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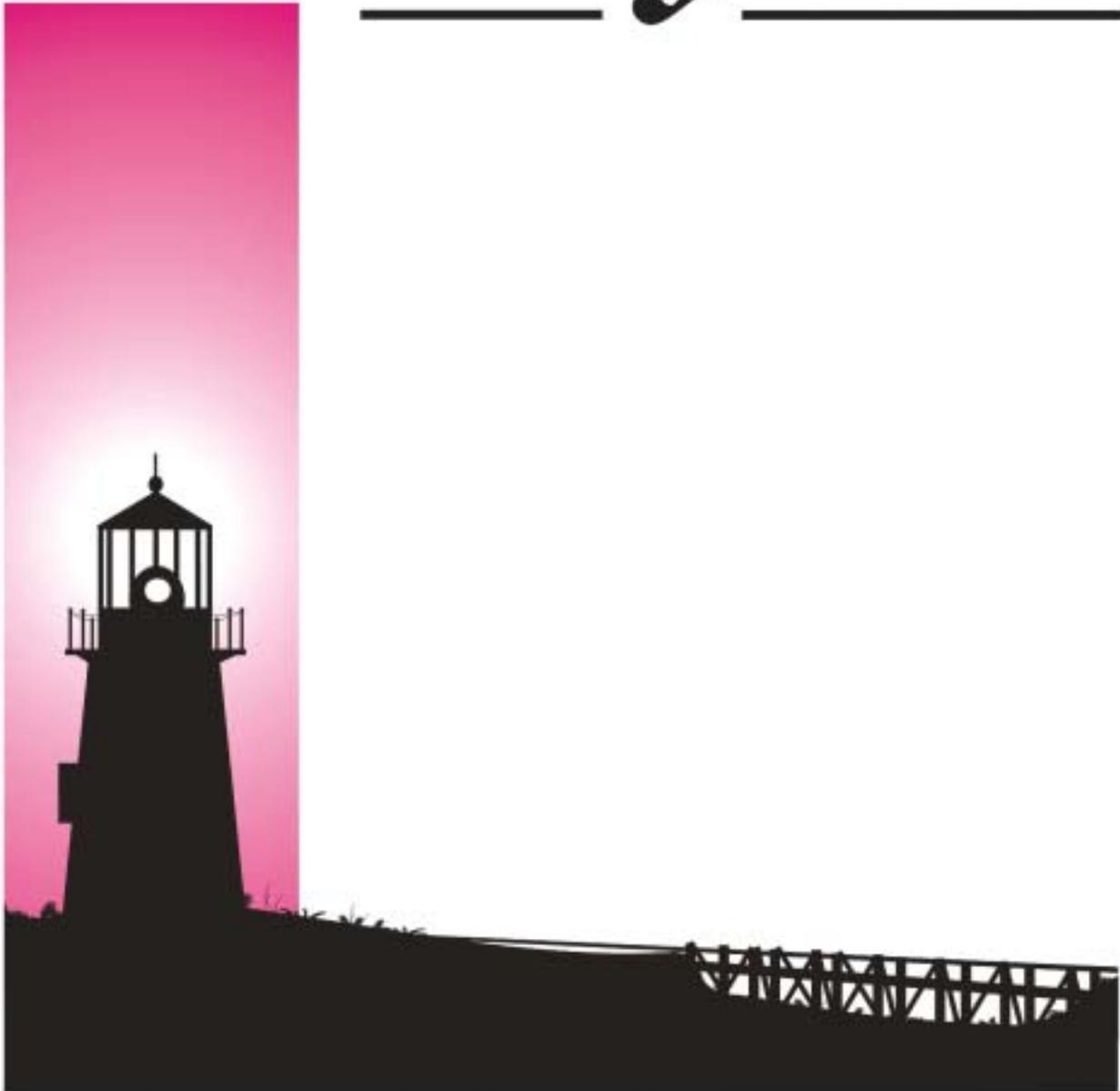


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The Beginning of Knowledge

(2)

by Randy Vaalburg



Last time, we briefly considered some teachings and practices that are not characterized by proper fear of the Lord. We saw that godly fear is different from the fear of pure dread or terror that the world has. This attitude is not Christian or godly because it does not draw us closer to God. Said the Apostle, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love,” (I John 4:18). Instead, the fear of God’s people is a holy fear, rooted in love. It is a fear motivated by reverence for and love of God.

After all the tragic events of September 11, the idea of fearing the Lord takes on new significance. There is much talk in the media on the one hand about not fearing anything and on the other about fearing man and man’s weapons. As redeemed believers, we are neither pridefully fearless, nor man-fearing, but God-fearing (Matt. 10:28). We know the biblical truths that the Lord alone is Sovereign and has all power. God is everywhere-present, and all things are under His control. We are greatly conscious that our whole lives are lived by, in, and before Him (Acts 17:28). These truths fill us with the awe and wonder of His majesty, and we revere His glorious name.

Holy fear is not only in our thoughts and in our hearts. It is also the way in which we work out our own salvation (Phil. 2:12-13). That we fear God will become evident in our sanctified and obedient walk. As God-fearing believers, we trust in Christ’s strength to walk humbly before God, fight against sin, and do what pleases Him.

Christian young people, we begin walking in the fear of the Lord in two main ways; first, by growing in the knowledge of God’s holiness, and learning how that applies to us as we are in Christ; and second, by trying to live “new and holy lives” before Him, obeying God’s commandments out of true thankfulness for what He has done for us.

**Walking in the fear of the Lord means that we grow in the
knowledge of the great holiness of our God.**

Walking in the fear of the Lord means that we grow in the knowledge of the great holiness of our God. This is important because knowledge of His holiness is understanding (Prov. 9:10). We saw before that fearing the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Now, we see a connection between godly fear, understanding and knowledge of His holiness. The more we know about God’s holiness, the more we will understand why we must be holy, and how we are to be holy.

The Lord is the Holy One of Israel (Ps. 71:22). “Be ye holy, for I am holy,” He commands us in 1 Peter 1:16. What is God’s holiness? We first think about His perfect sinlessness. This is how He is ethically holy. He is totally free from all evil. All of His works are wondrous, perfect and without sin. God loves righteousness and us who are righteous in Christ. Negatively, His holiness demands that He

hate unrighteousness and despise the wicked. His curse is already with them in their “house” – in their earthly lives (Prov. 3:33).

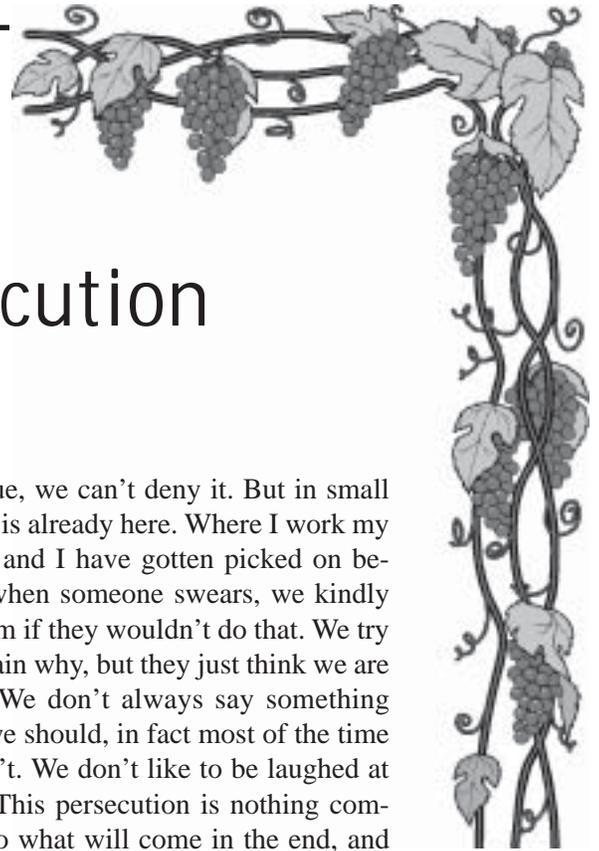
God is also holy in being. We can learn a bit more about this from Isaiah 40. Here, Scripture reveals how God is the perfect example of the basic meaning of holiness. He is sacred, completely set apart from all other beings. No one is like Him (Is. 40:18, 25). The Lord is high and infinitely lifted up above all other beings. The greatest of His creatures is nothing in comparison to Him. The nations of the world are so insignificant in comparison to God that they are like dust on the balances of a scale – their total weight is so light that it does not even tip the scale! (Is. 40:15-17).

What does God’s holiness mean for us, covenant young people? First, when Jehovah spoke to Israel at Mount Sinai to make His covenant with them and give to them His law, He called us, His elect, a “kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Ex. 19:6). This same terminology is used in the New Testament in I Peter 2: 9-11 where we learn that God separated us from the dark world as a “holy nation”, a “chosen generation”, and a “royal priesthood.” As individual members of Christ’s body, we are “pilgrims” and “strangers” (v. 11). All of these terms refer to our holy election in Christ (Eph. 1:4). For God’s glory, Christ’s holiness is imputed to us, making us holy saints. “I behold no iniquity in Jacob.” He says this because we are legally righteous in Christ. By confessing this, we are not making claims to be sinless in this life as some people do. We do say that while we live down here, the Father increases our holiness, by His Spirit, continuously drawing us out of the darkness of this world and into His marvelous light. Already in this life, we have a small beginning of holiness in Him. This gift of holiness causes us to have covenant friendship with our Father because fellowship within the Triune God is holy (Ps. 93:5). Our holiness and friendship with God is the fruit of our proper fear of the Lord (Ps. 19:9).

Second, God’s holiness requires that we offer ourselves up to Him by fleeing sin and worldly lusts. Inspired Peter explains, “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear...” (I Peter 1:15-17). “Conversation” refers to our whole lives. So, we begin to live “holy and unblamable” lives before God in His fear. When others observe our behavior it must be evident to them that the Lord dwells among us and has sanctified us. Even the heathen will know it! (Ez. 37:27-28) How? By the power of Christ’s Spirit, we are on our guard, fleeing sin *and situations that may lead to sin*. We are witnesses when we refrain from evils found among those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. These evils are clearly listed in Scripture (read Gal. 5:19-21 and I Cor. 6:9-10), and including the following: idolatry, hatred, strife, heresies, envyings, adultery, fornication, covetousness, drunkenness, witchcraft (rebellion is witchcraft, c.f. I Samuel 15:23!) For Christian young people, it is in the way of godly fear that they do not get drunk. Holy fear also motivates them not to do the things that their consciences tell them are forbidden outside of marriage. They do not give in to the pressure of peers – which can be great – to seek thrills in the way of danger or in rebellion against parents, the laws of God, or the government.

When we consider Romans 1:29-32, we see that doing evil things, or taking pleasure in people who do them, is not living in the fear of God, but rather unto death! This means that we must separate ourselves from sin and impenitent sinners. This is part of our calling as “priests” of God’s “royal priesthood,” for it is not possible to have close fellowship with Him and also with the unfruitful works of darkness. In God’s grace and strength, we keep ourselves clean and cleanse ourselves from spiritual filthiness by turning from sin, confessing our sins before His throne, and trusting His mercy. In this way of constant conversion, we perfect our holiness in His fear (II Cor. 7:1). This perfecting work of the Spirit deepens our friendship with our holy Father.

Next time, the Lord willing, we will consider how true obedience is an expression of our fear of the Lord, and the many blessings that come upon us who fear His name. ❖



Witnessing & Persecution

by Melissa Venema

“**B**lessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my names sake” Matthew 5:11. There are a lot of examples of persecution in the Bible, like the Israelites and the disciples. These Christians were persecuted because they were different than everyone else. They openly and unashamedly worshiped God, and we must do the same. They witnessed to those around them about God, and because of that witnessing they were persecuted. The persecution came because of witnessing. There is rarely one without the other. They go together. It is our responsibility to God to witness.

Physical persecution was much more common back then. Why? Are people nicer now? Do they tolerate Christians more now? Or is it that Christians have gotten weaker? Are we more ashamed of the major differences between us and the world? Or are we just being lazy? I believe the last two are more true than the others. Some so-called Christians act so much like the world that there is just a fine line between them and the world, barely noticeable. It isn't easy being different from everyone else. Everyone else can agree to that. Not just in religion but in looks and other things as well. No matter how, no one likes to be different, especially if you are a teenager. Our peers can be very cruel, and we just want to fit in. Sometimes we want to fit in so much that we will do anything. So when one is invited to a party where they know there will be alcohol they say they will be there. They don't want anyone to think that they are weird for not going. So they go, and get drunk, because after all, every one else is and they don't want to be separate. But every one knows this isn't right. It is obvious what we are to do and what not to do. The problem is that we rarely do what we are supposed to do.

We don't like doing the right thing because we know what will happen if we do. We will be mocked and laughed at and no one wants that. In school, I keep hearing speeches that say persecution is coming, which is

very true, we can't deny it. But in small ways it is already here. Where I work my friends and I have gotten picked on because when someone swears, we kindly ask them if they wouldn't do that. We try to explain why, but they just think we are weird. We don't always say something when we should, in fact most of the time we don't. We don't like to be laughed at either. This persecution is nothing compared to what will come in the end, and we must learn to be strong. We shouldn't be afraid of what is to come. In Revelation 2:10 Jesus says, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” And in Revelation 3:11, “Behold I come quickly: hold fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” We have nothing to fear if we have God. Physical pain is nothing when we think of the wonderful eternity that we will spend with God in Heaven.

When we are young we often think to ourselves that we can do whatever we want to do now and when we are older, then we will follow God and focus on Him. God is supposed to be our focus in life no matter what age we are. We are to “remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth”. When you are young, not just old. We think we can make up for our mistakes later in life. We have a responsibility to God to honor and glorify Him in all that we do. We serve a mighty God who created the heavens, the earth, and everything that is in them. He is the only one who can save us. We must remember this and trust in Him. Our lives, our strength, and hope is in Him. We must always remember this especially in those hard times when someone tempts us to do something and you don't want to be different so you go along with them. We must be strong and stand for what the Lord says is right, what is written in His word. We must suffer to be

laughed at a little now and then. A little teasing is not a big deal, when we think about what is to come.

Some people like to say that God would never persecute His people, but it states plainly in the Bible that God's people will be persecuted. There is no getting around it. Persecution is here and is going to keep coming and is going to get worse as the years go by. There are many places in the world where there already is persecution, and it is going to keep spreading.

We must be ready and able to witness, and to know what to say. Acts 22:15, "For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." It isn't going to be easy. Whether one is young or old, we must

be ready to defend God. No matter how difficult and painful it may be, God will be there. He is our refuge and strength, our shield, and we will put our trust in Him. Psalm 119:50-52 "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law. I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord; and have comforted myself." ❖

Melissa is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan. She wrote this essay for Church History at Covenant Christian High School.

Story Time

The Fourth Man

A Story from the Time of the Afscheiding

by P. S. Kuiper

translated by Rev. Cornelius Hanko

Chapter 13

Along the Edge of the Abyss

The family of Evart Splint had just had a new baby born into their family. But they were very poor and had not enough money to pay all their expenses. This was not because the father did not work. He worked as a weaver. But he did not receive enough pay from his employer (even though they both went to the same church) to support his family. He had asked the deacons for some help. Jacob Bollenbakker, a deacon, had come to visit them. He had refused any help and had scolded them for not making the wife and children work more hours. Evart Splint had angrily sent Jacob scurrying away from the house, but Jacob sanctimoniously congratulated himself on saving money for the church.

This Jacob Bollebakker was the father of Toon, whom we met already in the first chapter. Maarten had run into a fishmonger while running away from Toon. Maarten did not want to talk to Toon, because Toon was always bragging about how rich they were. Jacob was referred to as "Father Jacob" because he always used a very unctuous voice when he was admonishing other members of the church, something which he frequently did.

Fifteen minutes after "Father Jacob" departed, Evart Splint put on his cap and went outside. Rarely did he leave his home at night, and certainly on Saturday nights he wanted to be with his family. But now he needed a breath of fresh air.

Aimlessly he walked in the direction of the Kerkbrink, his wooden shoes scraping sharply on the rough gravel.

At the Kerkbrink the Saturday evening business was in full swing. Everywhere stood groups of men talking

and laughing, many already dressed in their best clothes. Splint turned right along the Kerkstraat, where it was still darker. The barbershops were packed with people, and also the Jewish shopkeepers, now that their Sabbath was over, had opened their doors. Large groups of young men and girls walked up and down the Kerkstraat, shouting and laughing.

A crowd was gathered at the Zeedijk. A house was being fumigated for bugs. On orders from the landlord, the inhabitants had filled all the cracks and crevices with kerosene-soaked rags and then set it afire.¹ Smoke swirled upward from all the doors and windows, and the embarrassed inhabitant had to put many mocking remarks in his pocket.²

All this merriment escaped Splint, however. His heart was embittered by the hard and humiliating talk with Bollebakker, and the future of his family was his deep concern.

Shortly, he arrived at the Groest.³ To get home he had to turn right. But then he would also pass the boss of the weaver's mill, Elbert Peet, and that suddenly filled him with revulsion. In his thoughts he saw Krijntje's⁴ small, pale hands turning the spindle. He heard the rending cough from his weak, little lungs echoing through the dusty work place. With a desperate anger he therefore turned left. He would walk to the end of the Groest and then out of the village. He longed for the loneliness of the narrow lane, where he possibly could get himself under control.

At the end of the Groest were a number of notorious taverns. The door stood open and the familiar odors and sounds from earlier years came invitingly to meet him.⁵

Why shouldn't he go in and sit among his old friends, who were just as poor and miserable as he? There was no escape for his family anyway. That scoundrel Bollebakker had said that the church had done its duty. What need had he then for the church?

The strong faith of Evert Splint wavered, and the devil availed himself of the opportunity. Splint managed to pass two taverns, then he hesitated by the third and stood still by the fourth.

At that critical moment a hand was placed on his shoulder. When he had turned himself about he looked into the face of Manus Rebel which still shone with shaving soap. "Good evening," said the hussar watchman good-naturedly.⁶ "Can you help me? Where in this area can one buy the cheapest chewing tobacco? I do not have a crumb left."

It took a few seconds before Splint even understood this simple question. Then he began to point out to Rebel the direction to the small store where one could purchase a package of chewing tobacco for four pence.

"I cannot follow all that going left, then right," laughed the watchman. "Walk along with me, and we'll keep each other company."

Together they walked back, again passing the taverns. The temptation to enter had not yet left Splint. Manus Rebel was not in the least aware that he was protecting his companion from a fatal danger. He chatted incessantly about a military maneuver at the Laarderheide, which he had viewed that day. "All new ideas," he disdainfully scolded. "Things were better in my time."

They passed through a few lanes and suddenly stood in front of an unsightly tobacco shop. Still talking, Rebel pushed Splint ahead of him into the shop. Before Splint could object he had already purchased a small cigar from him. Both men again walked slowly in the direction of the Groest. Splint pleasantly blew away the cigar smoke, feeling that it calmed him. Rebel jammed a "plug" of tobacco behind his teeth with an experienced motion, and looked questioningly at the weaver.

"Very talkative you are not, cavalry captain," he remarked. "Doesn't the cheap cigar appeal to you?"

"Your cigar is okay, Manus, but the man who is smoking it is not."

The old hussar thoughtfully spit out some tobacco juice on the ground. Then he pointed resolutely to a heap of boards. "We are going to sit at that place and rest," he said in an authoritative tone.

Splint took a look at his companion. He hardly knew him, but the ex-watchman had something about him that, in spite of his peculiarities, gave a person confidence in him. Before Evert was aware of it he was pouring out his heart in this deserted lane. He presented the whole sad future of his family to the old hussar, who interrupted occasionally. He seemed to be doing nothing but chewing and spitting, but his sharp ears did not miss a word.

How often had he not heard similar tales about the diaconate.

Manus Rebel rarely went to church. Having been raised in the liberal North,⁷ he soon lost contact with the church when he entered the army. Yet he never completely broke with the faith, not after having walked so often in the shadow of death on the battlefield.

“I would gladly help you into the saddle, mate,” he said kindly as they walked on, “but I myself have all I can do to make ends meet. Yet I am glad that I do not need the help of that church. That whole church can disappear, as far as I am concerned. I have my own faith.”

Splint stepped on the stub of his cigar. By talking he had regained his senses.

“To tell you the truth, Rebel, a half hour ago I felt the same way. But that is deceiving ourselves. God wants us in the church, you and me.”

The hussar watchman chewed and was silent. Again they came to the Groest. Right across from them stood the simple farm of Gijsbert Haan, the leader of the Secessionists. Unexpectedly Manus stood still. Splint hastily took a step backward, for a huge stream of tobacco juice sailed past his head.

“You wanted to admonish the man responsible for watching the alms,” he grumbled. “Pin this in your ears. If I ever go to church again, then it will be with them!” Amazed, Splint saw Rebel’s large index finger pointing to the farm of Gijsbert Haan. “Let that occupy your thoughts for a while. Now I will look for a decent night quarters. Farewell!”

The weaver had just enough time to call a “good night” to him before he disappeared. With a head full of thoughts Splint walked in the direction of the Langeind.

That evening Evert Splint and his wife Sijtje had a long talk by the flickering lamp light. Finally they bowed together at their bed and asked the Lord for deliverance from their distress.

While his wife went to bed Splint again put on his cap. “Till later, wife!” But his wife did not see that he

had taken out of the cupboard the brandy that he had brought into the house for Barentje’s birthday. He held the bottle away from him, as if it held a dangerous beast. With a firm hand he poured out the brandy over the manure pile next to the house, and broke the bottle against a stone. That evening he had again learned how dangerous it could become to have brandy in the house. Then he entered the dark lanes to the hovel of the Secessionist spinner Jacob Hordijk. There he sought information as to where and at what time the Secessionist congregation held its first service the next day.

That Sunday the family of Evert Splint left their seat in the Grote Kerk (the Big Church) unoccupied and listened to the pure preaching of the Word of God in a house on the farm. ❖

¹ Apparently this did not burn down the house, but only chased the bugs away.

² That is, he had to endure many mocking remarks. I recall the time when I was a child that down the hill from where my Grandmother lived was a family which was not very clean. This was in a community of Dutchmen who prided themselves in their cleanliness. The children in the area always crossed the street so that they did not have to walk in front of that house. When I asked why this was (we lived in Illinois), they told me that the family had “cooties.” Inquiring what they were, I was told that they were bedbugs. I never learned whether that was in fact true.

³ The name of a street or a part of the town.

⁴ His small son.

⁵ He had been saved from the sin of drunkenness.

⁶ We met Manus Rebel earlier in the market place in Hilversum.

⁷ The State Church, called the Hervormde Kerk, was much more modern in the north part of the country than in the south.

Note from the Editor

Have you sent an article or poem for publication but have not yet seen it in print? This may be due to a computer problem I had in which I lost some documents. Please resend anything you may have sent in the past but have not yet seen it in print.

Thank you.

Something to Think About (Genetic Engineering)

by Dan Holstege

Having just graduated from Covenant in June, this past young people's convention, which I attended, was probably my last. Holland PRC, the host congregation, chose several topics for discussion groups and sectionals. One of the larger and more controversial ones was the area of genetics and how we as Christians should respond to new advancements. The two main areas of genetics discussed were invitro fertilization and genetic engineering. I know from being in the discussion groups and sectional that this is a heated issue right now, and some people have strong feelings about it. I do not wish to anger or offend anyone in any way by what I am about to say, but I do hope you read with an open mind.

In this article I would like to cover only genetic engineering, or changing the genetic code. As scientists learn more about genetic engineering and how it can benefit humans, they are going to start using it to change genes with disorders into normal genes. In other words, they will take out a gene or genes that cause Down's Syndrome or cystic fibrosis and insert normal, healthy genes in their place. Now this can only be done when a baby is just conceived and is still in the embryo state, so the parents of the baby must make the decision if they want doctors to change the faulty gene(s). Whether or not we should be permitted to do such procedures lies in how we look at the genetic code.

Many say that the genetic code is the will of God for a specific individual and that we may not tamper with it. God wanted the person to have Down's Syndrome in order that the person would have an impact on others and would have that kind of a life. I would like to describe to you how I see the genetic code. The way I see it, there are levels of complexity in the body. The body can be broken down from systems (skeletal, circulatory) to organs (heart, brain) to tissues that make up organs to cells that make up tissues to the things that make up cells. Cells are made up of many things including the nucleus, or brain of the cell. Inside the nucleus is DNA which

makes up the genetic code. Each person is given his own specific code by God when he is conceived, and it forms the person into a complete human being. However, that code is still part of the body.

In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve sinned and caused God's curse to fall on Creation. As a result many troublesome things occurred and developed. Diseases, parasites, pain, death, and of course sin are some of them. By far the worst thing was that we fell into sin and our souls were dead in it ("for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"). Sin had to do with the state of our soul, and thus it was impossible for us men to deal with. Our souls are untouchable, and their state cannot be altered by us. However, the physical, earthly troubles that God incurred on us when He cursed the ground were meant to be dealt with. God tells Adam in Genesis 3:17-18 the following, "And unto Adam he said, Because thou has hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, ... cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field." Thorns and thistles will trouble us all our lives, but we must deal with them in order to continue in this life.

All through history man has worked towards healing diseases, and quite often he has been successful. Up until recently, these diseases have all been treated or cured by doing things only to larger, more visible parts of the body. For example, small pox was done away with by the use of vaccines. We don't need to be afraid of curing diseases because Jesus cured "all manner of diseases" as is seen in Matthew 4:23, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." I don't think anyone will argue that we will treat a disease with whatever drugs, vaccines, or surgeries are needed. The problem comes in when we change the genetic code to heal a disease.

Think of it this way: If there was a drug that would somehow cure a genetic disease and make a baby healthy, you would give it to the baby as soon as it was born, right? If you had to perform surgery in order to change an organ of the baby, you would do that, right? I say that changing the genetic code is simply a more complex form of surgery that cures the illness of the baby and gives it healthy life. It's as simple as this: the genetic code is not part of the soul, it is part of the body, and as such it can be changed and altered to heal disease.

changing the genetic code is
simply a more complex form
of surgery.

Using this technology is not "playing God" either, as some have said. Since we are not using it in defiance to God's will and power, we are not attempting to be God. Rather, we are using what God has given us in order to get rid of some of the pain and suffering that is so prevalent in this earth. Jesus gave His disciples power to heal also. Matthew 10:1, "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." Although this technology is not in the form of miracles, it is still given to us by God and can be used accordingly.

I would like to finish by giving a word of caution about this subject. As with most things on this earth, there is a right and a wrong way to use genetic engineering. If and when it becomes common to use this technology, we must be careful as to what our motives are in changing the DNA of our child. I believe that changing things for selfish, worldly reasons is wrong. For example, changing DNA to make a taller or smarter person is going too far. I do not believe that genetic engineering is wrong in itself. There is a right way to use it. Through prayerful consideration, God-fearing couples can change DNA to heal genetic diseases. Although it is not yet possible, we should keep these things in mind when it does become possible. ❖

Dan is a member of Southeast Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

He Is God!

by Thelma Westra

*"Choose you this day," said Joshua,
Then boldly he avowed
That he himself and all his house
Would testify aloud:
Jehovah: He is God!*

*The ark of God was captured
By Philistines, who were shown
That Dagon would be crushed before
The God Who reigns alone.
Jehovah: He is God!*

*Upon the mount of Carmel
Elijah showed that Baal
Was but an idol made with hands.
Each test must surely fail.
Jehovah: He is God!*

*God's people now take warning:
No idol of this earth
Called Pleasure, Money, Pride,
Have any lasting worth.
Jehovah: He is God!*

*Now unto God Jehovah
Lift heart and voice in praise:
In grand symphonic melody
Our voices let us raise!
Jehovah: He is God!*

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Cornelius Jonker

December 1 Read Exodus 10:1-6

The fearful plague of thunderings and hail had ceased, and once again we read that Pharaoh hardened his heart. This was sovereignly ordained by God, for He instructed Moses to go again to Pharaoh in order to reveal to him and all people the power of God. Moses then describes the impending plague of locusts. God further commands Moses to tell his children and his children's children the mighty works of God that they might know that He is the Lord. This is our holy calling as well. Do our children realize how great a God we serve? In the measure that we as parents, or teachers, or any other capacity, respect and hold the name of God in reverential fear, so will our children and pupils. What a great blessing for us that our God is a covenant God and what a privilege as well as a solemn responsibility it is to bring forth children and instruct them in the way of the Lord. Psalter 213:1-3.

December 2 Read Exodus 10:7-11

The servants of Pharaoh who were well aware of all that was transpiring in the land, finally advised their king in carefully chosen words to let the men go and serve the Lord their God. They realized that their country was almost in ruins. Pharaoh asked Moses who would go, and Moses, aware of Pharaoh's deceptions, replied that every soul plus their flocks and herds would go. That answer was not acceptable to Pharaoh and in anger he drove Moses and Aaron from his presence. Even as Moses insisted that every member of every family must be included in the worship of Jehovah, so must we with our families, from the youngest to the oldest attend divine worship. As soon as little children can sit reasonably still, they must be under the official preaching of the Word. The Spirit can and does speak also to their little hearts. We must have none of "children's church" in place of the preaching of the gospel. As we worship today, thank God that there are no Pharaohs to prevent us from worshipping Him as He commands us, and count it a privilege to live in a land that yet allows us the freedom of worship. Psalter 349:1-3.

December 3 Read Exodus 10:12-20

Moses left the courts of Pharaoh and in obedience to God's command, stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt to bring about the eighth plague, namely hordes of locusts. It was such an incredible host, that one could look out and see nothing but locusts devouring every bit of grass, leaves and vegetation. Under this mighty demonstration of God's power, Pharaoh hastily calls for Moses and Aaron to exclaim that he has sinned and prays that his sin be forgiven this once. We see here another instance of the wicked calling upon God, not in repentance for all his sins, but for immediate relief from the awful locusts. In Proverbs 28:9 we read "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination". How about your prayers, dear reader? Young people, do you make time for personal prayers? Not a hasty, almost memorized prayer, but sincere confession of all sins, and especially spe-

cific sins to which you are prone. There is forgiveness at the foot of the cross, for God beholds His people in Christ and imputes to them His righteousness. Pray, people of God, with a sincere heart for "the prayer of the upright is his delight." Proverbs 15:8(b) Psalter 31:1-3.

December 4 Read Exodus 10:21-23

The Lord isn't finished with Pharaoh and his host as yet. He will show His awesome power and judgment against this proud ruler by sovereignly hardening his heart even though Pharaoh willfully and deliberately shakes his fist, as it were, in the face of the Almighty. The ninth plague is inflicted upon the land of Egypt. A darkness settled on the land, so black, so thick, and so dense that it could be felt. No light could pierce it, and it brought to a standstill all movement for three days. It had to speak powerfully to the Egyptians who considered the sun to be a god. This darkness pictured to Pharaoh that his cup of iniquity was full and spoke of the judgment to come in that place of outer darkness. These three days of darkness and the three hours of darkness at Christ's crucifixion spoke of God's holy wrath against the wicked. What about you and I dear reader? Can we boast that we are not like these people? We deserve no less than they for we read in Ephesians 2:3 "(we) were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." How humbling, but listen further in that same passage: "But God who is rich in mercy...hath quickened us together in Christ." That's the gospel, that's our only hope and comfort. "For by grace are ye saved through faith." Pray that God will strengthen our faith that we may walk as children of the light. Psalter 71:1, 2, 5.

December 5 Read Exodus 10:24-29

The darkness was lifted from Egypt and Pharaoh summons Moses into his presence once more. The terror of that sea of blackness had subsided and so he makes one more attempt to bargain with the Almighty. He agreed to let the people go, including their little ones, but insisted that the flocks and herds be left behind. In his stubborn rebellion he seeks to retain their herds as hostages to insure the peoples' return. When Moses adamantly maintains that not even a hoof be left behind, Pharaoh in great fury tells him to leave and threatens to slay him if he returns. This should not surprise us, for from the beginning of time, the church has faced persecution and death from the world. Moses was not frightened by the king's threat, and neither should we be if facing a similar threat, for God is on our side. Most of us live in an environment in which our lives are not threatened because of our faith, but beware lest we become complacent. Satan works diligently in many subtle ways to destroy the church. Our comfort and assurance is that the God Who hardened Pharaoh's heart to deliver His people, and to show His almighty power, is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and He will be our Guide even unto death. Psalter 203:1, 2, 5.

December 6 Read Exodus 11:1-10

The first three verses of this chapter must be considered parenthetical and could better read “Now the Lord *had* said to Moses. . . .” Pharaoh is told that the final plague to descend upon Egypt would be the death of every firstborn in the land and describes the great outcry of sorrow coming from every home. In contrast to this, he states that not even a dog would dare to make a sound against the Israelites. He further predicts that Pharaoh and his servants will not only permit the people to go, but will actually bow down to Moses and thrust the Israelites out of Egypt. He then leaves Pharaoh’s presence in great anger. None of this has any effect on the king. He is determined to go in his wicked way and refuses to obey God. But God is on the throne and controls every step of this process in order to show His power and judgment upon the wicked and His mercy to Israel, His firstborn son. What a privilege is ours to serve Him. Let us resolve to honor Him today by walking in thankful obedience. Psalter 207:1-4.

December 7 Read Exodus 12:1-10

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron to give specific instructions for their impending departure from Egypt after the last manifestation of His power and wrath would be poured out upon that land. This departure was an event of such importance that even the month in which they were to leave would be the beginning of months on their religious calendar. A lamb with no defects must be selected on the tenth day, kept apart until the fourteenth day, and then be killed with its blood sprinkled on the lintel and side posts of their doors. The lamb must be roasted with fire and eaten in haste with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. All this had significance for the children of Israel as we shall see later in the chapter. These instructions were divinely given by a holy and sovereign God, Who rightly demands that we obey Him and worship Him as He commands. As churches, we are committed to the “regulative principle” of worship. Only those elements of worship are permitted that are prescribed by Scripture. Nothing else may be introduced as part of the worship. Young people and children who will be taking your place in the church, hold fast to this principle, cherish it with all your heart, for only then will God be pleased to bless us. Psalter 222:1, 2, 7.

December 8 Read Exodus 12:11-20

Here we have the institution of the Passover. It was first of all a sacrifice, pointing to the fact that the people of Israel were in themselves no better than the Egyptians. They must be covered by the blood of the lamb to satisfy God’s justice. The Passover lamb in itself could not do this, but only as it pointed to Christ the true Lamb of God. The Passover was also a meal. They had to have sustenance for the journey that would be undertaken, but it was more than that. As His covenant people, they partook of Christ and had fellowship with Him. The bitter herbs reminded them of their bondage, while the unleavened bread signified the purging out of the old leaven of sin and their becoming a holy people unto the Lord. This was all typical of course. The reality is the church redeemed through the sacrifice of the true Lamb of God on Calvary’s cross. Read the description of the church in L.D. 21, Q&A. 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism and thankfully say from the heart “that I am and forever shall remain a living member thereof.” Psalter 374:1, 3, 5.

December 9 Read Exodus 12:21-28

In obedience to God’s command, Moses called the elders of Israel together and related to them all that God spoke to him regarding the Passover preparations and their coming deliverance. They in turn must inform the congregation. He spelled out exactly what they must do and surely explained the great significance of all these instructions. Each thing had its typical and deeper meaning, with the lamb as the central theme. It had to be perfect; its blood must be shed and sprinkled on the lintel and side posts of the door; not a bone could be broken; the people must eat it, and none must remain to be defiled. Space will not suffice to reveal all that this momentous occasion signified, but God in His great mercy showed that the only way that an unworthy people could possibly be redeemed was through the covering of the blood. When the destroyer saw the blood he would pass over that house. What was the people’s reaction when they heard this? We read that they “bowed the head and worshipped”. Today we will hear that same gospel of the Lamb Who was slain for His beloved church. Shall we not also bow our heads and worship with unspeakable gratitude for so great a salvation? Psalter 269:1-4.

December 10 Read Exodus 12:29-36

It was midnight on the Lord’s clock and the tenth and last plague was visited upon the Egyptians. Every firstborn in the land from the palace to the prison was struck with death, with no family excluded, plus the firstborn of their cattle. Gone was the wicked pride and rebellion of king Pharaoh. His spirit for the first time is broken, and although his mind is as dark as ever, he is forced to acknowledge that Jehovah is God. He calls for Moses and Aaron yet that night and tells them to leave the country along with the Israelites, their children and their herds. The Egyptians likewise urged the people to depart, and true to the word of the Lord to Moses at the burning bush, they willingly gave jewelry and clothing to the Israelites plus anything else for which they asked. There are many references throughout Scripture of Israel being called out of Egypt and is rich with typology. Even as the nation of Israel, whom God called His firstborn Son (Ex. 4:22) is called out of bondage and sin, so God’s firstborn Son, Jesus Christ, is also called out of Egypt (Matt. 2:15) and must die to satisfy the justice of God and redeem His church. Is that firstborn Son your Savior and Lord, dear reader? Then pray for grace to leave the Egypt of this world and consecrate your life to His service. Psalter 289:1, 14, 15.

December 11 Read Exodus 12:37-42

What a memorable night that was when this huge multitude of people began their exodus from the land of Egypt. No more lashes from the overseer’s whips and no more servitude in bondage. It is estimated that some two million souls laden with spoil from the Egyptians, plus much cattle began this journey. We read that the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. Now they leave in haste which meant that they could only take unleavened bread for their journey. Much significance is given to this exodus as a wonderwork of the Lord and the people are instructed to observe this great deliverance throughout their generations. Every step of the way the Lord reminded the Israelites of His glorious redemption by signs and wonders. He also reminds the church today of that same redemption through the finished work of Christ Jesus. We are reminded of it through partaking of the Lord’s Supper and through the preaching of the Word. Treasure it, people of God, young and old and instruct your children accordingly. Psalter 191:5, 6, 7.

December 12 Read Exodus 12:43-51

This passage relates the Lord's instructions to Moses regarding the ordinance of the Passover prior to their departure from Egypt. Only those who bore the sign of the covenant could partake of the paschal lamb. The Lord was very meticulous in describing who was allowed to participate in this solemn occasion. To desecrate the eating of the Passover lamb was a profaning of the ordinance. To partake in faith was a most blessed privilege. We read that the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded. Young people, we realize that parents, pastors and elders encourage you to publicly profess your faith in Christ. When this occurs, it is a cause for them and the entire church to rejoice. But do you realize that Christ Himself said "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, which is in heaven" Matthew 10:32. What an incentive! May you by God's grace be led to fully participate in the communion of the saints. Psalter 112:1-3.

December 13 Read Exodus 13:1-10

God is determined, and rightly so, that His work of redemption be remembered, not only by the people that actually left the bondage of Egypt, but by their generations as well. How the Lord stressed that this deliverance was brought about by Him alone! Twice He states that with a strong hand He brought them out of Egypt. His claim on Israel is absolute for they are His people whom He actually called His firstborn son (Ex. 4:22) He established the ordinance of the feast of unleavened bread, a seven day event culminating in a feast to the Lord. It would be a sign upon their hand, a memorial between their eyes, and a law in their mouth. Tell this to thy son, the Lord says, that they may see in picture form, the deliverance from sin, the earthly pilgrimage through the desert to the heavenly Canaan, and how it all points to Christ. Without His perfect sacrifice, there could be no pardon for sins, no redemption and no hope of eternal glory. But He satisfied God's justice and He "ever liveth to make intercession for us," Romans 7:25. Remember this, people of God, and be sure to tell your children. Psalter 215:1-3.

December 14 Read Exodus 13:11-16

One more ordinance God established to be observed, when He brought Israel into the land of Canaan, was the consecration of the firstborn. All the firstborn sons of the nation and every firstborn male animal were to be consecrated to the Lord. The firstlings of all clean beasts were to be sacrificed, but the firstborn of unclean animals such as donkeys were to be redeemed, or bought back by sacrificing a lamb in its place. And once again the Lord stresses the point that when their sons asked the meaning of this ordinance, the parents must instruct them of the great deliverance from the house of bondage by the strength of the Lord. Also that the Lord slew all the firstborn of Egypt but in His mercy spared Israel's firstborn. Therefore every firstborn male shall be called holy to the Lord. The parents are required to redeem them with a sacrifice. We too, as God's people are redeemed; not with sacrifices, of silver and gold, "but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot." Having that knowledge then, shall we not walk each day, whether we are young or old, in a manner consistent with that confession? Psalter 111:1, 3, 4.

December 15 Read Exodus 13:17-22

One might think that the Lord would lead this tremendous host by the shortest possible route to the promised land of Canaan. But the Lord in His wisdom had many reasons not to do so. The short-

est route meant military encounters with the Philistines and although the people acquired some weapons, they were not ready for battle. They must first undergo a long period of training and learn many spiritual lessons in the wilderness. Many other reasons will unfold as we delve into their long desert journey. God never forsakes His people, but leads them each step of the way. The Israelites had their pillar of cloud and fire. We have God's Word which is a lamp to our feet and a light upon our path. Sometimes God leads us in a way of pain, sorrow or trials, and although it is difficult for our flesh to bear, yet we know it is for our good and we must with patience wait on Him, praying "Thy will be done." Psalter 210:1, 4, 5.

December 16 Read Exodus 14:1-12

We may ask, why did the Lord lead the children of Israel into a situation in which Pharaoh would believe they were hopelessly trapped? One answer is given that the Lord purposed to harden Pharaoh's heart which will lead him to his final destruction. Another is that He will be "honoured upon Pharaoh" thereby glorifying His own name. We also read of the first instance of Israel murmuring against the Lord when they see the Egyptians coming after them with an army. The Lord deliberately leads them into an impossible situation so that they may realize that they cannot rely on their own strength to deliver them. Trapped between the mountains and the Red Sea, there was no avenue of escape except by divine deliverance. We too are encompassed by a mountain of sin and a sea of guilt and there is no hope for deliverance, except for the regenerating grace of God in our hearts giving us new life and the desire to serve Him. Pray for grace each day to walk in thankful obedience. Psalter 352:1-4.

December 17 Read Exodus 14:13-18

Moses reacted to the people's rebellion by saying, "Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord". He answers them that this will be the last they will see of the Egyptians. At the same time he must have cried to the Lord, for the Lord said "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward". Then he instructs Moses to lift up his rod and divide the sea. The Lord twice states that He will have the honour upon Pharaoh and that the Egyptians must acknowledge that He is the Lord. We see multitudes today feverishly pursuing the fame, riches and pleasures that the world has to offer, but it all leads to destruction. Are we listening to the words of Moses, "Fear not, and see the salvation of the Lord"? Then follows the Lord's command, "Go forward". Let us also follow this command by faith with Him as our guide, and strive to bring glory to His name. Psalter 375: 1, 3, 4.

December 18 Read Exodus 14:19-22

What a marvelous occurrence took place in this passage of Scripture. First of all the leading pillar of fire which was the manifestation of Christ's presence moved behind the children of Israel and was a shining light to them, but darkness to the Egyptians. The effect of this separation by the Lord was that the enemy could not come near His people. When Moses stretched out his rod the waters divided, making walls on both sides forming a dry path in the midst of the Red Sea. Unbelievers in their folly try to find natural causes for this phenomena, but this was a wonder, a marvelous sign of the power of God, Who leads His people by His grace. This was also an act of faith on the part of Israel, for we read in Hebrews 11:29, "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land". It is also typical of baptism as we read in the prayer of the baptism

form: “(thou) has led thy people Israel through the midst of the Sea upon dry ground, by which baptism was signified”. Read this beautiful form, children and young people. Cherish your covenant sign and do not bring shame to it by sinful actions. Thank God for His mercy in choosing you and walk as one of His professing children. Psalter 143:1, 3.

December 19 Read Exodus 14:23-31

We read of the final destruction and judgment of Pharaoh and his army. Although the last plague had broken his resistance, yet he was not humbled in true repentance. When he heard that Israel was encamped by the Red Sea, he was determined by wicked hatred to pursue and return them to slavery. This was God’s doing, as He hardened Pharaoh’s heart because He will show His power over this evil tyrant. It was a disaster for the Egyptians as they in their folly pursued Israel in the sea. When the Israelites were safely across the water, Moses is instructed to stretch out his hand that the waters might engulf and drown the Egyptians. God is glorified in the salvation of His people and the destruction of the enemy. The reaction of Israel was that they feared the Lord and believed. Oh, not every one possessed faith and believed, but those whom God chose from all eternity did. Can you say, dear reader, as the father of the demon possessed son said to Jesus, “Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief”? Then you have everything! Psalter 342:1-3.

December 20 Read Exodus 15:1-13

When Moses and the people of Israel fully comprehended the amazing deliverance that the Lord accomplished in their behalf, they couldn’t contain themselves and burst into a mighty chorus of praise. They were free, free to live their lives unshackled by cruel taskmasters. Led by Moses, the hills echoed with this inspired psalm of praise that extolled God and Him alone. “He is a man of war”, they sang. He destroyed the enemy. His right hand dashed them in pieces; His wrath burned them as straw; by His breath the waters served to both kill the enemy, but save His people. This forerunner of the Psalms gives all the glory to God, extolling His greatness, revealing His wrath, but showing mercy to His redeemed people. We read in James 5:13 “Is any merry? Let him sing psalms.” Let us do likewise. God gave us songs to sing and reasons to sing them. Moses’ psalm of praise pointed to salvation in Christ. Let us join their chorus too and sing “The Lord is my strength and song and he is become my salvation.” Psalter 290:1, 2, 8.

December 21 Read Exodus 15:14-21

Sometimes we tend to worry about the future. We see wars and unrest, increasing wickedness in the world, and impending persecution of the church rearing its ugly head. The church is so small. What will our children and grandchildren have to face in their lives? The Lord is well aware of this, even as He knew that the children of Israel would face many formidable enemies on their journey to Canaan. What do we hear the mighty chorus of the Israelites sing? “Fear grips Philistia, Edom is dismayed, Moab trembles, the Canaanites melt with fear”. The Israelites were given this assurance as they began their pilgrimage to the earthly Canaan. We too have this assurance on our way to the heavenly Canaan, and although our journey may be difficult at times for the flesh, we can confidently say with the apostle Paul in Romans 8:31, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” That alone is our hope and comfort. Psalter 137:1, 2, 6.

December 22 Read Exodus 15:22-27

The Israelites began their journey into the desert. In these first three days, the scenery began to change from one of fertile plains of Egypt to barren expanses of wilderness. They began their journey with confidence and probably expected that ahead of them lay only a smooth road into Canaan. But now comes the trials. Their supply of water is exhausted, they are tired and thirsty, and when they came to Marah they found water but it was so bitter they could not drink it. So they murmur against Moses, but in actuality they murmured against Christ who was the antitype of Moses and who leads His people out of sin and death. The Lord instructs Moses to cast a tree into the waters and miraculously they were made sweet. We too tend to murmur when we encounter disappointments and trials in our lives. This is sinful, for when we are led through the wilderness of trouble and bitterness, it is to prove and test us that our faith may be made stronger. Pray for grace to patiently endure afflictions knowing that all things work together for our good. Psalter 329:1, 2, 4.

December 23 Read Exodus 16:1-8

After a restful stay at Elim for about a month, the children of Israel resumed their journey into the wilderness. Their supply of food soon ran out and again they murmured, this time very sinfully, exclaiming that they would rather had died in Egypt with their stomachs full than to die from hunger in this wilderness. How soon they forgot the wonder works of God and His promise that He would lead them to the promised land. We must not believe that every one, head for head, murmured. While the majority complained, the remnant prayed. The Lord tells Moses that He will rain bread from heaven in the morning and provide flesh in the evening for their daily sustenance. That bread from heaven was a material substance that gave physical nourishment. It was a picture of the true bread from heaven of which you may partake today in faith as you attend divine worship and hear the preaching of the Word. Christ is that living bread. Hear Him today. May we truly hunger for that bread and be filled with thanksgiving and praise to God for such a great salvation. Psalter 311:1, 2, 5.

December 24 Read Exodus 16:9-21

Before the people could actually see and eat the manna that the Lord would provide, they must assemble and behold the glory of God in the cloud. This indicated that the manna was a very evident sign of the presence of the Lord as the God of their salvation. The giving of the manna not only would sustain them physically, but was also meant to be a trial of their faith. Every day they must gather it, an omer per person, which amounted to about five pints each. None of it might be left until the morning since it would then decay and become rancid as many found out. This meant that each day anew they were completely dependent on God for their existence. Many received it as only physical food, but to those who believed, the manna served as a means to strengthen their faith and to confess “that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord,” Deuteronomy 8:3. May that be our confession as well, trusting Him not only to supply our daily bread, but above all, grace to walk in thankfulness and obedience unto Him. Psalter 292:1, 3, 4, 5.

December 25 Read Exodus 16:22-31

In this passage we read about a special provision made for the Sabbath. God instituted the Sabbath in Paradise and we read no more of it until now, but we should not assume that the people were

unfamiliar with it. However, now the Lord gives a precept that called for its strict observance in the cessation of all manual labor. To that end, no manna would fall on the Sabbath and the people were to gather a double portion on the previous day, which would be miraculously preserved. The Lord instituted this day as a day of rest from all weekly toil, a holy day, consecrated to Him and His service. How do you celebrate the Sabbath, dear reader? Let us remind ourselves what the Lord says in Isaiah 58:13 and 14: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Psalter 320:1-5.

December 26 Read Exodus 16:32-36

This chapter has dealt with the wondrous provision of manna for the children of Israel. It now concludes with instructions from the Lord to fill a container with an omer of manna to be preserved in a sacred place, namely the ark of the testimony. We know that the ark was not yet constructed, so although these verses deal with the issue of manna, this command was probably given to Moses after the tabernacle was built. It was important for the generations following to learn about this manna and all that it signified. It was truly a physical, life sustaining bread, but most importantly it pointed to Christ Who is the Bread of Life. There is life only in Christ. He took away the guilt of our sins and merited eternal life for all His own. Through faith we are ingrafted into Him. Therefore the people must teach their generations the wonderful works of God. Young people, feast on that hidden manna, the Word of God. Parents, teach your children how privileged they are as His covenant seed, and never cease to instill in them the greatness and goodness of our God. Psalter 81:1, 2, 4.

December 27 Read Exodus 17:1-7

The Lord led the people of Israel in a southerly direction through rugged mountainous terrain, devoid of vegetation, to a place called Rephidim. They found no water for themselves, their children and their cattle. They were hot, tired, dusty and thirsty. Instead of prayerfully looking to the Lord for help, Who had wondrously sustained them thus far, the majority of the people demanded that Moses give them water. And to compound their sinful murmuring, they say in effect "you have brought us out of Egypt to kill us with thirst" and were ready to stone him. When Moses cried to the Lord, he is told to take the elders and his rod and go to the rock at Horeb. There he must strike the rock to obtain water. Jehovah's presence in the cloud and the elders beside Moses confirmed the importance of the occasion. The rock was smitten and water gushed out. This was a picture of Christ, the Rock Who was smitten of God for our sins and from Whom proceedeth living waters. What is your reaction, people of God, when your faith is tried? Do you rebel and murmur, or prayerfully and patiently pray for grace to be submissive and wait upon Him? May God grant us that patience that endures to the end. Psalter 60:1, 3, 4.

December 28 Read Exodus 17:8-16

The Amalekites, who were descendants of Esau, attacked the Israelites while they were at Rephidim. We read in Deut. 25:17 & 18 that they struck down all who lagged behind when they were faint and weary, and significantly, the reason is given that the

Amalekites feared not God. A band of men was chosen and proceeded to fight Amalek. Moses took the rod of God in his hand and stood on a hill. When the rod was stretched out, Israel prevailed; when the rod was let down, Amalek prevailed. This rod was the symbol of the power of God. The lifting up and letting down of the rod testified that they were fighting the battle of the Lord against Amalek who opposed Him. It also showed that they could not win in their own strength, and it proved that the victory was not theirs but Jehovah's. This is true for us, too, as God's people. We are called upon daily to fight the battle of faith. If we attempt to do so in our own power, we will fail. Only through faith, which is a gift of God, can we prevail. Significantly the Lord commands a memorial to be written for the church of all ages that Amalek is a prototype of the powers of darkness which war against it. An altar is erected and called "Jehovah my Banner". Hold that banner before you, people of God, as you march to that Heavenly Canaan. Psalter 353:1-3.

December 29 Read Exodus 18:1-6

We have an account here of the meeting of Moses and his father-in-law, Jethro. Jethro, also called Reuel, was the priest of Midian and is believed to be a descendant of Abraham through Keturah. He brings with him Moses' wife and two sons. We are informed in these verses that Moses had sent Zipporah with her children back to Jethro, most likely after the occurrence at the inn in chapter 4:25. Jethro is a God-fearing priest and, although the historic line of the covenant is continued with Jacob, we see that it does not immediately die out in other generations. Moses had lived with Jethro for forty years while God prepared him for the arduous task of leading Israel out of bondage and up to Canaan. The names of his two sons are given, and it is interesting to note the meaning of them. Gershom means "stranger" which Moses experienced in the land of Median, away from his own people. Eliezer means "The Lord is my help and will deliver me from the sword of Pharaoh". Most of us don't follow this custom, but there's much to be said for both parents and children when a name is chosen with a Godly connotation. Psalter 360:1, 4, 5.

December 30 Read Exodus 18:7-12

Even in Midian the news had come to Jethro's ears about the mighty deliverance wrought by God for His people Israel. Now as he sat in Moses' tent, Moses carefully recounted in detail all what had transpired in the land of Egypt up to the present time. Upon hearing all of this, Jethro breaks forth with a joyful exclamation: "Blessed be the Lord who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians". Then, as a priest in his own right, he offered a sacrifice of burnt offerings to the Lord. Aaron and all the elders of Israel were summoned to this sacred service after which they ate bread before the Lord. What a beautiful and solemn occasion! Today being the Lord's day, we have the same privilege. We bring the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart (Ps. 51:17), which is acceptable to God. We also feast on the bread of life, which is the Word of God, and break forth with a doxology of praise "Blest be the Lord our father's God". That is a great blessing, people of God, a reason for joyful thanksgiving and it is a solemn responsibility to faithfully use these means. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation," Hebrews 2:3. Psalter 266:1-3.

December 31 Read Exodus 18:13-27

The very next morning after the sacrificial feast offered by Jethro, Moses resumed his duties as lawgiver and judge of the people. Jethro observed how dedicated Moses was to this task and how

much work it involved from morning to evening. Being a man of wisdom, Jethro soon realized that this burden was too heavy for Moses. He proposed that if God approved, able men should be selected from the people to judge small matters between persons, and any great matters or necessary spiritual guidance be handled by Moses. Moses wisely went with this matter to the Lord as Jethro proposed. The result was that a workable system was put into practice thereby lifting an almost impossible burden of work from

Moses. God saw to it that Jethro appeared in that moment of history to make a necessary change. God is aware of all our problems and heartaches that burden us. He may not send a Jethro into our lives to solve our difficulties, but he does say, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." I Peter 5:6, 7. Psalter 398:1-3.

Music

The Apostolic Age of Music

by Melissa Van Baren

Can you imagine – they had Christ right with them to guide and direct their worship each step of the way! They had Christ showing them directly how to worship His Father – their Father and our Father! How blessed they were in the apostolic age! We too are blessed in the same way. God has given us His Word to be our guide in our pursuit to worship God. How blessed we too are to have God as our guide.

Christ, by example, showed us how to pray, walk in life, and worship. Part of that worship included singing. He often used examples from the Psalms for that very purpose, but it is interesting that not very often, if at all, do we hear of the Apostles singing with instruments. In fact, Calvin in his commentary on Exodus 15:20 says, "Yet, it must be observed, at the same time, that musical instruments were among the legal ceremonies which Christ at His coming abolished; and therefore we, under the gospel must maintain a greater simplicity." Calvin also in his commentary on Psalm 33 also states more strongly how Christ abolished instruments at His coming and how "musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps and the restoration of the other shadows of the law." He continues on to say and explain that worship should be in simplicity. Yet we continue to use instruments.

There are a few accounts in the New Testament of people singing. Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 both speak of wisdom dwelling in us and our calling to teach and admonish one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs "singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." There is also the story of the Philippian jailer's conversion. Paul and Silas "prayed, and sang praises unto God" (Acts 16:25). That is an amazing faith that they had – that even in that turmoil they were still able to sing praises to God. Most of us would have grumbled and complained. This is a great example for us to follow in times of strife. There are also accounts in the New Testament of the Christ leading His disciples in singing after the last supper, before they went into the Mount of Olives (Mark 14:26 and Matt. 26:30).

My next article will focus on the worldly music at the time of the apostles and what things they might have dealt with when they were told to go into all the world and preach the gospel. What did the church of that time struggle with? What types of music might they have been tempted by? They were not perfect as it might have seemed. They, too, battled against the flesh and the desires of the world around them just as we do today! That battle was a constant battle and continues to today. May God bless His church in the world around us! ❖

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

Rev. Ronald Van Overloop

edited by Kris Moelker

God gave Gordon and June Van Overloop a baby boy on February 13, 1949. I was baptized by the Rev. Gerrit Vos as a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church.

For the first four and half years of my life I lived on 84th Street in Byron Center, Michigan (just a block away from the present location of the Protestant Reformed Church in Byron). At that time the efforts to establish a Protestant Reformed Church in Byron Center had ceased, and those in this community who desired to be Protestant Reformed traveled to the northwest about ten miles to attend the Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville. Love for God and His Church overcame any obstacles created by distance.

When it was time for my elementary education to begin my parents saw the need for a move. There were no bus routes from Byron Center to Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School in Walker. For them this move was necessitated by their love for God and for their children. As well, they were very conscious of the vows they had made at baptism, namely, to see their child “instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine...to the utmost of their power.” They would do whatever it took to have their child properly educated. So my parents moved to Hudsonville, to a house on 32nd Avenue (just two blocks from the present location of the Protestant Reformed church in Hudsonville). There was a long bus ride to Hope School on a route which included stops as far west as Beaverdam, but that would not stand in the way. An interesting note is that the bus driver during my eighth and ninth grades was a young man who was in his last two years in the Protestant Reformed Seminary. His name was David Engelsma.

When I began attending Hope, there were only four classrooms. During my years at Hope God blessed the school with good growth, so that the school expanded a couple of times. My first teacher was Miss Jessie Dykstra. Teachers who later had to put up with me were Miss Delores Mensch, Mr. Jim Jonker, Mr. John Buitter, Mr.



Lamm Lubbers, and Miss Agatha Lubbers. Strong memories exist of a solid education, with a Protestant Reformed basis. This education was also a part of the means God used to prepare me for the ministry.

After graduating from Hope School in 1963 I attended Unity Christian High School in Hudsonville, from which I graduated in 1966. Then it was on to Calvin College, where I enrolled in a pre-seminary course of study. Studies at Calvin ended after only two years there. At that time there was much concern about the education received in the colleges. So the Synod and the Theological School Committee of the Protestant Reformed Churches urged the men who were taking pre-sem courses in college to come to the Seminary. The seminary professors, Prof. Homer Hoeksema and Prof. Herman Hanko, agreed to teach the remainder of the pre-sem requirements for these collegians, as well as all of the regular seminary subjects. As a result of this plea, in September of 1968 I began attending classes at the Prot-

estant Reformed Seminary. The seminary was situated in the basement of old First Church, located at the corner of Fuller and Franklin in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The four years spent in the Protestant Reformed Theological School were good years, filled with activity. First, there was the hard work required by the professors. They worked hard, and they expected the seminarians to work hard. The love the professors had for God, for His truth, for the church, and for the Protestant Reformed Churches was a love they sought to instill into their students. A great education was given, which fully equipped one for the ministry in our churches.

In addition to getting an education, I got a wife. During the first of those four years, I courted Susan Swart, the oldest daughter of Bill and Ruth Swart, who were members of First PRC in Grand Rapids. In the summer of 1969 we were married by Rev. GiseVan Baren. The marriage was another powerful means the King of the Church used to equip me for the ministry. Before graduating, the Lord blessed our marriage with two healthy children – still another means in God’s all-wise hands to equip and develop one to be His servant.

How did it happen that I thought to become a minister? At first, I did not think it likely, nor possible. My earliest memory came through brief comments made by Rev. Vos during catechism classes. Not often and not a lot, but a seed sown. I remember that my reaction was to blush and say, “Never.” But the seed of the possibility of the ministry was sown, and God watered that seed.

Maybe having a seminarian for a bus driver was a way God reminded me of the seminary and ministry every day for almost two years. My parents encouraged all of their six sons to consider the ministry or teaching. They saw the great need in the churches and schools they loved – a love they sought to instill into their sons. The churches and schools were frequently in their prayers, so it was natural that they urged their sons to consider whether the Lord would call them to serve Him in these ways. And Rev. Vos continued, in his inimitable way, quietly to sow various seeds in my mind and soul that maybe the Lord wanted me to serve in the gospel ministry. In the ninth grade a profile had to be filled out, which profile was to be used in the Hope Echoes, the school’s annual. In response to the question about an intended career, I remember thinking about becoming a preacher, but I felt it would be too bold to say this. So instead of putting down “preacher,” I wrote “teacher” (though that too was written with trepidation). I can remember that when some of my classmates discovered what I had put down, a couple of them expressed themselves in agreement and one said what I had not dared to write, “What about becoming a preacher?” This was a God-given encouragement needed by one so hesitant. This was positive peer pressure. *(To be continued in the next issue.)*



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

Church Family

Post-High Bible Study

by Jodi Oomkes and Andrea Lenting

You may have seen “Post High” meetings announced in your bulletins. This group meets the last Sunday of every month at Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan, and is open to anyone out of high school wanting to have a Biblical-based topical discussion, as well as fellowship with other like-minded believers.

Deane and Donna Wassink started this group approximately six years ago. Deane and Donna had been

Young People’s leaders at First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland and saw a need that they could fill: young people lost touch with each other after high school and were dating and marrying outside the PR churches. They wanted to get young adults involved in a discussion group and keep them in touch with each other. Deane and Donna contacted the Federation Board and explained their thoughts, told them that they would be willing to lead, and asked if they needed to get approval. They did

not need approval, but could get help from the Federation Board if needed. The Wassinks chose Faith as the meeting place because of its central location.

A goal for this group was, and still is, to contain each discussion to one night, so as to more easily accommodate the often-irregular schedules of young adults. That way, if one could not make it to a meeting, he/she would not miss an integral part of a continued discussion.

The Post High group has grown a lot since its inception. After six years, the group has grown to 50 or more attendants at meetings recently. The number of attendants is now fairly steady, but the faces change over the months and years. Thus far, the group has only advertised in Michigan area bulletins, but we recently discussed the idea of creating a website. We welcome visitors from other areas to join us if you happen to be in town. (Or, come to town those weekends – some have done that over the years).

Discussions at Post High take different forms: often, a minister will lead the discussion, or Deane will lead, and once in a while, a member leads a discussion on a topic of which he has particular knowledge. Topics vary far and wide with some constants each year. Each June, we discuss the decisions of Synod, helped along by a delegate to Synod. We also have two outings per year – a camping trip in July or August and a retreat in the winter at a hotel. The main goals of this retreat are to get the Kalamazoo and South Holland young adults involved and to discuss a topic appropriate to our times.

In September, we hold our annual organizational meeting. Finally, in December, we have a Christmas get-together and sing Christmas songs.

Some examples of topics that have been discussed at Post High are the Church Order, Elisabeth Elliot books, Article 69 of the Church Order, finances, drama, and God's Sovereignty versus Man's Responsibility. Topics for this year may include some of the following: History and Poetry of the Psalter, History of the Translation of the Bible, Church Fathers, RFPA Book Reviews, Working on Sunday, Congregational and Personal Evangelism, Relationship of Church and School, and Ghana. The topic of this year's retreat is "The Christian's Responsibility in the Time of War."

A Post High meeting usually starts with a light meal or snack provided by members who volunteered and then we gather around in a circle and open with prayer and a Psalter number. Next, we introduce ourselves to each other by stating our names and stating to which church we belong. Then, the leader introduces the topic, and we read a passage of Scripture that applies to it, and start the discussion. We end our meeting with any announcements needed and prayer. There is no membership list and so there are no dues either.

In short, Post High is an informal group that discusses issues appropriate to our age group and place in this world, and enables fellowship and continued contact with other young adults in our churches. ❖

Jodi and Andrea are members of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.

Where We Stand

One Final Coming of Christ

by Rev. Ronald Hanko

Reprinted from the Loveland PRC newsletter.

There are those who believe in more than one personal and visible coming of the Lord Jesus Christ before the end of the world. Both Premillennialism and Dispensationalism teach multiple comings of Christ contrary to the clear testimony of Scripture (we

will be explaining these views in more detail in other issues).

Premillennialism teaches a coming of Christ *prior* to the establishment of His millennial kingdom, that is, some thousand years *before* the end of the world" – thus the name "Premillennialism," – "before the thousand years." This coming is referred to as the "rapture." That

premillennial coming is followed a thousand years later by another personal and visible coming of Christ for judgment and to create the new heavens and earth.

Dispensationalism not only believes in a rapture, but holds to a *third* personal and visible coming of Christ called the “revelation.” This coming, according to them, is “with His saints” (I Thess. 3:13; Jude 14), and follows the rapture by several years.

We believe that Scripture teaches only ONE personal and visible coming of Christ after His incarnation and before the end of the world. The passages used to prove a premillennial rapture and a “revelation” do not speak of anything but the coming of Christ at the very end of the world, therefore.

Jude 14 and 15, a passage that speaks of a coming of Christ *with his saints*, in fact is speaking of the coming of Christ for judgment at the very end of the world. We read there that “the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, *to execute judgment upon all.*” That this judgment is the final judgment of all creatures is clear from the previous verses, for Jude in verses 6 and 7 speaks both of “the judgment of the great day” and of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire, a picture of the end of all things (cf. II Pet. 2:3-7).

I Thessalonians 3:13, the other passage that speaks of Christ coming with His saints, and I Thessalonians 4:15-18, the main Scripture reference to the rapture, are

also very clearly speaking of the end of all things. The coming of the Lord described in these passages is accompanied by the sound of a trumpet, elsewhere referred to as the LAST trump (I Cor. 15:52). It is not followed by a thousand years of history and then a another trumpet summoning men to judgment and announcing the resurrection.

So too, I Thessalonians 3 and 4, in speaking of the coming of the Lord, makes it clear that this is followed by the eternal glory of the saints with Christ: “and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (4:18; cf. also Rev. 21:3; 22:4). His coming in, as described I Thessalonians 4 is not followed by a thousand years of rule on earth and only *then* the eternal heavenly bliss of the saints.

Finally, there are a number of passages that link the “rapture” with the final judgment and not with events a thousand years prior to the final judgment. We refer especially to Luke 17:28-37 (note the references to Sodom and compare Jude 7, which makes it clear that Sodom is a type of the *final* judgment, i.e., of “eternal fire”) and Matthew 24:37-41 (compare II Pet. 3:3-7, which teaches that the flood is a picture of the final judgment). Only ONE coming, for judgment and for salvation! ❖

Rev. Hanko is a minister in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Our Young People's Federation

New Board Members and a Word of Encouragement

by Corey Terpstra

On behalf of the Federation Board, I would like to welcome you to a new year. We are once again beginning a new year of Bible study and fellowship as young people. The convention of this past summer has come and gone. We hope and pray that many new friends and relationships were started at this convention. We pray that you were spiritually edified together as young people. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the young people and members

of our Holland church. Much time and hard work was put into this convention and we by God's grace can see the fruits of these labors in activities such as this. We truly are a blest denomination.

With the end of the convention also brings the end of those Fed. Board members who have served 2 years. At the delegate meeting held during the convention new members were elected. I will introduce these new members to you and the positions they will hold. I will also

give to you a brief introduction as to what the Fed. Board plans to do in the upcoming year.

I begin with the newly elected Vice President, Trevor Kalsbeek. Trevor is a member of Southwest PRC in Grandville. He recently married Sara Westra from Iowa. Trevor would like to see the Fed. Board find more ways to get the Midwest churches involved in the Federation. He will sit and learn the first year as Vice President and then must preside over the meetings as President next year.

Next is the Vice-Treasurer, Brad Pastoor. Brad is a member of First PRC of Grand Rapids. He will work with our current Treasurer, Nathan Yonker, in keeping the finances of the Fed. Board and the convention in order.

Next we have our Vice-Secretary, Audra Bol. Audra is also a member of our Faith church. Audra will oversee Maria Bodbyl, the Secretary, and keep her in line. As well, she must prepare her fingers to do much writing next year.

Next is our new librarian, Jeanine Boeve. Jeanine is a member of our First PRC of Holland. Jeanine is in charge of making arrangements for all the mass meetings and singspirations sponsored by the Fed. Board.

Finally we have our new Spiritual Advisor, Rev. Charles Terpstra. Rev. Terpstra is pastor of the First PRC of Holland. He along with Rev. Doug Kuiper will attend the meetings to give counsel and guidance in the decisions that will be made.

This year, the Fed. Board would like to especially work on bringing all of the societies closer together. We are a Federation of Young people and must work in closer unity one with another. We are looking into different ways in which we can do this. We will keep you informed throughout the upcoming year as to what is happening within the Fed. Board.

One of the most important tasks we do is overseeing the convention. This year, the Lord willing, Georgetown PRC will be the hosting church. We look forward to working with the young people and members of Georgetown in putting on another great convention.

I would also like to thank all of the retiring members of the Fed. Board. Mike Noorman served as President this year; Nathan Lanning as Treasurer; Tricia Flikkema as Secretary; Annise Koops as Librarian; and Professor Dykstra as our Spiritual Advisor. Your hard work and diligence for our young people did not go unnoticed and was greatly appreciated. May the Lord richly bless the work that was done by all of you.

With the beginning of the new society year, the Fed. Board also wants to take this opportunity to encourage those young people who are thinking of not joining the society this year because you believe you are getting to

In the last 5-10 years there has been a slow change occurring in many if not all of the societies. It seems that those young people who reach the ages of 18, 19 and 20 are no longer attending any society.

old for it, to continue to attend. In the last 5-10 years there has been a slow change occurring in many if not all of the societies. It seems that those young people who reach the ages of 18, 19 and 20 are no longer attending any society. This means a lack of older young people involved in the Young Peoples Societies. We want to encourage you to remain in Young Peoples for a little longer. I want you to consider this for a couple of reasons.

One, it is an opportunity that is set before you to learn more about your great God, along with other young people who are thus like minded in the faith. It is a time to ask questions and gain some understanding of issues that you can use in your life as examples to others. Everyone, no matter the age, must take advantage of your opportunities to grow spiritually. The Young Peoples Society and the convention is one example of this.

Second, you, as a child of God, are not alone. There are others who believe in the same truths as you, and have many of the same questions as you. Every child of God is at different times of spiritual maturity. A certain sophomore in high school may not have dealt with the same issues as a 19 or 20 year old has dealt with. The opportunity for the older young people to assist the younger is there. This is the situation the Young Peoples societies bring. I also remind you that no one is ever finished growing spiritually. A child of God on this earth must continuously be searching the scriptures and seeking to grow in their faith. Not only will the younger Young People benefit from you being there, but you as an individual will grow as well. An example of this is at the

conventions. It is just as much a time for spiritual growth for the chaperones as it is for the young people. Our heavenly Father is always working in his people hearts. What a joy it is to see our children walking in the truth. I encourage you to stay in Young Peoples until it is time too move on to the next society.

Let us as young people look forward to another society season. Let us with diligence search God's word in this upcoming year. May the Lord richly bless the Bible studies and discussions held in this year. And may we as young people grow daily in the knowledge and fear of Jehovah. The temptations as young people are many. Let

us take up our crosses and let our lights shine in this dark world. Let us keep our eyes always on things above.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith," Hebrews 12: 1, 2a. ❖

Corey is a member of First Protestant Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan and is currently President of the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young Peoples' Societies.

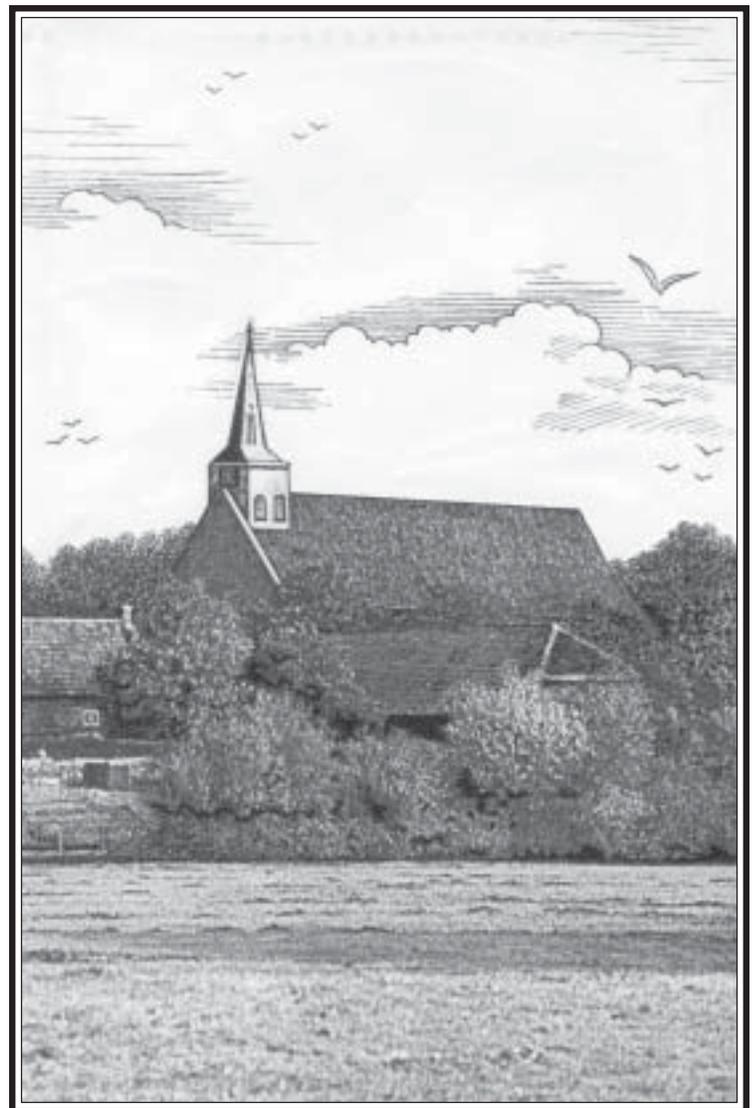
Church History

State-Reformed Church of Westeremden

by J.P. deKlerk

In the Northeastern part of the Dutch province of Groningen you find a quiet village with the name Westeremden, which is part of the town of Stedum. When this village came into existence, probably more than 2000 years ago, it lay at the seaside and the people lived of catching fish. However, inch-by-inch, the sea brought sand and clay to the beach, so that nowadays Westeremden is situated inland and there live only farmers. The Church was already built between 1250 and 1300, altered several times and decorated with beautiful paintings in 1500. The pulpit is carved out of beech wood, dated 1650. The population is known as being Reformed and very conservative. ❖

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



"LITTLE LIGHTS"

December 20, 1545

... *let it shine!*

by Connie Meyer

On this Sunday, the 20th of December in 1545, the sun rose over the hills and towns of Germany as it always had. In the city of Heidelberg its rays reflected off the river, illuminating the majestic steeple of the Church of the Holy Spirit, while a little farther up the hill the towers of a mighty castle rose up out of the morning mist. It was an impressive sight. But the residents of Heidelberg were used to seeing such things. They gathered into the streets – as they always had, to come to worship in the church – as they always had.

They did not know that on this Sunday they would worship as they had never worshipped before.

The people were in their pews. Colored light sprinkled in upon them from the stained glass windows on either side. Rows of candles were lit in front of the sanctuary. The priest, dressed in all his holy finery, prepared for the pageantry of the mass. Everything was as it always was.

But suddenly – a voice was heard from out of the congregation.

It was not a voice of talking or shouting. It was a voice of singing. It was a strong, melodious voice that

sang a hymn of grace and praise. This hymn had never been sung in this church before, but it was a hymn that all the people knew, nevertheless. Within moments the whole congregation burst forth into song!

God used the singing of one glorious hymn to bring the Reformation to Heidelberg. Much more would happen in this city (the Heidelberg Catechism would be written here!), but this marked the beginning of it. The people were ready for it. They knew the hymn. They knew the controversies. They knew they could not earn salvation by anything they did. They knew it was all of grace and grace alone. Their hearts could not contain such knowledge anymore!

So they sang a new song to the Lord. ❖

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



The song that the people of Heidelberg began like this:

*Salvation unto us has come
By God's free grace and favor;
Good works cannot avert our doom,
They help and save us never.
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone...*

Look up Ephesians 2:8, 9 and copy it on _____ lines below. Circle the words that also appear in the song above. Can you find at least five words to circle?

BEACON LIGHTS

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Church News

BAPTISMS

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

Mark 16:16

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Kara Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Gary Lubbers – Byron Center, MI

Emily Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ron Hunderman – Byron Center, MI

Matthew John, son of Mr. & Mrs. John Marcus – Byron Center, MI

Amanda Jane, daughter of Hilary Wiersma – Doon, IA

Mikaia Dawn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brendan Looyenga – Faith, MI

Ty Zachary and Trent Alan, twin sons of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Mulder – Faith, MI

Chloe Jane, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Travis Beute – Hudsonville, MI

Daniel Henry, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Andringa – Hull, IA

Brandon James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Neslon Oostra – Hull, IA

Kari Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brian Wierenga – Lacombe, Canada

Austin James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kris Campbell – Loveland, CO

Mary Olivia, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ray Schwarz – Loveland, CO

Taylor Renae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Rod Griess – Loveland, CO

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

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

Romans 10:10

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

GRACE, MI

Jodianne Meulenberg, Julianne Meulenberg

HUDSONVILLE, MI

Kevin Gritters, Shawn Kamminga, Shannon Kamminga, Kendra Kamminga, Brad VanderVeen

LOVELAND, CO

Tara Griess, Pete Tolsma

PEACE, IL

Elizabeth Terpstra, Roger Brooks, Shelia Bruinsma, Diana DeJong, Deanna Poortenga,

RANDOLPH, WI

Liz Oosterhouse

REDLANDS, CA

Amanda Bodbyl, Dale Bruinsma, Gina Bruinsma, Leanne Bruinsma, Renae Bruinsma, Steve Bruinsma, Lisa Dawson, Matthew den Hartog, Travis Feenstra, Scott Gaastra, Julianne Gritters, Nicholas Hopkins, David Jabaay, Cheryl McClaury, Casey Meelker, Curt Van Meeteren, Tarah Van Meeteren, Mark Van Voorthuysen, Brayton Williams

SOUTH HOLLAND, IL

Tim DeJong, Amy Lenting, Todd Van Baren, Sarah Fennema

SOUTHWEST, MI

Rachelle Boone, Michael Hanko

MARRIAGES

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

Matthew 19:5

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. David Brands and Miss Amy Bylsma – Faith, MI

Mr. Russ Lindell and Miss April Wiersma – Holland, MI

Mr. Ryan VanDerMeulen and Miss Kelli Engelsma – Hudsonville, MI

Mr. Dale Zandstra and Miss Cynthia Nowak – South Holland, IL