luther wrote along the same lines. He writes, “I would not have preachers torment their hearers, and detain them with long and tedious preaching, for the delight of hearing vanishes therewith, and the preachers hurt themselves” (*Of Preachers and Preaching CCCXCIII*).

In the Lord,  
Fred Ondersma

*“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted” (Acts 20:7-12).*

## Church News

### BAPTISMS

“He is the LORD our God: ...He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.” Psalm 105:7, 8

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Anna Kate, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Hassevoort—  
Byron Center, MI

Colton Daniel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Westra—Calvary,  
IA

Brice Gerald, son of Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Feenstra—Grace,  
MI

Jace Benjamin, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ben Cammenga—  
Grandville, MI

Caleb Joe, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joe van Gelderen—  
Immanuel, Lacombe, Alberta, CAN

Olivia Rose, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brian Wierenga—  
Immanuel, Lacombe, Alberta, CAN

Owen Gerrit, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brent Boverhof—  
Holland, MI

Jason Blake, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ed Tolsma—Loveland, CO

Ginelle Rose, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Pete Cnossen—  
Pittsburgh, PA/Southwest, MI

Dean Austin, son of Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Postmus—  
Redlands, CA

Ava Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Cleveland—  
Redlands, CA

Kole Owen, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kyle Bleyenburgh—Sioux  
Falls, SD/Edgerton, MN

Maci Addison, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brian TenBrock—  
Southwest, MI

Chase Ryan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Scott Kooienga—  
Southwest, MI

Anna Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joel DeVries—  
Southwest, MI

Nadya Hope, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Henry Westhuis—  
Trinity, MI

### CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

“Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall  
keep it unto the end.” Psalm 119:33

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

Kyndra Hassevoort—Byron Center, MI

Loralie Tolsma—Edmonton, Alberta, CAN

Blair Decker—Faith, MI

Leanne Doezema—Faith, MI

Dan Pastoor—Faith, MI

Kelly Kaptein—Faith, MI

Dave Noorman—Faith, MI

Michelle VandenTop—Grace, MI

Jill VandenTop—Grace, MI

Lydia Pols—Holland, MI

Kirsten Gustafson—Holland, MI

Lance Wassink—Holland, MI

Trevor Wassink—Holland, MI

Thomas Andringa—Hull, IA

Courtney Dykstra—Hull, IA

Kara Kroese—Hull, IA

Amanda Korver—Hull, IA

Paige VanGinkle—Hull, IA

Katelyn Westra—Hull, IA

Kristin Westra—Hull, IA

Kelsey Moore—Peace, IL

Rebecca DeGroot—Randolph, WI

Andrew Koerner—Southeast, MI

Jonathan Kamphuis—Southeast, MI

Justin Langerak—Southeast, MI

Jessica Ophoff—Southwest, MI

Stephanie Kamps—Southwest, MI

### MARRIAGES

“For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be  
our guide even unto death.” Psalm 48:14

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Tim Kuiper and Miss Annette Meyer—Faith, MI

Mr. Dustin Hall and Miss Tina Bodbyl—Grandville, MI

Mr. Alex Postma and Miss Angie Engelsma—  
Hudsonville, MI

Mr. Jonathan and Mrs. Maryanne VanDyke—  
Providence, MI

Mr. Todd VanBaren and Miss Karla TeSlaa—South  
Holland, IL

# "LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

500 Years Ago...

"Let Us Find the Truth!"

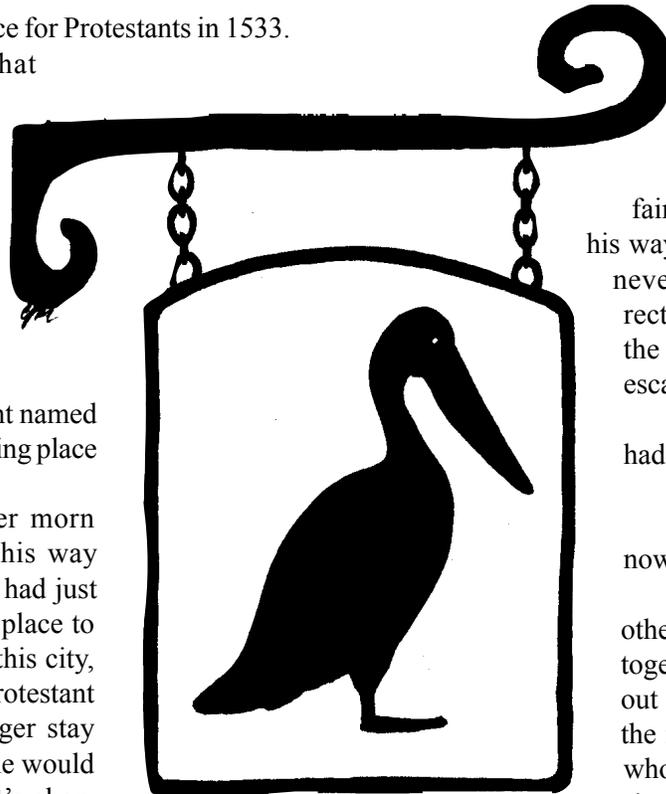
(5)

Paris was a dangerous place for Protestants in 1533. To believe the doctrines that Reformers like Luther and Zwingli taught, and to want to learn more about these truths, might mean imprisonment or death. Small groups secretly gathered in homes for worship and to be taught from the Word of God. The House of the Pelican, owned by a cloth merchant named de la Forge, was one such meeting place for Protestants in Paris.

On one brisk September morn in 1533, John Calvin made his way to the sign of the Pelican. He had just arrived in Paris and needed a place to stay. He had many friends in this city, but with his new and ardent Protestant convictions, he could no longer stay just anywhere. He had heard he would be safe at the cloth merchant's shop. de la Forge welcomed the young man into his home.

Calvin was amazed. He was so new to the faith himself, and yet so many people risked their lives to come hear him teach and preach! He was amazed, but he understood. They loved the truth their thirsty souls had never known before the Reformation began to dawn. And now, so did Calvin. And Calvin loved them, too. They were Frenchmen together, but they were much more—they were brothers and sisters in the truth and in the Lord. Yes, John Calvin had many friends in Paris.

And one was more notable than most—Nicholas Cop. Calvin had been a longtime friend of the Cops. Though he was young, Nicholas held the high position of rector of the university in Paris. As such, he had to preach the sermon for All Saint's Day on November 1. But Cop had begun to have Protestant convictions, too. And he knew Calvin was in town. He asked his gifted friend to help him with his sermon. Cop thought it was time to be more open about unmerited grace.



The doctors of the university did not think so. They were enraged over Cop's sermon. They said they would give the rector a fair trial, but word came to Cop on his way to parliament that they would never let him go. He cast off his rector's robes and became lost in the crowds of the city. He barely escaped with his life.

And what of John Calvin who had helped him?

Bailiffs were at the door.

"Calvin, you must leave—now!"

Friends stalled the bailiffs while others helped Calvin tie bed sheets together for a rope and let him down out of the second story window of the room. He ran to another friend who owned a vineyard outside the city. He dressed in the friend's work clothes, put a hoe over his shoulder,

and strolled down the road towards Noyon. The French authorities never found him.

But more truth-thirsty Protestants surely would.

**Nicholas Cop used the following text for his sermon on All Saint's Day. Unscramble the words:**

Seedbls rae het ropo ni tipsri: rof hirste

\_\_\_\_\_

si eht nodkgmi fo naveeh.

\_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 5:3

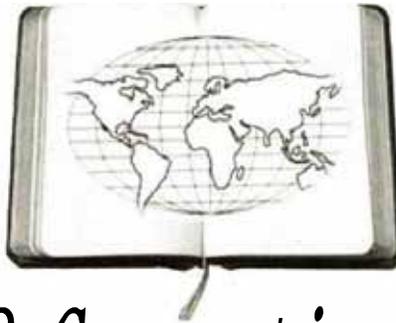
*Connie is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

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