

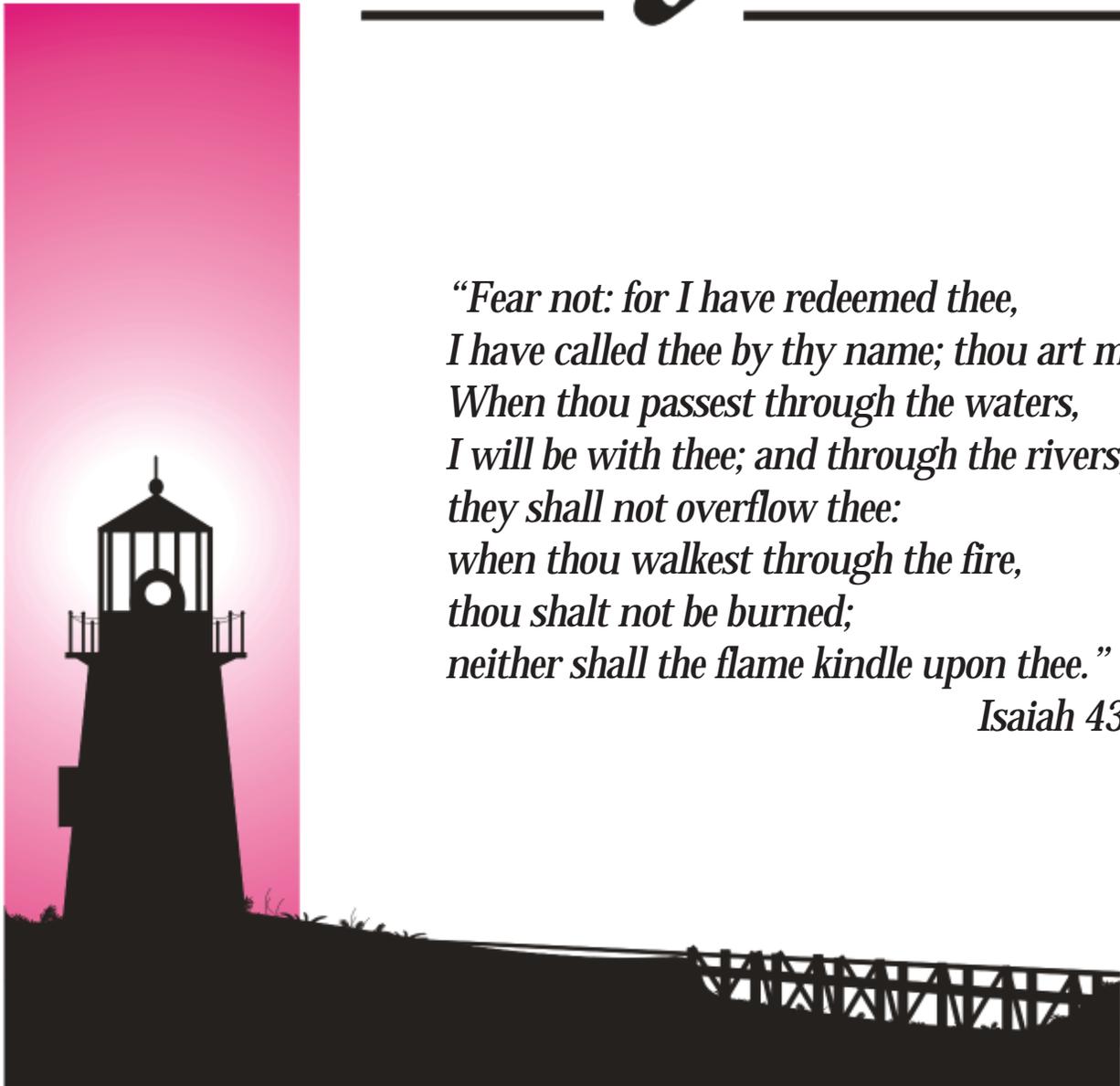
# Beacon Lights

March  
2006

Volume LXV  
Number 3

*“Fear not: for I have redeemed thee,  
I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.  
When thou passest through the waters,  
I will be with thee; and through the rivers,  
they shall not overflow thee:  
when thou walkest through the fire,  
thou shalt not be burned;  
neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”*

*Isaiah 43:1b, 2*



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The articles of *Beacon Lights* do not necessarily indicate the viewpoint of the Editorial Staff. Every author is solely responsible for the contents of his own article.

The *Beacon Lights* encourages its readers to contact the business office with any questions or comments. Letters may be edited for printing. We will not publish anonymous letters, but will withhold names upon request.

If any material of *Beacon Lights* is reprinted by another periodical, we will appreciate your giving the source and forwarding the printed periodical to the business office.

# Old Beacon Lights



We are pleased to report that work has begun on a project to scan all the old issues of *Beacon Lights* and make them available for research and spiritual edification. Currently each scanned issue will be available in two different formats. One will be in an electronic word document format (rich text) that looks much like the original but can be searched and treated like a rich text document. The other will be a .tiff file that will look exactly like the original which can be used for printing, viewing the issue exactly as the original, etc. We would like to make the files available on a web page as soon as they are finished so that you can begin to use and enjoy them. Our goal is to be finished within two years.

At this time we have an incomplete set of unbound *Beacon Lights* to scan. We do not yet have an exact count of which issues we are missing, but the majority of them are the earliest issues. We do have a complete bound set, but it is more difficult to scan. If any of our readers have old, unbound copies for use in scanning, please contact the editor at (920) 326-6186.

In the course of scanning, we have found many interesting articles. The following come from a rubric entitled "Letters From Our Boys." I have also included the editorial from the same issue.

John Huizenga

*October 31, 1943*

*Dear Friends:*

*Another Sunday is nearly by. It is a day when one thinks of home, friends, and his own church. I didn't have a chance to go to church today, because of being on barracks guard. However, I received my copy of the Beacon Lights, Standard Bearer, and Sovereign Grace Hour yesterday. Therefore, I had plenty with which to enjoy myself.*

*The church papers help one to come in much closer communion to God than do the sermons in the chapel. These sermons all have a good thought in them; but every one seems to end up with that well meant offer of salvation; namely the invitation. We believe that the Lord is almighty and nothing can upset His eternal counsel. We are elect from before the foundation of the earth; therefore, it is a calling rather than an invitation.*

*We have very little time to ourselves here during the week. Being under classmen, we surely are kept busy from reveille till taps. Everyone looks forward to the time when he can return the compliments to some other under classman.*

*The Beacon Lights are surely a comfort for both my friends and me. Please continue to send them.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*a/c Dick Dykstra, Ellington Field, Texas.*

*October 16, 1943*

*Dear Friends:*

*I received my first Beacon Lights yesterday of this season and I was surely glad to get it again.*

*I thought today would be a good chance to do my duty, and what has been in my mind ever since I left home and our church last December. I have been in the army a little over ten months and as yet I am still in Louisiana.*

*Well, I have been getting all our church papers, and O, how much these church papers mean to me nowadays, because good Christian reading material is very hard to get. I enjoy the articles in Beacon Lights and the Standard Bearer and Our Church News, and what a blessed comfort that our covenant God has given us our church papers.*

*When I was in camp I was able to attend some sort of chapel service every Sunday, but as you may know that it was not Protestant Reformed at all. We sure miss the services of our own church.*

*But we are indeed grateful to our covenant God for all these things, and how thankful I must be to our Lord that I am still in the States.*

*Well, keep up the good work of Beacon Lights, and may God bless and keep you all.*

*I remain, your brother in Christ.*

*Pvt. Ben Weessier, Shreveport, LA*

*September 30, 1943*

*Dear Editor:*

*It has been some time ago since I promised to do justice in some degree to the Beacon Lights by writing more often. Since I am about to move again I had better write as I may not have the occasion to write later, we never know what comes up next so there is no time to put off till the tomorrow. I have been in New York the past summer and had the privilege of going to church every week, and have the same over here in Flint, Michigan where I am now. I will be leaving Flint again on the 9th of October when I have to report to my district office for further instructions. I am in the best of health and wish the same to everyone.*

*Lately I received a booklet "Meditations" put out by Classis East of our churches and I wish to thank all those who contributed to this cause. I certainly appreciate mine. I don't think there is any need of saying anything about life in the service, that is an established fact. Till we meet again, for as God's children we shall certainly meet again, if not here then in the hereafter.*

*Your friend in Christ,*

*Conrad Portenga*

*September 25, 1943*

*Dear friends:*

*Having been persuaded by the last issue of Beacon Lights to write once again, I am doing so now. Thanks to all responsible for the summer issues as they are enjoyed immensely. I am feeling fine although received slight injury this morning, but also giving me time to write this letter. The weather during the day is very hot, but evenings are cool. We work six hours per day and have two shifts. I received a raise in rating last week, to electrician's mate 2nd class, (staff sergeant in army) and am in charge of a 20 man detail. We are not near actually fighting, but do feel the sting of war from overhead and even that is well under control. We have meetings every evening in charge of an Orthodox Presbyterian chaplain, so we do not lack spiritual food and teachings very much. This surely is a good sign of God's mighty Word, being out here in heathen places. He surely cares for all our needs everywhere. Thanks to Him alone for all things.*

*In His name and love, a brother always.*

*George Lanting*

# Remember Thy Creator

Rev. C. Hanko

**W**ho has not repeatedly read the well-known words of the preacher, remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have pleasure in them?

But in these times we are inclined to ask, could days ever be more evil than those experienced by our present day youth? Youth is the time for care-free enjoyment of innocent pleasure, for matching strength and skill in games and sports, for dreaming and planning for the future. But youth seems hardly the time for the serious business of warfare, for living in constant dread and fear, breathing the smoke of gun powder, smelling the stench of human blood, manipulating the machinery of destruction and bloodshed; for sitting at home wondering why the letters of their lovers are so long in coming, filled with grave fears about what the future may bring. From the point of view of youthful ideals and joy of living, youth is experiencing evil days. Can days ever be more evil than these?

Yet: Remember now thy creator. The admonition is as timely now as ever, or, if that were possible, even more so. Remember thy creator.

Thy creator is God, the living God, beside whom there is and can be no other. He is the eternal one, immutable, all-wise, almighty, always and at the same time present everywhere, the standard of all good and the God of infinite perfections.

In him we live and move and have our being. For even as he once by the word of his power called the things that were not as though they were, so he also formed each one of us. He gave us our being, brought us into existence, made us what we are in his own time and according to his eternal purpose. He alone determined the time and place of our birth, our parents, our station in life, and even all that befalls us in each moment of our earthly existence. He does it all in the unfolding of the counsel of his infinite wisdom.

He created us in His image to be his friend-servants in the midst of the world. How true it is, that by our natural birth we came into this world altogether polluted and corrupt, dead in sin, unfit and unworthy to serve him. But he has recreated us with the life of regeneration according the image of Christ Jesus. He has called us out of darkness unto light, that we may confess his name and tell his praises as his prophets, may crucify our old sinful nature and devote ourselves to him in love as his priests, and may fight the battle of faith against sin, assured that the victory is ours, as his kings in this world. Remember thy God, thy creator. "For thus saith the Lord, that created thee, O Jacob (his chosen), and he that formed thee, O Israel (his people), Fear not! For I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name! Thou art mine! When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isaiah 43:1, 2). How could it be otherwise? God prepares the rushing torrents of deep rivers of water and the flaming fires that billow and roar. He leads his people into the angry waves and into the raging flames. Yet they are as safe as Daniel was in the lion's den. "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." For God never forsakes his people. He tries us to purify us as in the

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...could days ever be more evil  
than those experienced by our  
present day youth?

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refiner's fire. The master-builder is shaping us, chip by chip, into stones for his glorious temple. We are being fitted for our place in his church either here on earth, or finally surely in glory. We may lose a pal, a friend, a lover or husband in the battlefield; we may suffer bodily injury or even lose our lives, but in all these things we are more than conquerors. We finally lose all...our youth, our friends, our dear ones, our own life...to receive all things with Christ in the mansions above.

Remember now.

This does not mean that we should bring him into remembrance occasionally as fancy or necessity dictates. God is not a servant, who can be slighted and scorned, yet called in when we are driven to an extremity. To remember him is to keep him in continual remembrance every moment of our lives, to have him always before us in every circumstance that each day may produce, to always be conscious of his sovereign nearness, his guiding providence, his tender care. With the Lord at our right hand, we shall never fear.

Looking at it from that aspect, the present days of youth are not so evil after all. In fact, they are not evil at all, for if God be for us, nothing can be against us. No anxious care, no bursting shell, no hissing bullet, no earthly loss, no, not even death itself can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

But evil days are those days when we shall say that we have no pleasure in those things. When we have reached the end of the road and we sit down by the smoldering embers of a wasted life, worn and broken, our dreams blasted, our vain hopes shattered. We had tried to drink to the full the intoxicating pleasures of the flesh, had striven to gain this world, only to lose everything. Like a dog we ran the treadmill, and gained nothing. We are forced to admit, vanity of vanities, all in this life, apart from God, is vanity.

When our life is wasted and spent it will prove impossible, actually too late to remember the creator.

Remember Him now, young man, young woman! And the evil days will never come, nor will the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in him. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. *They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.*" Our creator is forming us into a building for eternity.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

To that Christian youth answers: By thy grace we will! ❖

If any World War II veterans or surviving family members have anything relating to the vet's time of service, please contact Bruce Koole ASAP at (616) 532-2220 or [brucejkoole@hotmail.com](mailto:brucejkoole@hotmail.com). The "things" I am looking for are not originals but copies of letters sent to and from the home and battle fronts especially. Other things would include copies of official dispatches from the government letting the family know such things as draft notices, being wounded, discharge telegrams, M.I.A., notice of death, church bulletins, society minutes pertaining to WWII, and consistory minutes about WWII. If the consistory

minutes are deemed sensitive or classified, then, perhaps it would be possible to send individual minutes that deal with the War. Any copy of anything else anyone might have is greatly desired too.

I am gathering information for a senior-thesis paper I am writing for my WWII History class at college. The general topic is the religious responses to war and specifically the PRC at war. There are tentative plans to publish the paper in this periodical. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me very soon. The paper is due by the last week of April.

**D**avid Warner is a junior at Heritage Christian High School in South Holland, Illinois and a member of Peace Protestant Reformed Church in Lansing, Illinois. The poem "Be Thou My All" is David's response to a poetry assignment in Mr. Van Uffelen's American literature class. After studying the poetry of Anne Bradstreet,

Edward Taylor, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and others, David wrote his own poem and gave expression to his devotion to the Lord. David's technique is impressive, making use of dactylic meter, comparisons, and rhyming couplets; however, it's his poetic prayer of complete reliance upon almighty God that leaves the reader speechless.

## Be Thou My All

*Liken me unto the moon or a star;  
 Let me reflect of Thine image afar.  
 Liken me unto the trees to the sky;  
 Let me raise Thee-ward both arms up on high.  
 Liken me unto a mount, tow'ring tall;  
 Let me be seen as Thine only to all.  
 Make me a river that runs to the sea,  
 Pouring my heart and my soul into Thee.  
 Liken me unto the clear springs that flow;  
 Let my whole life a clean purity show.  
 Liken me unto a canyon, O Lord;  
 Echo, I'll echo, I'll echo Thy Word.*

*Be Thou my banner, the rainbow in heav'n;  
 I'll see Thy beauty in those colors, sev'n.  
 Be Thou my shade in this wilderness land;  
 Thy hand of power will keep me to stand.  
 Yet Thou wilt lead me to valleys more green;  
 There will I rest and on Thy bosom lean.  
 Be Thou my wind, always whispering by;  
 Comfort me always; forever be nigh.  
 Be Thou my rain, Lord, in day and in night;  
 Wash me and make my soul handsome and white.  
 Be Thou my All, Lord, and keep me from wrong;  
 Thy blood has bought me; to Thee I belong.*

*David Warner*



# The Church, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth (3)

by Rev. Angus Stewart

**W**hat means does God use to hold up his truth in the world? Is it *angels*? No. Angels appeared to men on earth only occasionally even in biblical times, and now not at all until Christ's return. Are *individual Christians* the pillar and ground of the truth? No, though individual believers do have an important role to play in witnessing of Christ. What about *Christian families*? They are the building blocks of the church, but they are not the pillar and ground of the truth. What about the *civil government*? Its calling is to punish evil-doers and reward well-doers (I Peter 2:14), but it is not the pillar and ground of the truth. What of the *false church*? It is the pillar and ground of the lie, holding up before the world the false gospel as if it were the true gospel.

"The church of the living God"—not Billy Graham crusades, not mission halls, not lay preachers—is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). God is in the church for it is "the house of God" in which He dwells by His Spirit (14). Jesus Christ speaks through faithful teaching and catechising by true ministers of His Word. Thus the church—and the church alone—is the pillar and ground of the truth.

From all of this we learn, first, the dignity of the church. No other body on earth is the pillar and ground of the truth. Without faithful churches the truth of God in the world would fall to the ground. Let us esteem true churches highly! Second, here we have a test for churches. Does a particular congregation or denomination function as the pillar and ground of the truth? Does it hold up all of the truth or most of the truth or some of the truth? Does it hold up lies as if they were the truth?

Some churches do so little teaching that it is as if they are pillars which hold up nothing at all! This test, whether or not a church holds up God's truth faithfully, enables us to determine the purity of a church. Try the spirits, including the churches, by God's Word (I John 4:1). Believers must discern a truth-upholding church in order to remain members of it or join it. Third, this teaches us the solemn calling of a minister. He must know how he ought to "behave" in a true church which is nothing less than a "pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:14-15). His behavior or conduct here especially includes his preaching. He must preach knowing that there is only one truth and not two. The truth must be preached with certainty and without fear of man. The minister must "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). He must be careful not to mix wood, hay and stubble with the pure truth of God's Word (I Cor. 3:10-15). Fourth, the calling of elders in a church (which is to be "the pillar and ground of the truth") includes ensuring that the truth and the truth alone is held up. Thus they must correct the minister if he preaches error and defend him if he is attacked for preaching the truth. ❖

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*Rev. Stewart is a missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches to the Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Northern Ireland. This series is being reprinted with permission from the Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship website, <http://www.cprf.co.uk/> Volume X, Issues 6.*

When I In Awesome Wonder...

Michigan's Golden Coast

## Fibonacci

by Deane Wassink

There is an amazing order in the creation that we sense, but, do not normally understand. I was shown this concept by a friend of mine who is now an ordained minister. That order in creation was first discovered by a man in the middle ages named Leonardo Fibonacci (c. 1200). I will not go into the concept here except to say that it is a mathematical pattern where the sequence of numbers is made up of the sum of the two numbers that precede it. The numbers are: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89... The relationship of the numbers is known as the "golden ratio." It can be seen concretely on a graph in what is known as the "propagating spiral". The clearest example of this in the creation is the beautiful spiral of the nautilus shell. However, the pattern of Fibonacci is throughout the creation in the shapes our heavenly Father has formed all around us.

Let's pause to picture the shapes around us that fit into this concept. Have you ever noticed the pattern of the seeds on the head of a sunflower? How about a daisy? Or, a purple coneflower? There is a similar pattern in the seeds of a thistle, raspberry and pinecone. The placement of leaves around the stem of many plants and even the placement of leaves on the trees of the forest form this pattern.

From the point of view of a scientist, this arrangement of seeds is the way to fit the most seeds into the area of the head of a flower. When it comes to the placement of the leaves it allows for each of the leaves to receive the most sunlight possible. If you think about it, if the leaves are stacked on top of each other, the top ones would shade the lower ones. The Fibonacci spiral reveals how the creator built a solution for receiving enough light into the genetic makeup of the plants themselves.

The sweeping shape of the spiral can be seen all around us as well. I see it in the shapes of the dunes



formed by our Father's sculpting tool, the wind. In fact the swirls of the leaves in a good gust of wind or the swirl of a spiderweb on the ground show the same shape. How about the curl of the pounding waves or the bend of the rainbow?

I found a striking example of this pattern on the shore of Lake Huron where I stopped with a friend to look at the rocks of Kettle Point. In addition to the amazing "kettle rocks," we found shards of coal black shale swirled into fantastic geometric patterns, Fibonacci shapes. The littlest pebbles on the shore of Lake Michigan display similar patterns where the waves wash back and forth when it is nearly calm.

Our eyes pick up the shape almost unconsciously. It belongs to what we conceive as beauty, order and symmetry. That is because we are made of dust, part and parcel of this creation. Even the molecules that we are made of display these patterns. In fact, I am convinced that this pattern is part of the witness of the creation to all men that there is a Creator God and that He must be served (Rom. 1:20, 21).

Once again, I stand amazed at the wonder of this creation. No matter how much we learn about His handiwork it surprises us anew with wonders.

What does this mean? Why is this significant? The fact that this pattern can be found throughout the whole creation reveals to us that our Creator is a God of order. Nothing is by chance, random or haphazard. That is true of all that he does. Nothing is by chance, nothing. That is why I can have the comfort of knowing that He is in control of all that happens in my life and in the world around me. As the songwriter says, "My life with all its perfect plan, was ordered ere my days began."

Blessed be His name.

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## Order

*Life has order,  
'Tis not by chance.  
God is the Lord,  
Of hist'rys dance.*

*My life's order,  
Is in His plan.  
Pink to palor,  
Lasting a span.*

*Trials come down,  
With His control.  
Shaping a crown,  
Saving my soul. ❖*

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

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Book Reviews

# Books Published by The Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies

**Jesus' Beauty Shining in You**  
by Rev. C. Haak, Rev. R. Van Overloop,  
Don Doezema and Marybeth Lubbers

**T**his book is a superb study of the fruit of the Spirit in the life of Christ and in the lives of God's people. The authors of this book took each fruit of the Spirit as given in Galatians 5:22-26 and wrote from a particular point of view. The authors also give us practical examples of how the fruit of the Spirit was shown in the life of Christ, a biblical character, and how it can be shown in the life of reformed youth.

187 pages, \$7.25

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# Watching Daily At My Gates

## The Song of Zion

reprinted from March '97 by Chester Hunter

### March 1 Read Psalm 9

Psalm 9:1-2: This Psalm starts with a declaration of praise. David will praise God for the mercies that he has given him. In reading through the Psalm we see that David wrote this after enduring affliction and being delivered by God. We, too, while living an antithetical life will endure affliction on this earth. Will we be able to praise God during such affliction? Do you remember that Paul and Silas sang Psalms as they lay in the Philippian jail? Let us live lives in which we are constantly magnifying the praise of God. Let us do that tomorrow as we enter the courts of praise. Sing Psalter 16:1 and 17:1.

### March 2 Read James 5:1-11

Psalm 9:3-4: Here we see David's knowledge of the enemies that were around him. But his experience was that God protected him from those enemies. Not only did God protect him, but God also showed those enemies that David had done that which was right in his life and therefore was deserving of that protection. When we live a life marked by the antithesis, we can be assured that God will protect us and will justify us. When we refuse to live the antithetical life, God will chastise us in this life. Today as we frequent the house of God we must account before him of our actions. How do we stand? Will God say, "Well done thou good and faithful servant."? Sing Psalter 16:2 and 17:2.

### March 3 Read Habakkuk 1:5-12

Psalm 9:5-8: The first two verses of this section shows us what God will do to his enemies. Are the enemies of God our enemies for his sake? Or do we join with the world and go against our God? It is a fearful thing to be judged by God and found wanting. But we have the beautiful promise found in the last two verses. Our covenant God, Jehovah, endures for ever. His justice is righteous. And because Christ has died for us, we know that we are innocent before the righteous judge. These two sections put together give us direction for daily life. They are good for us to consider as we begin our work week. Let us flee evil and seek that which is good. Sing Psalter 16:3.

### March 4 Read II Corinthians 4:1-11

Psalm 9:9-10: Do you know God's name? Some of you may be saying, "Of course I know the name of God, who

doesn't?" But do you know his name from experience? Do you have the confidence that God is your God and heavenly Father? If you do, then you have a beautiful refuge during times of affliction. You have a safe haven in which to flee. You will have someone in which to trust when situations become very bad. You have the blessing that God will not forsake you no matter what your circumstances are. How can you know God's name? Verse 10 tells us to seek him. That is our command from God. Are we seeking him? Sing Psalter 16:4 and Psalter 17:3-4. (Maybe try the second tune today.)

### March 5 Read Ephesians 5:15-21

Psalm 9:11-12: These verses, like the first two, speak of singing the praises of God. These, however, emphasize singing with God's people. We are blessed in our schools that we have this opportunity for our children and young people. As adults we need to make more opportunities to sing with God's people so that we speak of his great works which he has done for us. Verse 12 tells us why we must do this. Our songs are remembered by God as he avenges wrongs done by the wicked to his people. We must sing songs that portray us as humble saints declaring a majestic God. Let us make an effort to sing among God's people often. Sing Psalter 16:5 and 17:5.

### March 6 Read Matthew 20:29-34

Psalm 9:13-14: God's mercy can be expressed as his compassion toward his people. We need that compassion for two reasons. First of all, it is our sins which rise up against us prevailing day by day. Secondly we need mercy because of the troubles caused by God's enemies. The Old Testament saint had the picture of the high priest pouring the blood of atonement upon the mercy seat each year. Hebrews 4 teaches us to approach the throne of grace in order to find mercy. Verse 14 tells us the reason for desiring mercy from God's enemies. We need this mercy so we can praise God by showing the joy of our salvation. Let this be our daily desire. Sing Psalter 16:6.

### March 7 Read Proverbs 4:14-19

Psalm 9:15-16: Here in these verses we read of the end of the wicked. Those who continue in the way of sin only have their own wickedness to look forward to. God will continue to trap them in this wickedness. This is the testimony of Scripture. Think of Cain, Esau, Ahab, and Judas. They had no hope

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and only became more and more ensnared in sin. What does this tell us? Do we shake our heads and thank God that we are not like these men? We'd better not as Romans 3 tells us that "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." If you are walking in sin, beloved people of God, flee from it to him and ask for his guidance that you not become trapped in it. Sing Psalter 16:7.

### **March 8 Read Deuteronomy 15:7-11**

Psalms 9:17-18: Verse 17 continues the thought of the previous verses. Those who do not repent from their sin go to hell! This is the clear teaching of Scripture. In verse 18 we have the poor used as a picture of the people of God. As a rule God's people are not the rich of the world. A materially rich Christian has a great obligation before God. He cannot buy his way into heaven; he must use his wealth in the service of God. One way that we must use our financial gifts is to care for the poor in the church. They are there; the passage we read today tells that to us. Christ tells us that also. The poor is anyone who has less than we do and are in need. God cares for the poor, and he expects us to do the same. We are poor spiritually, and he gave us his only Son to die for our salvation. Are we grateful? Then let us care for the poor. Sing Psalter 16:8.

### **March 9 Read Psalm 9**

Psalms 9:19-20: The Psalmist finishes this Psalm by asking God to judge the wicked. This is an imprecatory prayer. This is not popular today. We are told to love, love, love. But loving sin is hatred against God and the neighbor. Must we pray such prayers? Yes, we must. Why? First of all because they are given to us as examples in Scripture. Secondly by praying such prayers, we show that we wish God's name to be hallowed. As we see sin around us, we must not glory in that sin, but we must not ignore it either. God's enemies blaspheme his name. We must pray that for the glory of his name, God will punish them and give to us the salvation wrought for us by Christ on the cross. Let us do it today as we meet with the believers of God and throughout our lives. Sing Psalter 16:9.

### **March 10 Read Psalm 10**

Psalms 10:1-2a: Once again we see the Psalmist crying to God for relief. He feels that God's people who are always the poor of the land are being oppressed by the wicked. He prays that God would deliver them for his name's sake. Do we make this our prayer? When we are oppressed because of our faith do we ask God for divine deliverance? Even though we do not live in the day and age when we can see God using the armies of Israel to bring vengeance, we must pray this prayer in the faith that God will deliver us. We must not rely on our strength or cunning, but rather we must throw ourselves upon God's grace and mercy for deliverance. Sing the first stanzas of Psalter 18 & 19.

### **March 11 Read I Kings 21:1-14**

Psalms 10:2b: In this passage, taken from the history of God's people, we see a poor righteous man preyed on by a wicked queen. He was afflicted and eventually killed because he stood for his faith. He would not sell his inheritance. People of God, are we ready to make Naboth's stand ours? Young people, will you cancel your wedding plans because your intended will not share in your faith? Business men, can you let a business deal fall through because to carry it out would cause you to compromise your faith? We must have the faith of Naboth in these matters and also in the matters of praying to God to stop the advance of the wicked in our lives. The wicked's traps are crafty, but we must believe that God works all things for our salvation. Sing Psalter 18:2.

### **March 12 Read I Kings 21:15-29**

Psalms 10:3-6: In the conclusion of the chapter that we began yesterday, we see God bringing justice for Naboth. No, he did not receive it in this life, but it was received nonetheless. In the verses of Psalm 10, we see the impunity of the wicked. They care not for God or his ways. They are crafty and seek to bring us down. We must pray daily for safety from such a foe. We must also realize that this safety does not always come in what we may think is the best way. Naboth's deliverance was through death. Ours may be through other circumstances that we have trouble understanding. Not only must we pray for deliverance, but we must also pray for the grace to accept any deliverance God has decreed for us. Sing Psalter 18:3.

### **March 13 Read James 3:5-12**

Psalms 10:7-8: One of the most damaging weapons the wicked has at his disposal is the tongue. In this day and age in which language and communication is so available and so widely used, the tongue can cause much damage to the child of God. As we draw nearer and nearer to the end of time, we must realize the wicked will say things to cause the church much harm. They will use the language of the court and news media to stop the advance of the gospel. There are two lessons for us in these verses. First of all, we must recognize our enemy and pray for grace to withstand him. Secondly, we must not fall prey to this sin ourselves as we go about our daily lives. Sing Psalter 18:4.

### **March 14 Read I Peter 5:5-11**

Psalms 10:9-11: In I Peter 5:8 the devil is described as a roaring lion. This is the same language used in Psalm 10 to describe our enemies in this world. Even as a lion crouches in hiding waiting for his prey, so do Satan and all his hosts which includes the wicked in this life. Lions wait for the weak to kill and so do the wicked. We must constantly be sober and vigilant in our daily lives. Young people, are you watching for the traps of Satan as you engage in entertainment? Are you looking for Satan's traps as you choose friend? Parents, are you carrying out your baptismal vows as you help your

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children avoid the places lions are often hiding? Let us pray to God for such grace. Sing Psalter 18:5.

### **March 15 Read John 17:6-19**

Psalm 10:12-13: In his high priestly prayer our Savior asked his father who is our father for Christ's sake to watch over us. Christ knew the troubles that we would face. He knew the wiles of Satan personally and experientially. He knew that it would be so difficult for us that he made it part of one of the last prayers he prayed before he faced great affliction. We can and must be thankful for such care from our elder Brother. We, too, must make petition to God that he would keep us from evil. Notice that we are not taken from the world. He has placed us here for a purpose. We must live out that purpose but in the trust he will care for us and protect us from all evil. Sing Psalter 18:6 and 19:2.

### **March 16 Read II Kings 9:22-29**

Psalm 10:14: Later on in the history of Israel, we see that God did see Ahab and Jezebel's treachery against Naboth. We see that by using Jehu as his divinely-ordained instrument that he carried out justice against wicked people who boasted that God did not see their work. What a great comfort it is to know that our all-seeing God knows all that is happening and will care for us! We must know that he sees our needs and cares for our needs in the way that is best for us. We must also know that he sees our deeds and will chastise us when we fall into sin. Hagar knew this as she fled from Sarah; we must know this as well and live our lives accordingly. Sing Psalter 18:7 and 19:3

### **March 17 Read Revelation 19:7-16**

Psalm 10:15-16: As we come to the end of this Psalm we come to the Psalmist's grand conclusion. He first repeats his plea that God will bring judgment upon the wicked. He does this, however, because he has a sure confidence in God. This confidence is based on the confession that God is King for ever! This is the confidence which must be ours as we face the difficult days which lie ahead. This will be the churches triumphant cry as it enters heaven. This is for what we look forward. No matter how dark it seems now, we know from creation that it is always darkest before the dawn. Christ will return and we will join with all the saints which have gone before us and praise God, the king, forever. Sing Psalter 18:8.

### **March 18 Read Psalm 10**

Psalm 10:17-18: The concluding words of this Psalm are a continuation of the two verses we considered yesterday. For the past nine days we have been looking at this prayer of a child of God. It is a prayer that is not heard much today because the nominal Christian does not want to believe that people are enemies of God's church. But it is a prayer that we must pray and that we can pray. It has a beautiful ending. Jehovah loves righteousness. Does he see us as righteous? Yes, he does through the blood of Christ. Will he see us doing righteous works? Sing Psalter 18:9 and 19:4-5.

### **March 19 Read Psalm 11**

Psalm 11:1-3: People of God, is your trust in Jehovah the I Am That I Am? Do you truly trust him to deliver you from all evil? It appears that in this Psalm David is once more being harassed by Satan through an enemy. Satan does that to us as well though he may use the material goods of this life or the problems of this life to cause us to flee from God's care. David asks a question in the third verse. It is a rhetorical question to which there is only one answer. We can do nothing unless God is with us. Let us make that our confidence and hope. Sing Psalter 20:1.

### **March 20 Read Hebrews 4:11-16**

Psalm 11:4-5: People of God, do we live in the realization that God looks upon our deeds and judges them according to his holy law? These verses speak of the trying of both the wicked and the righteous. David knew that God would try those wicked who were oppressing him. This was a comfort for him. But David also knew that his life was open before the almighty judge of heaven and earth. We, too, must know and confess this daily. This should help us live a walk of gratitude before Jehovah God. Pray for the help needed to walk this way and do not despair when evil seems to get the upper hand. Our God is on his throne. Sing Psalter 20:2.

### **March 21 Read Psalm 11**

Psalm 11:6-7: David concludes this short Psalm with the verses of our meditation for today. Young people, as you prepare for your activities of tonight, read these verses and ponder on their meaning for you. Verse 6 gives you no reason to gloat. Your old man of sin is described in that verse. The condemnation described there would be yours except for the grace of God. Verse seven says that our God loveth righteousness. Will he see any in you tonight? No, this righteousness is not of the flesh but because of the quickening Spirit which dwells in you. Do not quench the Spirit tonight, but rather let fruits of repentance rule your actions. Sing Psalter 20:3.

### **March 22 Read Psalm 12**

Psalm 12:1-2: David looked around him and seemingly saw that there was only wicked on this earth. These wicked made themselves known with sins of the tongue. These sins caused David to cry to God for deliverance. He could see no other way out. David was concerned for the well-being of the church. Is this our concern as well? Do we make this our prayer daily? Are our ministers, elders, and deacons named in our prayers as they should be? Tomorrow we will attend the house of God. We need to stop and thank God for such a refuge in this world of lying and deceit. Let us make the house of God our care as we pray daily. Sing Psalter 21:1.

### **March 23 Read Acts 5:1-11**

Psalm 12:3-4: Yesterday we began speaking about the sin spoken of in this Psalm. We discovered that the wicked use the tongue to cause much hurt to the righteous. Today's reading points out how Satan takes this sin and brings it into the church. As we attend the house of God today, we look for

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truth. Satan would have the lie preached. He causes men to say, "I am God," and, "I will do what I want." These sins are prevalent in the world around us. We must not make them our sins. We must not glorify this sin through our use of the music and the entertainment of this day. Television programs are based on these sins. Let us look for truth and not the lie. We can only do this by looking to Jehovah. Let us constantly pray for grace to do this. Sing Psalter 21:2.

### **March 24 Read Exodus 3:1-10**

Psalm 12:5: Moses tried to help the oppressed Israelites by his own strength. To teach him that this was not God's way, God drove him into the wilderness. For forty years God taught him the way of meekness and patience that was needed. Then God showed him the burning bush at Sinai. God told Moses that he had seen the plight of Israel and would deliver them. God would deliver them and not Moses. We must keep this before our consciousness daily. God will help us in all kinds of afflictions and will deliver us. He has promised this in his Word and he is faithful to his promises. Sing Psalter 21:3.

### **March 25 Read Psalm 12**

Psalm 12:6-8: The Word to which we referred to yesterday is the Word of God. It is a word that is pure even as silver that has been melted and all impurities have been burned away and removed leaving only pure silver. It is the pure silver to which the word is compared. God's Word never had any impurities in it. Of this we may be sure. It is as pure as silver that has gone through purification seven times. It will be kept pure by God himself and that Word cannot be corrupted by any generation though they strive mightily to do so. We can confidently turn to the Word of God and receive only truth. We must thank God daily for this gift. Sing Psalter 21:4.

### **March 26 Read Psalm 13**

Psalm 13:1-2: Sometimes God's ways seem so mysterious to us. We suffer disease and we cannot find the cure. Or we suffer some other affliction with no end in sight. David felt this as he waited for God to give him the throne. He knew that it was his, but yet he had to live a life of much discomfort. David knew that he had to pray to God. We, too, must pray for deliverance. However, we must pray for the grace to have patience and wait upon the Lord. We know that he loves us and will care for us. His way is best; we must wait for it. Sing Psalter 22:1.

### **March 27 Read Revelation 21:10-27**

Psalm 13:3-4: David continues his prayer asking for relief from those that oppress him. He asked God to lighten his eyes. This is an interesting expression. We find much the same idea in the twenty-third verse of the passage we read for today. David needed to know, as we also do, that God is our light. His glory will lighten our way in this life as well in the new heavens and the new earth where there will be no need of a sun. Our eyes are dark and clouded by the sin that is both around us and in us. We need God to make it possible to see the way that he leads us. Sing Psalter 22:2.

### **March 28 Read Psalm 13**

Psalm 13:5-6: That little three letter word "but" begins today's text. David confesses that he has trusted in God's mercy and lovingkindness. And because he knows that God will deliver him, he can rejoice in the salvation afforded by God's mercy. The expression of such rejoicing is by way of song. David is known as the sweet singer of Israel. We must following his example and sing songs of gratitude for our salvation. These songs will not be the world's music, but these songs will be those which help us to best express our thanksgiving for our salvation. Let us sing these songs often and lustily. Sing Psalter 22:3.

### **March 29 Read Psalm 14**

Psalm 14:1-2: Here we have another Psalm in which David has surveyed the wicked around him and sees their evil. He does this using an anthropomorphism. Even as a king surveys the subjects of his kingdom, God evaluates those who live on this earth. His judgment is that there is none that doeth good. Paul echoes this evaluation in Romans 3 when he states that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. By nature we are included in this all. We sin and come short of the holy God's glory daily. Only through the blood of Christ can God look on us in his mercy. We must be careful about saying that we are better than our neighbor, or as Nathan said to David; God will say to us, "Thou art the man." Sing Psalter 23:1-2.

### **March 30 Read II Timothy 3:1-17**

Psalm 14:3-4: David had to deal with evildoers in Israel which did him and the cause of God much harm. Timothy had the same experience in Ephesus. If you read through the two epistles addressed to this young minister, you will see many places where Paul instructs him about this fact. This is the lot of the child of God in the world today. The wicked are all around us. They wish to do the cause of Christ much harm. We might despair that it is not worth it to follow Christ. We must take instruction from these men of faith and call upon God even in this trouble. He will send help to us and preserve us and the cause of the gospel. Make this your prayer today and every day. Sing Psalter 23:3-4.

### **March 31 Read Psalm 14**

Psalm 14:5-7: In these three verses we find three main thoughts. First we see the reason for the wicked's scorn. They hate us because God is with us. This is as it should be. If we are loved by the world, then we'd better know there is something wrong with our life style. Secondly David longs for the salvation that comes out of Zion. We need to long for that salvation as well. This earth is not our home and we'd better not wish to remain on it. Finally we know that our restoration is sure. God will come and we will rejoice and be glad. Being glad is not something that we can hope for in this vale of tears. Being glad can only come to be when we are joined with God and the lamb in heaven. Sing Psalter 23:5-6.

# Stewardship (4)

## Stewardship And Money: Giving God's Way

by Darren Vink

According to George Barna, only 3-5% of Americans tithe. Also according to George Barna, the average donation by adults who attend U.S. Protestant churches is about \$17 a week. According to Ron Blue, incomes have gone up 9-10 times in the last 20 years while giving has gone down about 50%. According to Ron and Sylvia Ronsvalle, if members of historically Christian churches in the United States had raised their giving to the Old Testament's minimum standard of giving (10% of income) in 2000, an additional \$139 billion a year would become available.

These are a few statistics on the current state of giving. They are not very encouraging. The trend in society today is toward getting, not giving.

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**Giving is the highest thing that  
we can do with our money.**

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Giving is the highest thing that we can do with our money. Luke tells us in Acts 20:35 that to give is better than to receive. When we spend money, we are receiving something. When we are saving money, it is with a goal in mind. When we give money, we receive no physical, material possessions.

What does it mean to give? A good definition of giving is to let go, to deliberately choose to receive nothing in return for our money. When we give we expect no compensation. When we give we place our money in someone else's care. When we give we transfer possession, relinquish, or surrender our money.

We ought to keep in mind here that we are stewards. We are not really giving. We are managing on behalf of God and giving to others on his behalf. When we say that we give it is true only to the extent that God first gave to us.

What explains the statistics in the introduction? Why is giving so low? What hinders giving? There are several reasons. The primary reason is debt. People wake up in the morning and sing the little song "I owe, I owe, so off to work I go." Credit cards, student loans, cars, and houses all have payments. It is hard to give to charity when all of our income is going to pay for our stuff. The second reason is poor money management. When there is no plan of spending, i.e. no budget, the income we earn just goes in every direction until it's gone. The third major reason is not enough money. Jesus said in Matthew 26:11 that the poor will always be with us.

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**It is hard to give to charity when  
all of our income is going to pay  
for our stuff.**

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There are many good reasons to give, but first let's look at why we shouldn't give. We should never give so that we can get more. Do not be greedy. There is no financial formula in Scripture that says that the more money you give the more money God will bless you with. We should never give as a form of a bribe. There are many references in Scripture that associate bribery with the ungodly. We should never give for our prestige. We are instructed very graphically what God thinks of us when we try this. Ananias and Sapphira tried this in Acts 5 and paid for it with their lives.

There are many reasons why we should give. The primary reason we should give is exactly because we are stewards. When we give we remind ourselves of our position of steward. We remember that what we give is not ours, but God's.

Another reason to give is that the act of giving makes us less selfish and more Christ-like. We place others

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higher than ourselves. We humble ourselves just as Jesus did, and we become similar to him.

A third reason to give is because it is an act of praise and worship. All giving is an act of worship, but giving is explicitly commanded to take place on the Lord's Day. Giving is a part of keeping the Sabbath day holy.

A final reason to give is because we have been given so much! Not one of us can say that our needs are not met. We live in the United States, the richest country in the history of our planet.

God has placed promises in his Word to those who give. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10). Here God both throws down a challenge to his people and a promise to those who take up this challenge. God says that when you give he will provide and bless.

This leads to the second idea, which is found in Matthew 6. Jesus tells us to lay up treasure in heaven and not to worry about our earthly possessions. We are shown here that Jesus will provide for us while on this earth. We are also shown that when we give our money, which is part of our whole walk in life, we are laying up treasures in heaven. Just as in Malachi, God tells us here that when you give he will provide and bless.

We all agree to give, but how much should we give? Some have been given much and some little. What guidelines can we use? We can come close to the proper mindset by asking some questions from the point of view of a steward. The owner will ask, "How much of my money will I give to God?" but the steward will ask, "How much of God's money will I keep?" The owner will ask, "Do I want to buy this?" but the steward will ask, "How will this purchase affect my ability to advance God's kingdom?"

There is disagreement on how much we should give today. The Old Testament clearly teaches tithing. Jesus agrees with the practice in Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42. In the middle of his railing on the hypocritical Pharisees, he actually commends them on one thing: the tithe. He approves of the giving of 10%. I Corinthians 16:2 is often cited as a rebuttal. It reads, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." It is said that we are to give as

"God hath prospered" us and that this does away with the tithe.

The way I view I Corinthians 16:2 is that it does not do away with anything, but merely implies that our giving should be proportionate to our income. What proportion then? I find no other proportion mentioned in the New Testament, so I fall back on the only proportion mentioned, the tithe. Also, I have heard it said (and agree), "When in doubt, give, because you can't outgive God."

Who should the tithe go to? The church. The church then has the responsibility to give to those who are in need. Those in need are the widow (I Tim. 5:16), the poor (Matt. 26:11), and the pastor (I Cor. 9:14).

It is not enough to know that we have to give, how much to give, and who to give to, but it is also very important that we give the right way. We need to have the proper attitude when we give. There are three attitudes that we need when giving. The first is that we fulfill the great commandment while giving. We need to give out of love for God and love for others. This is thankful giving. This is willingly giving to God because he gave so much for us. The second attitude is to give cheerfully. "God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:7). This again emphasizes thankful giving. The third reason is to give purposefully. Again, II Corinthians 9:7 says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give." Giving should be a conscious and deliberate action.

Giving God's money away is the best thing we can do with it. Placing God first is the most rewarding thing we can do with God's money. When we meditate on the gift of salvation God has given to us and consider again how much material prosperity we have been given in this country, we can't help but be thankful for the love and goodness he has showed to us. We prove through our actions that we are a grateful people, grateful for the death and resurrection of his son Jesus Christ. It is because of him that we have, and it is to him that we give.



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# Considerations for A Day of Prayer – March 8<sup>th</sup>

By Jeanine Huizenga

**O**n March 8<sup>th</sup> of this year we will celebrate Prayer Day. In our churches it is a time to worship together, give praise to God, and be reminded of God's faithfulness and promise to care for us in the coming year. In the past, when our whole country was more involved with farming and the planting and sowing of crops, it was easier for us to realize our dependency upon God and our need to ask him for our daily bread. Today we have jobs that give us more than we could ever use, we have storehouses of goods, we have clothes to choose from in abundance and it is often easy to forget that we need to pray earnestly for all that we need. We often think that we can take care of ourselves, and it isn't until God strikes us with illness or death and that we slow down and reflect on his hand in our life.

Prayer Day is a good time to take some time to reflect and meditate on God's word regarding prayer. It is a time to examine our own prayer life and give ourselves some goals for improving our prayer life. It is a time to re-examine our need for prayer and God's requirements for prayer. So, let us now consider some of the basics when it comes to prayer and use the Heidelberg Catechism as our path to examining our communication with God.

## Why must we pray?

Lord's Day 45 Answer 116 states "Because it is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us; and also, because God will give his grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of him, and are thankful for them."

Let us take a moment and break up this answer. First it is the "chief part of thankfulness...". If we are truly thankful to God for all that he has done for us, we will

have a willing heart and a genuine desire to come to God in prayer. Isn't it in our nature to want to be with and talk to people that show love and kindness to us? Who loves us more than our heavenly Father? Who has already shown us a love greater than a brother, because he has laid down his life for his sheep? Next notice, "which God requires of us..." God commands us to pray. As children of God it is our desire to serve him and obey his commandments. When our heart seems locked and we in our weakened state feel that we cannot pray, we must remind ourselves that God commands it of us and therefore we must sit down, bow our heads, and let the Holy Spirit guide us in our prayer. And finally, let us look at the promise or reward for following God's will, "God will give his grace and Holy Spirit to those only..." God promises his tender mercies, and his gift of the Holy Spirit to those that pray. The Holy Spirit will give us the words which we need to say to our Lord and Maker. So today when you bow before your Lord in prayer, remember to come with a heart of thanksgiving knowing that you are obeying your God and that as promised you will receive the rich gift of his Spirit.

## How must we pray?

Once again I turn to Lord's Day 45 Answer 117: "First, that we from the heart pray to the one true God only, who hath manifested himself in his Word, for all things he hath commanded us to ask of him; secondly, that we rightly and thoroughly know our need and misery, that so we may deeply humble ourselves in the presence of his divine majesty; thirdly, that we be fully persuaded that he, notwithstanding that we are unworthy of it, will, for the sake of Christ our Lord, certainly hear our prayer, as he has promised us in his Word."

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The things that I want to point out in this answer are that we must come to God, with respect “to the one true God only...” God is not a man whom we can address like a friend. We must at all times remember to respect him as our heavenly Father. We must pray to God the Father; not the Holy Spirit, not God the Son, but with a childlike trust and reverence we speak to the one who we know loves us, will guide us and care for us. God is not our equal, God’s name is not one that we flippantly take upon our lips to help us get good grades, or a date, or a new car. We must come to our Lord with all our needs and yes, even our desires, but with a tone of respect and understanding of who he is and an understanding of what our relationship is with him. Which brings me to my next observation. We are called to come to God with deep humility; “knowing our need and misery...” Only when we truly know how sinful we are can we come to this point of deep humility. If there is any part of us that thinks we are good, we will not be able to reach the point of humility that is called for in Scripture. The beauty of knowing this humility is that then the Bible tells us that we can come boldly to the throne of grace and present ourselves before the Lord. So through our humility we shall be exalted. Finally, as I mentioned before, we can come boldly and confidently to the throne of God because we have been promised that “Christ our Lord, certainly hear our prayer...” As parents, we listen to the need of our children. As a parent I can’t tell you how many times I fall short of this part of my children’s life. We want them to feel that they can come to us about anything. We truly desire this and encourage it whenever we can. But our mind is full of earthly things, our heart is selfish with our own thoughts and desires. Our Lord, on the other hand, has promised us that he will never be preoccupied with other things. He will listen to us and give us his perfect undivided attention. What more could any of us ever ask for, but to have the “ear” of our heavenly Father who loves us perfectly and is able and willing to give all that is good for our bodies and souls. So today when you bow your head in prayer, come humbly but boldly to God’s throne with a real understanding of what you are about to do and whom you are talking to.

### **What should we pray for?**

The Heidelberg Catechism spends several Lord’s Days answering this question. It is always beneficial to review our prayers in light of these questions and answers. Answer 118 summarizes this section with this response “All things necessary for soul and body which

Christ our Lord has comprised in that prayer he himself has taught us.” Here the authors refer to our Lord’s Prayer.

Before we get specific with what requests we may and may not bring before God, let us look at this summarized answer. “All things necessary for soul and body...” ALL things NECESSARY. Not just all things, but all things necessary. It is so easy for us to want to bring all things to God in prayer, but as I mentioned before, if we come humbly and with true reverence, we will not bring requests to God that are frivolous. I think that it is also important to point out that this answer puts forth first the necessities for the soul before those of the body. If we first pray for true wisdom, God’s Word, to fill our soul; then we will know what to properly bring to God in prayer for our body. We need the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide us through our prayers, to help us keep our minds focused on coming to God with reverence and humility.

The Heidelberg Catechism gives us the guidelines to follow for proper prayer. It is not my intention at this time to go over those individual Lord’s Days. I would however, like to take a moment to examine a few of the specifics that we must watch out for in our prayers. We may not bring to God the things that will make our human flesh feel better. It is not wrong to pray for health and a strong body, but we must not desire these things for praise of man, or so that we look attractive to others; we must desire these things so that we have the strength to serve God. It is not wrong to want a spouse, but we should not pray to God for a date, or let our hearts get discouraged because we are not dating. Our desire should be that God will give us a godly mate, in his appointed time, and that he will give us the strength and contentment to wait upon him. I know that we all want to be liked by others and to have friends, or even for some, to be popular. But we must remember that it is more important that God be happy with how we present ourselves, how we walk with him, the sacrifices that we are willing to make for his sake. May our prayer be for strength, contentment, and courage to walk in these ways and not to be distracted by the desires of our flesh. We may pray to God for our bodily needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, work, etc. But we must lift up these petitions with a clear conscience that God’s will be done. We need to pray for guidance and for a wise heart when we make the decisions as to what to eat, what to wear, where and how to live, and what type of job to have.

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When we come with proper respect and understanding of God’s Word, we may bring our hopes and our disappointment to God in prayer. The Lord loves the tears of a broken heart when it brings his children to his feet. At times like this we have the comfort of knowing that Christ will intervene on our behalf, if in our emotional state we may not come to him in a proper manner. We need not be afraid of coming to God with our deepest and sometimes darkest thoughts and admissions. The Lord knows us and loves us unconditionally, and only through his grace can we truly be healed and renewed.

Prayer is a wonderful and precious gift that God has given us. He commands us to use it as a way to have blessed and true fellowship with him. We must use it in confidence knowing that God’s love for his people will bless us and give us a rich life; full of his blessings. May God’s word encourage us all in this day to bow boldly before him in prayer; and to bow often. ❖

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*Jeanine is a member of Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin.*

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Memoir of Rev. C. Hanko

# Rev. C. Hanko

## Chapter 10

### Beginning Anew

edited by Karen Van Baren

*Editor’s Note—Rev. Hanko now goes on to tell us of the “Gideon’s Band,” out of which arose the Protestant Christian Reformed Churches. This small group eventually became a new denomination called the Protestant Reformed Churches in America.*

The Lord had brought about a reformation. Yet at the time it seemed so small, so insignificant. We were like a small Gideon’s band over against the large host that still opposed us.

True, there had been other leaders, ministers, who during the conflict had encouraged Rev. Hoeksema to stand firm and hold his ground. One minister preached for us on the Sunday evening before Rev. Hoeksema’s suspension. At the close of his sermon he urged us to continue to stand with our minister in defense of the truth, regardless of the consequences. But he did not. Another minister preached for us on a Sunday evening after Rev. Hoeksema was suspended from office, but later he confessed to his churches that he had erred in doing so.

In this connection it may be mentioned that Rev. Ophoff had been requested to meet with a few ministers of the CRC in the Grandville Avenue Church. He attended the meeting while his elder waited outside, nervously pacing the street. The meeting evidently lasted

quite awhile. When Rev. Ophoff made his appearance the elder’s first question was: “Did you give in?” To which he received the response, “Of course not.” Later Rev. Ophoff revealed that a rather large congregation was offered him if he remained in the CRC. Later, one of the ministers mentioned above accepted a call to this congregation.

There were still others who had given every indication of breaking with the CRC, if Rev. Hoeksema was cast out. But one by one they dropped away. Was it because the movement was much smaller than they had anticipated?

People on both sides of the issue of common grace wrote many pamphlets. Some of them were written before Rev. Hoeksema’s deposition, and some were written after. Rev. Hoeksema wrote a brochure entitled “In Defense of Justice and Truth” to explain the recent controversy and his plans for the future. Various other booklets were written in defense of the Three Points and the errors of common grace and the well meant offer. Prof. Bavinck in the Netherlands wrote on “Common Grace.”<sup>1</sup> Rev. H. J. Kuiper published a series of three sermons, which he had preached in defense of the Three Points.<sup>2</sup> Prof. L. Berkhof published a brochure entitled “The Three Points in Every Detail.”<sup>3</sup> Rev. Hoeksema answered

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this in a brochure called “The Triple Breach.” Rev. J. K. Van Baalen<sup>4</sup> wrote accusing Hoeksema and Ophoff of being anabaptistic. To that the ministers responded with “Not Anabaptistic but Reformed.” Van Baalen also wrote “Novelties and Errors.” Prof. W. Heyns wrote a series in *The Banner* on the preaching of the gospel, which was also published in a pamphlet.<sup>5</sup> Hoeksema and Ophoff answered this in a brochure called “The Gospel.” Prof. Heyns also wrote a series of articles on the covenant, which was answered by our pastor with “The Believers and Their Seed.”<sup>6</sup>

In regard to the brochure of Prof. Heyns on the gospel, it is interesting to note that, completely contrary to the Reformed view that God has one will in Christ, he stressed the idea of *two wills in God, that God both wills to save only the elect and also wills to save all mankind*. It is amazing to see how this error developed throughout the years in the CRC. At a later date Rev. R. B. Kuiper<sup>7</sup> spoke on “The Balance that is Calvinism.” In this address he completely undermined the five points of Calvinism by trying to point out that true Calvinism teaches total depravity, but also the good that sinners do; unconditional election, but also that God wills to save all mankind; limited atonement, but also that Christ died for all mankind; irresistible grace, but also that grace is resistible.

And still later the synod of the CRC took the stand that *God loves and wills to save all mankind*.<sup>8</sup> There are even voices heard in the church world today, that since Christ died for all men and by God’s common grace loves all men, *there is a possibility that some, possibly many, are saved outside of the preaching of the gospel, that is, without faith in Jesus Christ*. This is so very obviously contrary to all the teachings of Scripture in which it is stressed that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone (Gen. 15:6, John 3:16, 36, Acts 16:31, Eph. 2:8-9).

As to the threat of worldliness, of which even the synod had warned the churches, soon the CRC spoke of the labor unions as neutral societies and allowed their members to join. Later the theater was condoned and the liturgical dance introduced. Evolution is now taught in the seminary and in the churches. And more recently, women are ordained as ministers, elders and deacons in the churches. It would seem as if Prof. Janssen lived too soon. The liberal theology has taken over in the churches even as Rev. Hoeksema had predicted.

We may well ask, since he was no longer in the denomination, why was there continued antagonism against Rev. Hoeksema and why were attacks made upon him? To that must be answered:

First of all, we must remember that the theory of common grace as developed by Dr. Abraham Kuyper was used to defend the inclination in the church toward worldliness and “culture.” Besides that, there was a strong element in the church that preached a general, well-meant offer of salvation on the part of God. Both segments tenaciously clung to their error. Rev. Hoeksema continued openly to deny and oppose both.

In the second place, Rev. Hoeksema was a staunch defender of the truth, even appealing strongly to Scripture and the Confessions, which teach no semblance of a theory of common grace, much less a general, well-meant offer of salvation on the part of God. His opponents realized that their appeal to Scripture and the Confessions was very weak, while his arguments could not be denied. Soon they gave up trying to answer his arguments and practiced the silent treatment to try to prevent him from influencing the church constituency.

Even in the Netherlands his writings were reviewed, particularly the brochure entitled “A Power of God unto Salvation,” yet no one entered into his arguments or tried to refute them. Well aware of the decision of the CRC in 1924, they ignored the whole issue with a pompous wave of the hand.

In the third place, we know that Rev. Hoeksema had employed some very strong language in his defense of the truth. He had told the members of Classis Grand Rapids East that the Reformed truth had to be sought among them with a lantern. Twice he had become so aggrieved by their obvious efforts to cast him out that he had walked out of the assembly. He had also walked out of Synod when they refused to allow him to defend his own case after he had spoken once. Rightly or wrongly, the members had taken offense.

In the fourth place, his journalism was powerful and would surely influence those who seriously read his defense. In his writing, he plainly revealed his disgust with the flimsy arguments that were used by his opponents against him. They felt hurt, if not ashamed. They continued to refer to him as stubborn and self-willed. Often he was called a dictator, and it was commonly known that they referred to his church edifice later built at the corner of Fuller and Franklin Streets as “Pope Herman’s Cathedral.”

We can only conclude that Rev. Hoeksema was the man appointed and prepared of God for his time. God prepared a Luther who did not compromise like Melancthon, a Calvin who was not a proud boaster like Servetus, and a Gomarus who was not a suave individual

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like Arminius. Surely reformers are human, and their strength is often their weakness as well. But their honest, undaunted spirit is guided by the Spirit of Jesus Christ in preserving the truth of the Scriptures.

Yet the history immediately after 1924 was not all strife and grief. There was also a bright side. Soon after the expulsion of Revs. Ophoff, Hoeksema and Danhof and their consistories from the CRC, a meeting was held by the three consistories in which it was decided to send a protest to the 1926 Synod of the CRC and in the meantime to adopt the name “Protesting Christian Reformed Churches.”

The congregation loved Rev. Hoeksema dearly. They saw an aspect of his character that did not always become evident in the public debate. In the Sunday services, in the catechisms and societies, they learned to know him as he was. In the public worship on Sunday, his prayers were a sincere pouring out of his soul to God. He never failed to emphasize the greatness, glory and blessedness of our God. Over against that, without fail, he made a humble confession of his and our sins. In his sermons he expounded the text thoroughly, was strongly doctrinal, yet presented the truth in such a clear and concise manner, that all were edified. His preaching was God-centered, antithetical, with the proper emphasis on predestination and on God’s providence.

He made it a practice to preach on the Heidelberg Catechism in a Dutch service in the morning. Later when supply was available, an English morning service was added, which he also took when the need demanded.

In the afternoon he preached a Dutch sermon for those who had difficulty understanding the English. This service was also well attended. For some time he expounded the prophecy of Isaiah in this service to the delight of his audience. Often he used such down-to-earth examples that smiles would appear on the faces of the audience, and sometimes a slight twitter passed through the congregation. On one occasion, when he had not conducted this service for some time, he came on the pulpit and expressed his joy at being able to preach for them once again. A spontaneous voice arose from the audience, “We also are glad.”

The evening service was in English and was also well attended. He preached on the history of the Old Testament from Genesis to the Judges, not only explaining the historical event but also interpreting it in the light of the whole of Scripture. He enjoyed preaching series. He carefully and thoroughly expounded such epistles as Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, James, I and II Peter and

Revelation. In fact, he made a life-long study of the book of Revelation, the fruit of which now appears in the incomparable volume, *Behold He Cometh*.

The ministers were kept very busy. Rev. Ophoff remained a faithful and diligent laborer among us. He also worked hard as co-editor of *The Standard Bearer*. Besides the work in their congregations, writing articles and giving lectures, there were requests from various areas for more information and possible organization. Soon a congregation was organized in Byron Center, Roosevelt Park (this later became our Southwest Church) and Hudsonville, Michigan. In answer to a request from the Midwest, Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Danhof went to northwest Iowa and organized a congregation in Hull. Later Doon, Rock Valley and Sioux Center were added. A church was also organized in Waupun, Wisconsin.

It was to this fledgling denomination that God called me for my life’s work. ❖

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Bavinck was professor in the Free University of Amsterdam.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Kuiper was a minister in the CRC and editor of *The Banner*.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Berkhof was professor of Dogmatics in Calvin Seminary.

<sup>4</sup> J. K. Van Baalen was minister in Munster CRC in Indiana. He was one of Hoeksema’s fiercest opponents and probably wrote the most against him.

<sup>5</sup> William Heyns taught in Calvin College and Seminary. He popularized the conditional view of the covenant.

<sup>6</sup> The pamphlets mentioned in this paragraph were originally written in Dutch. The author included the Dutch titles as well, but here I give only the English translations of the titles.

<sup>7</sup> Rev. R. B. Kuiper was a minister in the CRC who later taught in and was president of Westminster Seminary. The speech referred to here was given at a Calvin College graduation exercise in 1952.

<sup>8</sup> The CRC took this stand in the mid-60s when they dealt with the “Decker Case.” Harold Decker defended the proposition that the atonement of Christ was for all men with regard to sufficiency and intention, but not efficacy.

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*Karen is a member of Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois, and a granddaughter of Rev. C. Hanko.*

# Church News

## BAPTISMS

*"For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39*

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:  
Karen Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jon Bult—Bethel, IL

Alyssa Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brent Kuiper—Faith, MI

Kaitlin Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Chris Groenhof—Georgetown, MI

Nicole Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Kamps—Georgetown, MI

Payton Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Andy Kalsbeek—Georgetown, MI

Tyce Alan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Stoel—Grace, MI

Taya May, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joe VanOverloop—Grandville, MI

Rebecca Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Brunsting—Hope, MI

Jonathan Jay, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tim Bomers—Hope, MI

Ava Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Nathan VanOverloop—Kalamazoo, MI

Mark Gilbert, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bert Mulder—Immanuel, Lacombe, Canada

Quinten Matthew, son of Mr. & Mrs. Michael Klaassens—Immanuel, Lacombe, Canada

Delia Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Bob Bos—Loveland, CO

Dawson Andrew, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jordan Kamps—Loveland, CO

Drew Nathan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Regnerus—Randolph, WI

Dylan Mark, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bob Knecht—South Holland, IL

Kara Noelle, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dale Lenting—South Holland, IL

Ivan Robert, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Smits—South Holland, IL

Kate Dorothy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Earl Kamps—South Holland, IL

Kyle Steven, son of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Kamps—Southwest, MI

Reece Caden, son of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Cleary—Southwest, MI

## CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

*"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."*

*Proverbs 22:6*

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

Carrie Lubbers—Byron Center, MI

Kaylynn Gritters—Byron Center, MI

Kelly Langerak—Grace, MI

Ashley Kuiper—Georgetown, MI

Joel Koole—Hope, MI

David Rutgers—Hope, MI

Larissa Groeneweg—Hull, IA

Mark Verbeek—Kalamazoo, MI

Jeff Hendriks—Redlands, CA

Kara Miersma—Redlands, CA

Mike Jabaay—Redlands, CA

Brandon Feenstra—Redlands, CA

Daniel Miersma—Redlands, CA

Mitchell VanOverloop—Trinity, MI

## MARRIAGES

*"For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." Psalm 48:14*

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Mark DeBoer and Miss Sarah Booth—Byron Center, MI

Mr. Michael Vermeer and Miss Beth DeJong—Peace, IL

The Protestant Reformed Scholarship Committee is offering scholarship awards to prospective Protestant Reformed teachers and ministers. If you are interested in receiving a packet, please contact Melinda Bleyenbergh at 616-453-8898 or email [darylme@altelco.net](mailto:darylme@altelco.net) by April 1, 2006.

# "LITTLE LIGHTS"

## A Turn of Events: from Chaos to Comfort (Part 1)

... *let it shine!*

by Connie Meyer

He was a man of great intellect, self-assurance, and strong opinions, but where would these opinions lead? Dr. Thieleman Hesshuss taught in the newly established seminary at Heidelberg, Germany. Professors of varying Reformed persuasions were welcomed here in 1560, and Hesshuss held his Lutheran views on the Lord's Supper very high. In most of Europe the tides of persecution were swelling and many a Protestant, whether Lutheran or Calvinist, was dying for his faith. For the time being Heidelberg was a safe haven from this flood. But if those waters could not be brought to Heidelberg, the devil would find a crack from within and let the tide seep in. Hesshuss was his man.

Dr. Hesshuss was also minister of the large Church of the Holy Spirit in Heidelberg. He was of the opinion that the Psalms ought not be sung in worship because they were too "Calvinistic." He was of the opinion that when the bread was eaten in the Lord's Supper, a napkin should be used lest someone let a crumb fall to the floor. These were views that Luther himself would not have approved.

Wilhelm Klebitz was a student under Dr. Hesshuss as well as a deacon in his church, and—Klebitz was a young man who also freely voiced his opinions.

Klebitz wrote his thesis paper defending Calvin's view of the Lord's Supper in opposition to Hesshuss' view. It was time for him to graduate, and the faculty of the seminary at Heidelberg not only approved of this paper, they appointed him

to be a professor there. All this happened while their fellow faculty member, Dr. Hesshuss, was out of town. Hesshuss was furious when he returned.

Hesshuss immediately preached against Klebitz and his views. Klebitz fired back with equal venom. The mayor of Heidelberg tried to calm the situation, but to no avail. The tide of trouble was rising.

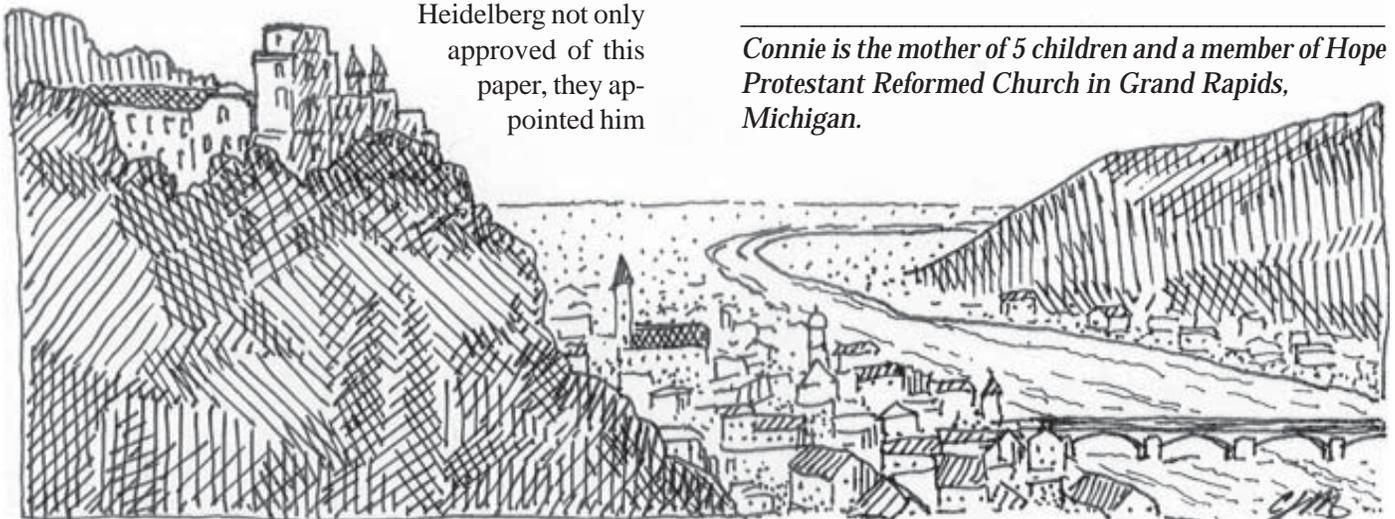
It continued to rise. Without the knowledge or advice of his consistory, Hesshuss announced from the pulpit on the following Sunday that both the mayor and Klebitz were excommunicated from the church.

Now Elector Frederick III, the ruler of the land, became involved. He called Hesshuss and Klebitz to silence, but the waters would not be stilled. The very next Sunday Dr. Hesshuss was administering the Lord's Supper when deacon Klebitz ignored his "excommunication" and came forward to help. Hesshuss grabbed the communion cup out of Klebitz's hand and the two proceeded to wrestle and fight!

The flood had come, but now at its peak, it could only drain away. Hesshuss and Klebitz were thrown out of Heidelberg, Germany. Not only was chaos left in their wake, now their places were left empty, too. The Church of the Holy Spirit needed a pastor and the seminary needed another professor. Who would fill these important posts? The devil took glee in the trouble he had caused with these two men, but God was in control of it all. Such would be the turn of events... ❖

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



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