

# *Beacon*

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# *Lights*

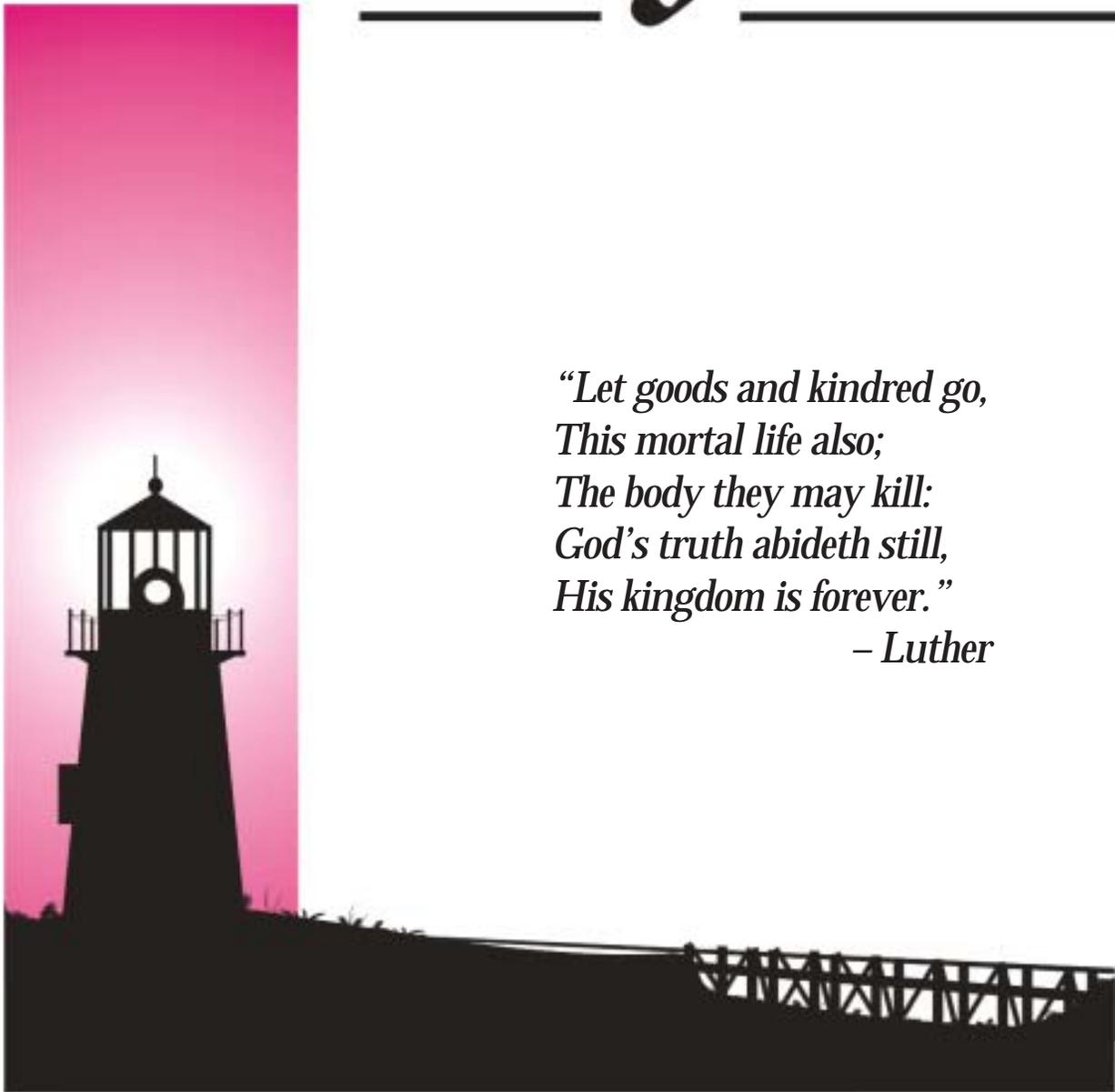
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November  
2007

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*“Let goods and kindred go,  
This mortal life also;  
The body they may kill:  
God’s truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.”*

*– Luther*



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## BEACON LIGHTS

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Editorial

## Smoke-filled Rooms – Let's Move On

by John Huizenga

**I**t is said that our forefathers made momentous decisions for the Protestant Reformed churches in smoke-filled rooms. Indeed they did. And I am grateful for the heritage we are able to pass on to our children, and the solid foundation laid by their work. The matters placed before these men were great. The decisions would have consequences for generations. Fierce battles were fought on behalf of the truth. Hours and hours were spent late into the night with heart wrenching, tense debates that would end with families divided. To this tension, tobacco smoke brought welcomed relief.

As we move onward through history, and reminisce about those days, the element of a smoke-filled room continues as an important element to these meetings. Perhaps we take some pride in the theological intensity that the blue haze represents. I truly hope that we continue to appreciate the difficult work that was done by those men. What they fought for was rooted solidly in God's word and can serve to guide our development today. The smoking, however, needs to be left behind, especially if we use their smoking as an excuse for ours.

While time does not change true doctrine, it can and does change our attitude toward smoking. There was a day when it was easy to brush off concerns that filling one's body with smoke was a bad idea. That has changed. Some of the first questions asked by the doctor are: "Do you smoke?" or "Are your children exposed to second-hand smoke?" It is one of the first questions on the health or life insurance form. These questions are asked because the answer makes a big difference for one's health and life. The doctor is alerted to be on the lookout for the deadly effects in your body. The insurance company will prepare for higher costs and a shorter life by making you pay more in your premiums. Now, when we smoke, we know that we are making a choice that will very likely take away from the health and life that God has given. Our forefathers could claim ignorance, we can't.

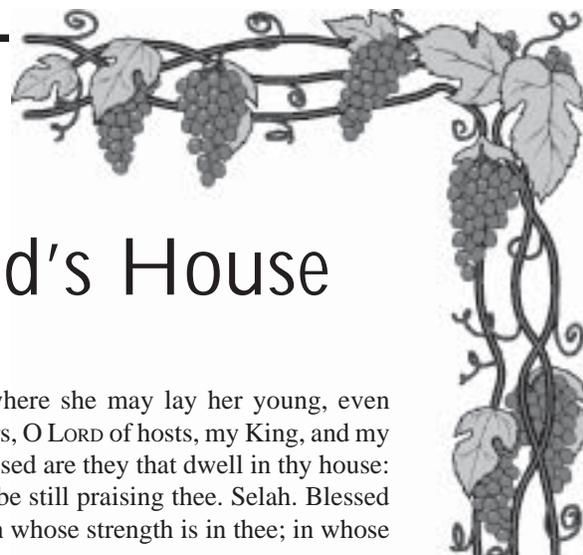
So is smoking a sin? We have no direct statement in God's word to that effect because, to my knowledge, the activity of smoking did not exist at the time. Similar behavior such as gluttony and drunkenness is, however, condemned. Drinking alcohol in itself is not wrong, but when it continues to the point at which the mind loses control, it is. Alcohol also contains the potential for dependence as well as health and life degradation. How much food is too much, and why we eat is different for everyone. In this area of life too, the sin seems to have an element of losing control along with a degradation of health and life as a result. Smoking also has a mental control and health element. One difference, however, is the fact that food and drink have a life sustaining purpose whereas inhaling mind altering chemicals into our bodies does not. So even if an occasional puff on a cigarette is not a sin, I believe that God's word makes it very clear that we are only one step away from it.

Because smoking is something that perhaps only the strongest of us can do without being pulled into a sinful grip, I think we need to put an end to smoking outside of our church buildings. The psychological effect of smoking along with peer pressure makes it hard enough for our young people and children to resist trying a smoke. When our ministers, elders, uncles, and other respected adults smoke, it makes the temptation to dabble in so powerful a substance as nicotine all the more difficult to fight. Such an influence and temptation certainly is not welcomed when we gather after a worship service to fellowship together. If anything, we ought to do what we can to encourage and help those who struggle with addiction to fight against it.

The negative impact that smoking has on the youth is only one reason why it's time to move on and leave the smoke behind. As our knowledge of the wonders of the human body increases with science and medicine, we marvel and testify that our bodies are indeed fearfully and wonderfully made by our God. When the world sees us willfully destroy our bodies, they mock our foolishness and blaspheme God. Let us not forget that we hold to a glorious heritage. We must let this light shine. The scattered sheep in the world hear Christ from our pulpits. They come to our churches to hear more, but often must first walk through a cloud of smoke. Let's clear the air and let our light shine. May the doctrine we hold dear to the heart come to clear manifestation in our life and conversation as we glorify God in our body and spirit.

In conclusion we consider this word of God: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19, 20). We know the dangers of smoking. Statistics indicate that the average person who is taken by the addiction and smokes all his life loses about ten years of life. In this light, consider that such willful exposure of our body to danger is condemned in the sixth commandment as expounded in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 40. May we stand together as the body of Christ to encourage and strengthen one another in the battles we face as the people of God. ❖

Fruitful Branches



## Longing to Dwell in God's House

by Andy Tanis

**Psalm 84**—How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for

herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose

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heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

The word amiable, according to the Webster's Dictionary, means "worthy of love or affection." This is how the psalmist describes the house of God. The tabernacle is the place where God dwelt among his people. He meditates on all of the blessings that he sees and experiences when he is *near*, or even better, *in* the house of the Lord. His love for the house of God is so great, that he says his soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord. His heart cries out desperately yearning just to be near his God. This joy that floods his heart and soul as he stands in God's dwelling place is far better than any glimmering shadow of carnal happiness he may find in this world.

The psalmist then begins listing the various blessings that he experiences when he is nigh to God's house. First, he mentions how even the birds find shelter here. Two birds in particular are mentioned. These are the sparrow and the swallow. One striking feature that is necessary to notice about these two birds is that they are relatively small, almost seemingly insignificant. Yet, sheltered in the arms of Almighty God and provided for in his providence, they find rest here as do we.

The psalmist tells us that he is so blessed to be dwelling in God's house, his heart is filled with praise. He says he would rather have the lowly position of doorkeeper in the house of God, than to claim the highest position in the tents of wickedness apart from God. One day, mind you, as a doorkeeper in God's house is a far greater blessing than a thousand days in this world of sin.

Those who think that Sunday is just another work day or golf outing (amongst many other forms of entertainment) don't understand this Psalm. They are those who enjoy the tents of wickedness so much that they are blinded to the truth, and stumble at this passage. If one can't live in obedience to the fourth commandment and keep the Sabbath day holy because he is so driven by a

love for money and material pleasure, Christ's command to him is:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:11).

(Of course, we know that the first day is the present sabbath day because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ who is the Lord of the Sabbath.) For those who violate this commandment, the calling is for repentance. Confess your sins to God, and truly find rest for your body and soul in his house! Be fed by the word of life (Christ) who by the power of the Holy Spirit uses the preaching of the gospel to breathe life into us, and to whisper words of sweet forgiveness and hope!

Where is this zeal today? Do we really feel this blessedness and joy for the amazing privilege we have to frequent the house of God, and to hear Christ speak to us? Or do we have a hard time getting out of bed on Sunday morning, not really all that excited to go to church? Perhaps, we struggle to pay attention because we don't think about the fact that our savior and bridegroom is speaking to us through the mouth of the minister. Do we complain and gripe about the minister as the one who stands equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit to boldly proclaim the gospel with authority, always trying to find some fault in what he says when he presents the truth of the gospel and speaks Christ's words to his bride, the church? Do we look forward to communing with the saints, edifying one another with that gospel of peace? Maybe in the consciousness of our own sin, the thought of coming into the presence of a holy and just God who hates sin makes us tremble!

May this passage of Holy Scripture truly humble us to the dust in sorrow for this blessed privilege that we take for granted! May we truly delight to dwell in God's house and there find the assurance that surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in God's house forever when he takes us to our eternal dwelling place in heaven! ❖

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*Andy is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.*

# A Word to Christian Employers

by Dan Holstege

**H**ow should the Christian employer view himself and his company in light of the great commandment to love God with all one's heart and soul and strength? What is it about the Christian employer's attitude that sets him apart from worldly employers, that demonstrates to all that this man is not a typical businessman? As Christians living in this world we are called by God to "come out from among them" and be separate (II Corinthians 6:17). The Christian employer too then must be clearly different from worldly employers in the way he thinks about things in the running of his company. He must demonstrate by his attitude and actions that he loves God and his neighbor.

Now as Reformed Christians we recognize that our love for God and the neighbor arises out of a most profound gratitude for God's gracious salvation and is only possible through the work of the Holy Spirit within us. Because of God's wondrous grace by which he redeemed us from sin, we cannot but love God and our neighbor. We do it spontaneously. Finding that God first loved us (I John 4:19) and gave up his only-begotten Son for our sakes, we are overwhelmed by the desire to return that love to him. And by the power of grace which is the Holy Spirit we are enabled to live such lives of thankful love to God and the neighbor. Thus, love for God and the neighbor is the proper and natural attitude of the Christian employer which then sets him apart from the ungodly employers and businessmen of the world.

For a Christian employer, therefore, as for all Christians, it is vitally important that he view himself and behave himself before men as one who is saved by grace and thankful. He does this by demonstrating love for God and his neighbor. If he does not demonstrate this love he has no right to call himself a Christian or to be considered a Christian by others. The apostle James especially stresses this, saying that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). A faith that does not manifest itself with good works of love for God and the neighbor is a *dead* faith; it is no faith at all. It is the phony faith of the ungodly and hypocrites in the church. Thus, James

urges us to a life of good works. He says this is the way one *demonstrates* his faith, i.e., that he is a saved-by-grace believer. In verse eighteen of the same chapter he says "I will *show* thee my faith by my works" (my emphasis). How then does a Christian employer show his faith by his works?

The Christian employer does this in the way he views himself and his business with respect to God. He does this by having an attitude of love and submission to God in his business. He does not only show his faith by going to society once a week and to church on Sunday, although he certainly does this. The Christian employer must love God *in his particular place in the world*. In other words, he must love God *as an employer, as a businessman*. In the building and running of a company, in the successes and failures, in the acquisition of power and wealth, the Christian employer must love and submit to God.

Loving God as an employer means recognizing and praising him as the *source* of all one's authority, abilities, opportunities and wealth. Worldly business owners view themselves as "self-made" successes. They recognize only themselves as the source of their authority and abilities and wealth. They praise only themselves for their success (although they usually blame others for their failures). But this is not love for God. This is nothing but ugly pride and self-glorification. The law of God says "thou shalt have no other gods before me," but this kind of employer serves the god of himself and bows to the god of filthy lucre. He serves not God, but mammon (Matthew 6:24).

The Christian employer must recognize and praise God as the source of all his authority. In his business he certainly has power and authority. He has authority over the running of the company, over decisions made from day to day. But love for God requires that he acknowledge him as the source of that authority. In Romans 13:1 the apostle Paul points out that "there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." God is the real possessor of all power and authority. He gives it out to men to use in service to him. Thus Christian busi-

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ness owners must worship and bow down before God as the omnipotent one; they must recognize him as the one who gave them their power; and they must use their power and authority to serve him. They must seek to further the causes of his kingdom and seek to be good stewards of his creation.

Loving God also means acknowledging and worshipping him as the source of one's talents and abilities. The apostle James has something to say about this too. He says that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). The business owner must recognize that his ability to read economic trends or understand good marketing ploys or anything else is a good gift in the form of a talent which comes down from the Father. Loving God means giving him thanks and praise for those gifts. It also means using those talents to the best of one's ability. Jesus taught in the Parable of the Talents that one must take the talents given him by God and make them prosperous. The Christian employer must put his talents to work in a way that reveals the goodness of the giver.

Another way the business owner demonstrates love for God is by acknowledging him as the source of all opportunities that arise in the life of the company. This is probably something we do not think about so often, but confessing the sovereignty of God means recognizing him as the source of all our opportunities. He directs all things by his providence so that whatever happens is according to his will and by his power. So when the company is suddenly given the opportunity to gain new accounts or purchase new land or equipment or anything else, the Christian business owner does not heap praise on the market or some turn of events, but he thanks and praises God. He recognizes that God is responsible for that turn of events and he gives thanks and praise to him.

Furthermore, the Christian employer demonstrates his love for God, and the neighbor too, in his attitude toward the wealth he accrues. The successful Christian businessman, and there are many, inevitably accrues much wealth through his company. His attitude toward that wealth must be sharply antithetical to that of worldly businessmen. Ungodly employers view their wealth as entirely their own to use how they please. They put it in the service of their insatiable lusts for pleasure, power, and fame among other things. Their love of money is truly a root of all kinds of evil (I Timothy 6:10). But the

Christian business owner must be in stark contrast to this.

The Christian employer who loves God must view his money in relation to God. All of his money comes from God, has its source in God. God owns everything in the world. For "the earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1). It is God's earth, his world. He made it; he controls it and directs it. So when wealth falls into our hands, how can we fail to recognize that it comes from God? How could we possibly think that it is all ours to do with as we please? It is not ours. Woe to the man who loves his money, who praises himself for obtaining it, who says to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19). It may be that God will say to such a man, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (v. 20). Rather, the Christian employer recognizes that God possesses all things, even money, and he lends them to us. He expects us to be good stewards of those things. What does it mean then to be a good steward?

A good steward takes care of the money or possessions of the owner. He does not seize hold of that money as if it were his own and then go spend it all on himself. He understands that the money is not his own. He understands that he has a responsibility with respect to that money to use it in ways approved by the owner. This kind of stewardship must characterize the Christian employer's attitude toward his wealth. He has been entrusted with it to use in ways approved by God. He is God's steward with respect to that wealth. Well, how does God want him to use this wealth?

Jesus says that we must seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matthew 6:33, Luke 12:31). Now doesn't it make sense that we should seek God's kingdom first, seeing that we are stewards of God's things? God's kingdom is the number one priority for all believers, including Christian employers, with respect to their money. Jesus says that placing the kingdom first means giving alms to the poor (Luke 12:33). For us this means giving to the benevolence fund. Considering how wealthy we are today, the benevolence fund should never suffer lack. We must give abundantly to provide for our poor. Jesus also describes this seeking first as laying up "treasures in heaven" because "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:20-21). Thus we must use our money to support heavenly, spiritual things. This includes all the "kingdom causes" of Chris-

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tian schools, the mission work of the Church, and many other things. When we liberally support all these causes we will find that our hearts are in those causes. Our hearts will be on spiritual things and not earthly, carnal things.

Furthermore, seeking the kingdom first with respect to money means using that money rightly within the company itself. The Christian employer must have his heart set on heavenly treasures in his particular place of labor. The apostle Paul, after stating that “the love of money is the root of all evil,” says that the man of God ought rather to “follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (I Timothy 6:10-11). The Christian employer, then, must not be greedy and covetous, but rather one who loves his neighbor within his own company. He must treat his employees well. Paul says this explicitly in Colossians 4:1: “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.” The Christian employer must be concerned for the welfare of his workers even as God the Master is concerned for his welfare. He must be kind to them; he must show mercy to them; he must

provide for their needs; he must be hospitable to them; he must be honest with them (see Romans 12:9-21). In this way he will seek the kingdom of God first in his business.

When the Christian employer seeks the kingdom of God first, when his heart rests on the heavenly treasures, then everything else will fall into place. Jesus puts it this way: “All these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). If we were to apply this to the employer, Jesus means that the business will be blessed. It might not always experience what the world deems blessedness. It might not always experience fiscal stability. But it will be blessed nevertheless. This blessing is the spiritual blessing of God. This is the blessing of peace and joy and contentment. Pay no attention to the world’s idea of happiness as pleasure and power and fame. The spiritual blessing of God is true and enduring happiness. ❖

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

## Gem of the Month

# He Who Was Sinless

*“He Who was sinless was made sin for us.”  
Turning depravity into salvation  
For sinners deserving only damnation.  
Who but Jehovah could plan such a thing,  
Jehovah of Hosts, the conquering King.  
It pleased Him to sacrifice His only Son  
Because of His love for the wholly undone;  
He loved us and changed us by mercy and grace  
Into sanctified children—His chosen race.  
We now glorify Him, exalting His name,  
And into eternity still will proclaim  
The wonder He wrought, and the joy that He brought:  
With the blood of His Son, His people He bought!  
He Who was sinless was made sin for us!*

Thelma Westra

# Watching Daily At My Gates

by Skip Hunter

## November 8 Read II Timothy 2:1-6

Paul, in his second epistle to his beloved Timothy, writes to him encouragement and direction. He does this because he believes that he is near to the end of his life and wishes to help Timothy in his work. Even today godly parents and grandparents will do this for their children and grandchildren. They do this on the basis of God's word. Notice the words of verse three. The fight on this earth is hard. It is a fight. The child of God must endure even as a soldier endures the hard conditions of the battlefield whether it be jungle, desert, or mountainous terrain. As soldiers of Christ, we must fight and fight hard the battles placed before us by God. We have the assurance that we will win the battles not by our strength but by the strength given to us by the same God. Young people, are you preparing yourselves to fight? Grandparents and parents, are you encouraging them in the fight? Sing Psalter 392.

## November 9 Read II Timothy 2:7-13

Notice verse eleven. Because of our belief in the death of Christ for our sins, we have many benefits. The first mentioned is that of life. Not the physical life of this world which is marked by physical pain caused by the frailty of this body, but rather the spiritual life that will be eternally ours in heaven with Christ. This life will be marked with joy; this is the joy of the redeemed. This is the joy of those who God has elected from all eternity; this is the joy of those who have been bought by the blood of Christ, our Savior. Young people, do you seek earthly joy or heavenly joy? We will have to endure suffering; but do not despair, we are redeemed. What a blessed hope we have! Sing Psalter 329.

## November 10 Read II Timothy 2:14-21

It is Saturday; the last thing anyone of us wishes to think of is our studies. But yet Paul reminds us to study to show ourselves approved unto God. We might not look at our schoolbooks today; some may have put them away for a long time now, but we are still called to study. We may have the opportunity to enjoy nature. Study it to see God's glory and grandeur. Do not forget to pick up your Bibles and study today. Tomorrow is the Sabbath; will we be found approved before God? Study, people of God of all ages, and be prepared unto every good work. Sing Psalter 333.

## November 11 Read II Timothy 2:22-26

Take a look at verse twenty-two again. Young people, are you heeding the first part of the verse? Older young people,

are you putting away childish things? Older and elderly saints, are you walking in the station and calling where God has put you? That is what this verse calls us to do. Were we with those that "call upon the Lord out of a pure heart" today? Did we go to church? Did we go twice? Did we go prepared to learn how to "follow righteousness, faith, charity"? This verse gives us much direction in how to live our lives. Let us follow its teaching and know our God. Sing Psalter 322.

## November 12 Read Psalm 23

We are never too old for this Psalm. God's people of all ages can enjoy it, receive strength from it, and be comforted by it. Read it often and find new ideas in it for our lives. What is a shepherd? Have you ever given that much thought? In this less than agrarian society in which we live, we may not know much about shepherds. But the idea is important to God's people. Jesus is the good shepherd. Our ministers are the shepherds of the people of God. We can go on with this idea, but in order for us to know what a shepherd does, we must know what a shepherd is. Think about that today. Sing Psalter 53.

## November 13 Read Psalm 23

This Psalm can be read over and over again. Our thinking assignment for today is sheep. Do you really know what sheep are like? In order really to understand Psalm 23, we need to know that. What are their feeding patterns? Are they really as dumb as people say? God's people are often likened to sheep. We stray like sheep. We are led like sheep. We need to be protected from the world's wolves like sheep do. We need to know what sheep are to see how we are like sheep. Think about sheep today. Sing Psalter 55.

## November 14 Read Psalm 23

Once again we turn to this beautiful Psalm. In the end we find that we have a place to which we are being led. This place is one of peace. This place is heaven. This provides comfort to people of God of all ages. Even our littlest of children can understand the joys of peace. The most aged of saints wish for the peace that is found in God's fold with the one shepherd Christ Jesus. Young people, seek that place. Do it as sheep. Obey the shepherd. Dwelling in God's house is the one goal that will give you peace now and in eternity. Sing Psalter 52.

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## November 15 Read Psalm 118:19-29

Notice verse twenty-four. Quite often we think of the Lord's Day as Sunday. Everyday is the Lord's day. We must always remember that. As we work today and throughout this week we must remember that every day we must use the day that Jehovah has given to us. In doing this we first of all prepare for the Sabbath. Secondly, we prepare for the Lord's supper that may be celebrated in some churches this week. Thirdly we prepare for the eternal Sabbath in heaven. Use today well, and you will be ready to use Sunday well. Sing Psalter 256.

## November 16 Read Psalm 1

Here is another Psalm that we would do well to read often. Who are the blessed ones? There are two chapters in the Bible that gives to us descriptions of those people. In this chapter we see the blessed ones are those who walk in God's law. They are the ones who have been planted by that river of God that nourishes them. The happy ones are those who stay away from the evil one and his ways. Let us seek to truly be blessed, and let us seek to walk in God's way. (Matthew 5 is the other chapter which tells us how to be happy.) Sing Psalter 2.

## November 17 Read III John 1:1-4

These words from John are the hope of parents and grandparents of the church of all time. Truth does not need to be defined. It is that which is in accordance to the law of God. In the end, this is what parents and grandparents want for their children and grandchildren in their education and the rest of their lives. Doing your very best in school is part of that truth because students must study to show themselves approved before God. Young people, show zeal in your work. In doing so you will walk in truth and give to those who love you much joy. Sing Psalter 334.

## November 18 Read Hebrews 11:1-6

What a wonderful gift faith is? By it we can believe God and all of His glorious wonders. Young people, as you study, take time to contemplate what those studies tell you about God. Man can invent but only God creates. Abel obeyed God and it cost him his life. Will we have the courage to do this? It's easy to have faith when things go well. What about when things are not going so well? Can we please God like Enoch? Enoch did not know he was to be translated. He was busy running for his life. But he spoke about God, he walked with God even when he was alone, and in doing this, he pleased God. Sing Psalter 71.

## November 19 Read Hebrews 11:7-13

People of God, let the ideas of Abraham lead you; not in this life but in the life to come. Our home is not here but in glory with all those who have run the race before us. Be persuaded of God's goodness and continually confess being a stranger and pilgrim on the earth. These ideas are good for God's people of all ages. Young people may have trouble comprehending the ideas of being a pilgrim and stranger. They may see the end of their studies being their lives on this earth. Older saints, we must lead them in the idea that the earth is

not their home. Young people, speak to your godly grandparents often. They understand these truths, and will be happy to explain them to you. Sing Psalter 221.

## November 20 Read I John 4:1-6

This text tells us to do a necessary task in our lives. We may hear many who talk and sing about God. We may hear many interpretations of the Bible writings and speeches. We must try the spirits and see if those things are of God. Young people, this is true of you as well. Your parents are not always around to guide you. You must try the spirits. Songs and messages that are not of God-not your determination or another person's determination, but only Scripture, you must reject. You may have to shut off the music box, leave the concert, or, refuse attendance. In doing so you are obeying God and will find the "peace that passeth understanding." Be of good courage and say no to those things which are not of God. Sing Psalter 362.

## November 21 Read Psalm 136:1-9

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving. It is not too soon to think of what true thanksgiving really is. First of all we must think of whom we must thank. We thank God who created the heavens, the earth, and all that is in them. Ponder God and his creation. Can we do anything but thank Him for all that He has done for us? Think about the wonders of creation; do they not force us to cry out, "O God, how great thou art!?" By doing this we will become less focused on the turkey and more focused on God, our creator. Sing Psalter 377.

## November 22 Read Psalm 136:1, 10-26

Because the passage is a little longer today, I will not say much about it. God is good. He has redeemed us from all evil. Say verse twenty-five before your meal today and then repeat verse twenty-six. Thanks be to God. Sing Psalter 378.

## November 23 Read I John 4:7-15

Let's continue where we left off Tuesday. God is love. What a beautiful thought that is! Because He is love, we must love those around us. In doing that, we show our love to God. Now, notice verse 15. This is some thing we must do daily. Confessing that Jesus is God's Son is more than just words. It is saying the truths found in Scripture as well as walking a good daily walk. Whether we are old or young, we must pray for the strength to do this each day. Young people, you have to learn to do this. Ask for help from those around you, and ask for help from our heavenly Father. Sing Psalter 51.

## November 24 Read I Peter 1:1-9

Notice verse three. Sometimes we have trials that cause us to be "down". Sometimes those around us take away the hope we have in Christ. Sometimes our situations do not look as nice as we would want them. Through any of this we have the hope of the resurrection of Christ. This hope will sustain us through all trials and temptations. We do not have to worry about the trials of this life. Our elder brother has experienced them and has given to us the hope that will sustain us in all

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situations. Read the Bible often and know that our God will care for us in all things. Sing Psalter 342.

#### November 25 Read Psalm 24

A familiar Psalm now and then is a refreshing thought. When we can hold to the familiar, it takes away doubts, despair, and loneliness. Our King of glory is always around us and will always care for us. As we worship today, we must make sure that we worship the king of glory. He is not an earthly king. His kingdom is not of this world. He is heavenly and has a heavenly kingdom. By worshiping Him we find the way to true contentment in this life and in the life to come. Enjoy the Sabbath and be ready to enjoy the eternal Sabbath in heaven with the King. Sing Psalter 58.

#### November 26 Read Isaiah 44:21-28

Notice first of all in verse twenty-four that God is our creator. Young people, remember this as you study science and especially human anatomy. The creation is orderly because God is orderly. God also knows all things because He has decreed them. It was many years before Cyrus made history when these words were penned. These words came true and because they did, God's people found comfort then, and we can find comfort now. If God knows Cyrus, He knows each of us by name. Think about that. He knows you! Sing Psalter 375.

#### November 27 Read Psalm 3

People of God of all ages, this Psalm is for you! Those of you who are afflicted reread the first three verses. Do not despair, we have a shield. Jehovah will lift us up from despair and deliver us from those afflictions. Of that there is no doubt. Those who face death reread verses four and five. God who is in heaven hears us when we cry. We can sleep a comfortable sleep knowing that whether we awake on this earth or with Jesus in heaven, we will find joy. Maybe your physical state is such that you desire to awake in heaven. The great physician knows your needs and will bring you the balm of Gilead. Let this strengthen you in your afflictions. No matter what our situation salvation belongs to God, and He will bring to us blessing from His limitless store. Sing Psalter 5.

#### November 28 Read Hebrews 11:8-13

Young people, you have years of schooling ahead of you. Some have more than others. But yet as we read in Hebrews the city that we look for is not on this earth but rather in heaven. We are but strangers and pilgrims here. Let us remember that. We have a calling as strangers and pilgrims. That calling is to make our calling and election sure. This, as is true with all we do, can only be done with God's help. Making our calling and election sure is not how we get salvation, but rather how we show gratitude for salvation. We cannot show gratitude if our goal is a good life on this earth. We must seek for that heavenly abode. We must do this as, daily we study. We must do this as we work. Our abiding city

has the foundation of God and His truth. Let us seek Him and His truth in all that we do. Sing Psalter 325.

#### November 29 Read Genesis 6:1-8

Notice the last verse. When we find grace in God's eyes, we please Him with our walk. Notice that the grace comes first and then the walk. Finding the grace is not our doing but God's. He leads us to the grace which He provides for all of His people. This is how we walk as strangers and pilgrims on this earth. Noah means comfort. God gives to us those men and women who provide comfort in this world as Noah did in the world in which he lived. Young people, are you looking for God's grace? Are you seeking the help of those men and women of comfort? Sing Psalter 252.

#### November 30 Read Jude 1-13

Part of working out our salvation or making our calling and election sure is earnestly contending for the faith. Jude lived during a time of controversy in and out of the church. It mimics much the way it will be before Christ returns. Jude's admonition to earnestly contend for the faith is one that we need today. We contend for the faith by our actions and our speech. It will get harder and harder, but our covenant God will sustain us through all things. Sing Psalter 407.

#### December 1 Read Jude 14-25

The last two verses have been the favorite New Testament doxology of many. I know it is mine. Think about it. Christ will keep us from falling away from His everlasting love. He presents dirty old us to His Father in a spotless condition. Think of a little child who stumbles and falls, who gets dirty, both his skin and his clothes. Now do you get the idea of this doxology? What else can we do but to thank Him by giving Him all glory, majesty, dominion and power? This brings much comfort to us as we live our lives. Sing Psalter 315.

#### December 2 Read I Corinthians 13

This is the famous chapter on love. What is often missed is that this chapter deals with the love of the brethren in the church. It is often misused for other things including weddings. Now it is true that there is this idea in it, but its primary purpose is to prevent troubles in the church. Take a look at the last verse of the next chapter and you will see my point. Young people, as you seek to make confession of faith, think about preserving the unity of the church. This can only be done through the right way of love. This is the love that God showed to us by sending His Son to die on the cross. We must reflect that love in our lives. Sing Psalter 124.

#### December 3 Read II Peter 2:1-11

Verse nine of this chapter is most comforting. There are many temptations in the world. God is faithful and will lead us from them. This does not mean that we seek temptations. If we do, we will be like David and Peter and have grievous falls. See Canons Head five. We have been given a great heritage in Scripture and the Reformed faith. Woe to us if we throw it away. Young people, this means you. Older people of God, this means us. Sing Psalter 202.

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## December 4 Read II Peter 2:12-22

In verse seventeen we see an everyday situation which we can appreciate. In the summer we go through a dry spell. We see clouds but have no rain. This is what false teachers are like. They thunder and lightning, but nothing good comes out of them. We are called to try the spirits. We must do so that we are not fooled. We must seek true teachers and teaching of God's truths. By doing this we will have the assurance of God's love for us. There is no peace in false teaching. The only true peace is in God's Word and His way of salvation. Sing Psalter 336.

## December 5 Read Psalm 4

The last verse is that to which I wish to call your attention. As we awake from another night of sleep we must thank Jehovah who has given to us that night of rest. We awake because He cares for us. Sometimes the night can be a scary time. Many deaths occur at night. Even these should cause us no fear because for the child of God death is the entry into heaven. We may take with us to bed the gladness of the day and rest assured that Jehovah will care for us. Sing Psalter 8.

## December 6 Read II Peter 3:1-7

Christ is coming! No, I am not talking about the shallow celebration of Christmas that already pervades the world around us. I am speaking of that time when He will come and take us to Himself. Both Peter and Paul felt it necessary to give instruction of these things. Reread I and II Thessalonians sometime. In our reading for today, we are instructed to think about the flood. In thinking about the flood, we think about the end of time. We will see how to respond to those who do not see the truths of Christ return or do not see them

correctly. We will find comfort for our souls as we await His coming. Sing Psalter 28.

## December 7 Read II Peter 3:8-13

God is not slack concerning His promises. What a beautiful thought is provided for His people! Many people make promises. Some are just out and out lies. Some cannot be fulfilled because of circumstances beyond man's control. God is not like that. His promises are true. He will have all of His people come to repentance. The world will not end until that happens. It is comforting for us to know that none of God's people will go lost because they did not repent before Christ returned. He will come back, and receive **all** of His people unto Himself. Sing Psalter 83.

## December 8 Read II Peter 3:14-18

People of God, are we seeking to grow in grace? Do we faithfully read His word so that we can grow properly? Are we looking forward to tomorrow when we can join with fellow saints and learn more about our God? If we do these things, we will seek to grow in grace. This growing never ends. It begins with parents teaching the smallest children that God made them, and that Jesus loves them. It continues with our children and young people striving for the sure knowledge and hearty confidence of faith so they can seek to confess their faith before the church. Parents grow in grace by living out their lives in a way that honors and glorifies our Heavenly Father. Elder saints grow in grace as they help others in the church and patiently await the day of their entrance into glory. Let us grow in grace, people of God of all ages, and let us know that this pleases Jehovah. Sing Psalter 40.

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## Memoir of Rev. C. Hanko

# Rev. C. Hanko

## Chapter 28

# Trip to Holy Land—1984

edited by Karen Van Baren

*Editor's Notes—Rev. Hanko was apprehensive that he would not stay busy enough in his retirement years. He soon found out that this was no cause for worry. He taught Dutch in the seminary for a number of years, he was church visitor for Classis from 1979-1989, he traveled extensively on behalf of the churches, and he traveled to Bradenton, FL to preach there for parts of every*

*year from 1980-1992. In this chapter, he relates the story of his trip to the Holy Land. While not taken on behalf of the churches, the trip was instructive and edifying for both him and his companions.*

**I**n 1977, when I was 70 years old, I retired. This was not an easy decision to make. I had lived an active life, and did not fancy the idea of sitting home and

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twiddling my thumbs. If retirement meant doing nothing, I would put that off as long as possible. But the opportunity was offered to me to teach Dutch to the students in the seminary. That would give me something to do. So with that in mind, I informed Hudsonville's consistory, which reluctantly agreed to approve my action.

We had just moved into the new church on Beechtree. The consistory also offered to me that we could move into the new parsonage, but since I had in mind to retire, we did not do that. It was a good thing also, for my last duty as minister of Hudsonville was to install Rev. Van Baren as minister there.

In the summer of 1978, I had hip surgery. Dr. Avery had consulted a bone doctor about my Paget's disease, which had been developing ever since 1956. The doctors in Beaver Clinic in Redlands mentioned to me that I had this ailment, but said that likely it would never bother.<sup>1</sup> On the world tour of 1975 I had begun to limp a bit, not so noticeably, but I stumbled readily. Later, I fell without realizing what caused it. I began taking shots for this, but Dr. Avery wondered whether more could be done to prevent it from developing further. One doctor whom he consulted said that I should have hip surgery, replacement of the ball and socket. Another doctor advised strongly against it. After some time the doctor who advised the hip surgery won out.

For a few days I was in a private room at Blodgett hospital, after which I went through a period of therapy, telling that left leg to move. Only by concentrating on it would the leg finally move. While the surgery did help for a time, that leg was now shorter than my other one.

All the while I had not even given thought to where I would live after I retired. Somehow that problem never came up. It was Gordon Van Overloop who came over and asked me what I had in mind.<sup>2</sup> He suggested the possibility of going to Sunset Manor, a retirement home, or buying an old house somewhere. He also mentioned that he had ordered a new condominium among the Beechnut apartments on 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave., which he would turn over to me if I so desired. We went to where some condos had already been built, looked over the lot where he had intended to buy, discussed the price, and decided that this would be the best thing to do. So Gord made all the arrangements with the owners, managed to get a cut in the price for us, and gave us the privilege of deciding how we wanted the various rooms arranged, particularly allowing room for my library.

At the beginning of 1979 we moved with the assistance of some of the family and many members of the

congregation. It was a rather stormy day, with snow flying, but we managed to get all the furniture across without any damage. So Allie and I were settled in a condo, in contrast to the eight-room house on School Street. It felt like we were living in cramped quarters, like a motel. But we soon became accustomed to it, and were glad that the place was no larger.

In 1980, I had an opportunity to take a trip to the Holy Land for a mere \$300. This sounded good to me, so I sent a down payment. Later I was glad that this fell through, because, upon further investigation, I found out that it was a tour of charismatics, who would spend prayer time in Jerusalem and on the Sea of Galilee. The reason it fell through was that Allie developed cancer in the thyroid gland. For this, she had surgery that same summer. The surgery was done in Zeeland hospital, but she had to go to Ann Arbor for treatments of radioactive iodine. She was in isolation for four or five days. We could come as far as the door to see her. After she returned home, she had to go to the University of Michigan every year for a check up.

On July 8, 1984, we left for an unforgettable trip to Palestine. It all happened because Elaine had a brainstorm, thinking that if she could get a group of our own people together, this would make a nice trip. This is what made the trip especially enjoyable; that all but three of the twenty were our own people, and a number of them schoolteachers. There were twelve of us who left a week earlier to go to Egypt. A limousine took us to Detroit, Michigan, and from there we went to Brussels, Belgium. Later in the day we were served a meal and obtained a plane that took us to Paris, France. After a bit of delay in Paris we went on to Cairo, Egypt where we arrived at three AM on Tuesday. A guide was there to meet us and direct us to a bus. It took some time to get out of the airport, which was under heavy security, but soon we were bumping and racing along with a driver who knew three English words, "Kentucky Fried Chicken." One extra large bump caused Gen Lubbers' suitcase to fall and coast behind us. But this was soon retrieved and when we arrived at the Hilton on the Nile, we tried to get a few hours sleep.

The first two days we spent in the large, disorderly city of Cairo. We had nice weather, hot but clear. Traffic in Cairo was mad confusion. There were six lanes of traffic, all going in the same direction, consisting of people walking, horse drawn carts maneuvering their way and cars and busses blowing their horns and trying to make time. One night at 11:30, we were still in a traffic jam. But we enjoyed seeing the pyramids, riding on camels



*The tour group that visited the Holy Land*

and especially the night tour to the sphinx and pyramids under lights.

We went to Memphis, the ancient capital of the Egyptian kingdoms, where we saw a colossal image of Ramses II.

The land of Goshen is no longer the fertile country of onions, garlic and leeks, known to Israel. Since the Aswan Dam was built on the Nile, the river no longer overflows and the irrigation ditches are but stagnant pools of filthy water with a few miserable huts alongside.

We went by plane to Luxor and went by bus to Karnak. Then by boat we went across the Nile to the Valley of the Kings. We visited the tomb of King Tut and also went all the way down in the tomb of Ramses VI. What especially impressed us was how far the culture had already advanced in those days when the tombs were built. The passage in the tomb was a gradual slope. All along the perfectly aligned walls and ceiling were designs of all sorts, not rudely scratched into the wall, but carefully engraved by experts. There were alcoves along the way, also bearing all sorts of designs.

Near the tombs of the kings were caves used as dwellings. The government had made houses for the people to live in, but they preferred to stay in the caves. We visited

an alabaster factory, where laborers made and painted vases and other objects from a mineral, harder than clay, yet not as hard as stone.

We then went to the Valley of the Queens where we saw the ruins of the most elaborate temple of all. It was the temple of Queen Hatshepsut, who is thought to have been the adoptive mother of Moses. She never appeared in public without a long beard to give an impression of authority.

We went back to Karnak across the Nile. We had lunch in a restaurant that was not exactly clean, especially because there was a cat running around between our legs and all over the place. There we had a salad of greens that we enjoyed at the time, but we did not realize that the water in which the greens were washed might have serious effects on us. After resting a while, because of the heat of the day, we went to the various ruins of temples of the kings. One king had built a temple to his honor, and the next king broke part of it down to build his temple. Amazing what a number of temples were lying there in ruin! There were obelisks of one solid piece, fully designed and standing 90 feet high. How in the world did these Egyptians ever raise something as tall as that?

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We took the plane back to Cairo and stayed in the same hotel in Cairo. Some of our party began to feel nauseous. In the afternoon we took the plane to Athens, Greece where we were to meet the rest of the party on Sunday evening. That trip from Cairo to Athens was a horrible experience because Allie and I were very sick. The trip was a nightmare. Twice the stewardess offered me food, which was the last thing I needed. But as we approached Athens, I began to sip 7-Up, so that by the time we landed, I was able at least to stand on my feet.

On Sunday morning, some of our group went to find a church. The rest of us had a short service in the hotel. In the afternoon we took a walk in the park and saw the changing of the guard. Allie and Kathy Bouwkamp remained nauseous most of the week, but the rest of us were pretty well over our sickness.<sup>3</sup>

That evening, the other eight, who were making this trip with us, including Rich and Elaine Bos, arrived at the hotel in Athens. They had already heard in Grand Rapids about our bout with nausea. It was a pleasure to have the group complete. We had a meeting with the guide that night to make plans for the week, but most of us were eager to get some rest. John Kalsbeek Sr. was my roommate for the rest of the trip.<sup>4</sup>

On Monday morning our guide arrived and was ready to show us Athens. We spent some time at the Parthenon. On Monday afternoon the party went by bus to Corinth. We rode part of the time along the sound and we saw the pass, the cut through the rock that is used by ships to avoid the long trip around the point of the peninsula. Our guide took us to Mars Hill where Paul preached.

Tuesday morning, our guide came and we started out bright and early to go north through Greece to Thessalonica. We rode past Mount Olympus and stopped at a monastery at Meteora, perched high on a solitary cliff. There were 240 steps leading up to this lone spot. When we were almost there all the girls who failed to wear skirts or had sleeveless blouses on were forbidden to continue on their way or see the monastery. Allie and Kathy had purchased cheap skirts for such an occasion, but forgot them. All these girls gained was exercise.

We stayed along the way overnight and arrived in Thessalonica on the morning of Wednesday. We walked about on the seashore and saw many ships lying at anchor in the harbor. We also saw the ruins of the old entrance gate and visited the crypt of St. Demetrius in the basement underneath the church. Later we walked up the hill to see the ruins of the old wall and a castle situated

there. Thoughts ran through our minds of what Scripture told us about this city in the days of the apostle Paul.

The next day we traveled to Delphi, where we spent the night. It was a long climb to Delphi. Imagine Paul on foot walking this rugged terrain day after day. The city itself was very hilly. We saw a number of statues with their heads broken off. The guide informed us that the Crusaders had damaged these statues in their holy wars.

The next day, July 20, we went to a port at Athens to take the ship *Oceanos* to visit various islands. This was indeed a highlight of the entire trip. The ship was very attractive, the scenery was beautiful, and the meals of the very best. During the day we visited various islands and at night we did most of our traveling. Our first stop was the island of Mykonos, outstanding for all of its white buildings. The most difficult part of these stops was that we had to descend a ladder to climb into a launch that took us to the island. This was not so bad when the sea was calm, but when the ship rocked we had to tread lightly. We spent some time in Mykonos and then were told to return to our boat.

The next day we stopped at Rhodes with its famous entrance to the harbor. We were reminded that Paul stopped here on his way to Jerusalem. There were many attractions for sightseers on this island, such as an acropolis and a palace. Rich, Elaine and others took an extra tour to Lindos, on the other side of the island.

As we returned from Rhodes, a generator gave out in the ship, so that there were no lights in the gangways leading to our berths. We sat out on deck for many hours, being entertained in various ways. The snack bar was also opened, so that we could enjoy whatever snacks we wanted.

On Sunday morning, July 22, we arrived at the port near Ephesus. This was another outstanding experience on our trip. A bus took us to the ruins of the former city, about the best-preserved ruins of any of the old cities. Here we could see ruins of the former Roman temple, library and the amphitheater. The guide told us to imagine about a thousand people gathered here, as he gave a big shout which resounded against the hill. We could well imagine what a riot that was when the mob turned against Paul, shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

From Ephesus we took ship to the Island of Patmos. This was an especially interesting part of the tour. There is only one very small city on the island, and only one likely place where there is a cave and where the apostle John must have lived. From this spot one can look over the broad expanse of the sea, and it takes but little imagi-

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nation to see what John saw and describes in the Book of Revelation. We did not stay very long in the cave, because there was a baptism ceremony going on there, and they did not appreciate interference.

That evening we had a short service on the ship. A few of the women who worked on the ship attended our service and stayed until about 11 o'clock talking to Don and Judi Doezema.<sup>5</sup>

On our return trip to the port of Athens the sea was quite stormy, so that some of us were either close to being or were seasick. This was our last night on the ship, so we had a farewell dinner about six o'clock in the evening.

We had already been gone two weeks. But so much had happened that it seemed much longer. On Monday we returned to the port at Athens and were ready to go on the next phase of our trip to Palestine.

At Tel Aviv we met our guide Joseph, who would be with us throughout this tour. We went by bus to Jerusalem. Before we arrived there, we were shown a large miniature of the old city as it was in the days of Jesus. We could walk around this display, and were shown the temple, the palace of Annas and the palace of Caiaphas. We had a mental picture of what Jerusalem must have looked like in Jesus' time.

From there we were taken to the foot of the Mount of Olives from which vantage point we could see, overlooking the Kidron valley, the entire city of Jerusalem. Our attention was called to the Dome of the Rock, the place where the temple had stood in Jesus' day. We also went to the top of the mountain where Jesus ascended to heaven. From there we went to our hotel to get settled there.

Tuesday dawned and we were ready to see the Old City, called "The City of David." We visited a mosque which could hold five thousand worshipers. Then we went to the site where the Palace of Caiaphas is thought to have stood. This was near the Kidron Valley. We also visited the place that is considered to be near the site of the upper room where the Last Supper was held. Next we were brought down into a sort of dungeon where criminals, but also the disciples, were said to have been beaten.

In the afternoon we went to Bethlehem and saw the cave where Jesus is supposed to have been born. Then we passed the field of Boaz where Ruth had gathered grain, and also passed the field that is thought to have been the place where the shepherds sat when they heard the announcement of Jesus' birth.

Going back to our hotel, we were given the liberty to explore the shopping places and other sights near our hotel.

Rich and Elaine and I went to the Damascus Gate to sit and watch all the strange creatures, including a donkey, coming out of this gate and climbing the steps out of this part of the city. On the sidewalk women sat peddling their wares. I might mention here that a tunnel showed that the old Damascus gate was 39 feet below the present gate.

On Wednesday we did not return to the old city, because a small riot was disturbing the place and the gates were closed. Nor could we go to Hebron because of unrest there. So on a hot Wednesday morning we went to Masada. Here, high up on an almost inaccessible cliff, is where Herod the Great built his palace with rooms for some of his wives and large bins for food storage. We rode up there by tram. At the time of the siege of Jerusalem, when the Romans invaded Palestine, a thousand Jews hid themselves on this cliff. When the Roman army, encamped down below, tried to ascend this mountain they were doused with hot water or boiling oil. They did succeed in building a ramp, but by the time they reached the top the Jews were all dead.<sup>6</sup>

From there we went to the Dead Sea, where some of the group went into the water. This water is so heavy with minerals that one's rear keeps going down and one's legs up. Swimming is impossible. We never saw such desolation as in that entire area around the sea. Even a weed or a sprout of grass cannot survive there. The area still speaks of the curse that God laid upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

Our next stop was Qumran where the Dead Sea scrolls were found. A large hexagon building now holds a number of the scrolls. We also saw there the ruins of what may have been a monastery for the Essenes, who made copies of the Old Testament scriptures.

That noon we had lunch at the restaurant of our guide Joseph's brother in Jericho, known as "the City of the Palms." As we rode along our guide jokingly pointed to a sycamore tree where Zacchaeus sat. We saw King Hisham's palace and the "spring of Elisha." On the Jericho road going back to Jerusalem we saw how forsaken this road can be, an ideal spot for robbers to beat up a man, as we read in the parable of "The Good Samaritan."

Thursday, July 26, was an interesting day spent in the old city. There was no evidence whatever of the riot of the previous day. Joseph brought us to the Wailing Wall, but, being an Arab, wanted no part of it. This wall is thought to be the last remnant of the ruins of Herod's temple. The women were on one side, the men on the other. Each of us men was given a small cap to wear on his head. There were a number of people standing or sitting at the wall, engaged in prayer. There was a confir-

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mation ceremony being carried on there for a young boy. As we left we saw a group of orthodox Jews, dressed in black with the curls on the sides of their heads, their patriarch in their midst.

Next we went to the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim temple, on Mount Moriah. We had to take off our shoes to enter. This is one place that certainly looks authentic. The Rock is considered to be the place where the altar of burnt offering stood. It is part of the hill and has a large hole in the center, which empties into a large pit, recently dug out. This pit empties in the Valley of Hinnom.

From there we went to the Pool of Bethesda, which also lies in ruins. This pool is much deeper than I ever imagined it. It is said to have been 200 feet wide, 350 feet long and 25 feet deep. There is not much left of the porches around it.

Passing the Golden Gate, we went to Hezekiah's tunnel. Some of our party went through on bare feet. The tunnel is s-shaped and is 600 yards long, leading from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam. It is said that the workmen started from each end and met in the center almost in line.

We were shown the Pavement where Jesus is supposed to have been tried and condemned. With all alacrity (our guide did not enjoy being in this area), we hastened along the Via Dolorosa and to the Damascus Gate.<sup>7</sup> At the Damascus Gate, I felt a small hand slide into my side pocket, where I had my billfold. But I grasped my billfold in time, and, still amazed at the audacity of the boy thief, gave him a whack with my cane.

Not far from the gate was the site that might have been Golgotha. It is a large rock formation with holes that resemble eyes and a mouth. If this is the place where Jesus was crucified, the crucifixion took place on a hill near the road that comes from Jericho on which the passers-by may have seen the crucifixion on their way to celebrate the Passover in the city.

Just beyond this is a garden that is called the Garden Tomb. There are olive trees there that are thought to be hundreds of years old. On one end is a cave cut into the hill, if not THE tomb, then similar to the one where Jesus lay and arose. The guide said, "If you stand here, that is, by the rock that was supposed to have been rolled away, you can see the place of the grave clothes, even as John must have seen them."

Friday dawned and we started out for Galilee. We passed the Valley of the Dance where, in the time of the judges, the few remaining Benjamites could fetch themselves a wife. We stopped at Jacob's well, a very deep

well. This well is 7 ½ feet in diameter and 90 feet deep. Once more one wonders how it was possible in those days to dig a well that deep. Here is where Jesus may have met the Samaritan woman.

We rode between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. The former is covered with green foliage, but the latter is bare. Quite fitting for the blessing and the cursing that took place there.

Our next stop was Megiddo on the southern edge of the plain of Jezreel. This is well known in Bible prophecy. Here is Ahab's water system or tunnel, which is regarded as a remarkable feat of engineering. It has 183 steps leading down to it. Its purpose was to supply the city with water.

We went on to Nazareth. It was a long difficult climb for the bus to work its way to the city, which is built on a cliff about 300 feet high. It was from this cliff that the people of Nazareth intended to cast down Jesus to get rid of Him.

After having lunch in Nazareth, we went to the Sea of Tiberius and took a boat ride to see the ruins of Capernaum. The sea is 13 miles long, 7.5 miles wide and 130 to 157 feet deep. This sea could become very tempestuous, as we saw one afternoon while in Tiberius. In Capernaum we saw what was thought to be the home of Peter. We visited the synagogue, but as for the rest, the city gives every evidence of the curse Jesus pronounced upon it.

We headed back to Tiberius, past a cove similar to the place in which Jesus spoke while sitting in a boat. Passing Magdala, we came to Tiberius, another hilly city, where we stayed in a hotel.

On Saturday morning we went to the Mount of the Beatitudes and to the Golan Heights and the Syrian border. The young guard at the border seemed glad to have a bit of company, but we could not understand each other. From there we went to the source of the Jordan River, climbed over the rocks and paused a moment by a pool where people were swimming. The Jordan has its source in the snowy peaks of Mt. Hermon and flows to the Sea of Galilee and then on to the Dead Sea. It twists and turns over an area of 159 miles while the actual distance from its source to the Dead Sea is 65 miles.

On Sunday we went to the city of Haifa, on the slope of Mt. Carmel, which overlooks the Mediterranean Sea. We went to a diamond factory and saw the operations. At Mt. Carmel we were shown the cave where some think Elijah hid from Jezebel before he fled to the wilderness

south of Judah. At Caesarea we saw the aqueduct of Herod the Great, built to bring water into the valley.

We had come to the end of our tour, so, arriving at Tel Aviv, we took the plane to Brussels, where, about midnight, we saw part of the town. The next morning we bid farewell to those of our party, Corny and Fran Doezema, their daughter Dorothy and also Don and Judi Doezema, who were going on to the Netherlands, while we started for Detroit.<sup>8</sup> A limousine and a van took us home to Grand Rapids. I think it would be well for every minister and every schoolteacher to take a trip to that area to get a mental picture of Egypt, of Palestine and the many places referred to in Scripture.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Paget's disease is a chronic bone disorder that results in enlarged or deformed bones in the spine, skull, pelvis, thighs, or lower legs.

<sup>2</sup> Gord Van Overloop is the father of Rev. Van Overloop, Jim, Tom, Greg, Randy and David.

<sup>3</sup> Kathy Bouwkamp is now Kathy Schut and is a member in Hudsonville PRC.

<sup>4</sup> John Kalsbeek Sr. is the father of John, Charles, and Calvin Kalsbeek, and Karla Kamps.

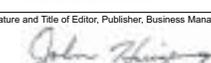
<sup>5</sup> Don and Judi Doezema are members of Southwest PRC.

<sup>6</sup> When the Jews realized that their situation was hopeless, the heads of the clans agreed to kill those belonging to their clan. When this was finished, ten heads of clans remained. These ten cast lots to determine which of the ten would kill the other nine and then commit suicide. The grisly work was soon done.

<sup>7</sup> "The Via Dolorosa" can be translated as "The Way of Sorrows." This refers to the path that Jesus supposedly walked to Golgotha.

<sup>8</sup> Cornie and Fran Doezema are members of Holland Church. They have children in several of our churches. Dorothy is married to Henry De Jong. They are members in Holland Church. ❖

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

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## Music in the Woods (3)

It was May of 1849 when a visitor in black coat and top hat rode into the city of Holland. Who was he?

By now Holland had grown to over 200 log cabins and several shops. The surrounding woods were steadily being cleared to make room for fields and farms. Though the Dutch immigrants worked very hard to settle the area, it was all they could do to grow enough food to keep them alive and have some semblance of a roof over their heads. Luxuries and comforts were none. The visitor was obviously not one of them.

Rev. Isaac Wyckoff! Yes, the man from the east who had so helped their own Rev. Van Raalte three years ago, and had helped them and many more immigrants since. They welcomed him with open arms. And he was very glad to see them.

He came on behalf of the large Reformed denomination that was already established in America since 1624. Could these new immigrants from Holland join his Reformed Church? And could the Reformed Church in America help them?

They certainly needed it. Rev. Wyckoff saw their severe poverty. Families lived in one-room cabins with boxes and crates for tables and chairs. They had only a little salt pork, potatoes, and corn meal to eat. But he also saw their faith and hope. He reported back east that he had never seen such piety before. And he heard them sing their beloved Psalms with such joy and zest! "They do all things with prayer and praise," he wrote.

The Reformed Church in America held to the same confessions that these wooden shoe-clad believers did. They ought to be brothers.

But the matter was not so easily decided. These immigrant Dutchmen were battle-worn spiritual warriors. They had been sorely persecuted in the Netherlands for



# "LITTLE LIGHTS"

*... let it shine !*

by Connie Meyer

holding to these Reformed truths in all their distinctive fullness. They had been forced to leave the State Reformed Church there, a secession known as the Afscheiding of 1834. That was not so long ago. Now in joining with the Reformed Church in America they might be compromising those very truths they held dear as their lives. The State Reformed Church in the Netherlands claimed to hold to these confessions too, but...

Rev. Wyckoff added one more persuading argument. He told them they could bid his Reformed Church "a fraternal adieu" (a brotherly good-bye) if they were at any time not happy about the union. Rev. Van Raalte supported joining the large denomination. Finally, the handful of elders and ministers in the woods of West Michigan agreed.

The following year, in 1850, these Seceders of the Afscheiding were officially united to the Reformed Church in America. They were called "Classis Holland" of the west. They were one.

It was a union that would not last.

### Find the following underlined words in the puzzle below:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments." Psalm 133:1, 2.

G	H	D	R	A	E	B	D	R	W
B	D	P	L	E	A	S	A	N	T
R	W	O	L	O	K	N	E	P	S
E	E	R	W	I	H	R	H	U	O
H	L	B	R	N	H	E	O	T	U
T	L	T	Y	T	K	I	B	N	P
E	S	A	E	M	C	E	I	U	O
G	A	R	M	E	N	T	S	P	N
O	B	D	R	N	Y	D	O	O	G
T	D	P	U	T	K	W	E	N	T

Connie is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.

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## 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:**

Colton Duane, son of Mr. & Mrs. Chad Mingerink—  
Byron Center, MI  
Charlie Brad, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brent Dommissé—Byron  
Center, MI  
Keagan James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Goerge Barendregt—  
Edmonton, Alberta, CAN  
Micah James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Rau—Faith, MI  
Avery Dale, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Noorman—  
Faith, MI  
Lyla Charity, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Chad Rus—Faith,  
MI  
Troy Daniel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dave Zandstra—Faith, MI  
Kathleen Marjorie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Rod  
Korhorn—Georgetown, MI  
Tanner Reid, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Boer—Georgetown,  
MI  
Calvin Henry, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Timmerman—  
Georgetown, MI  
Chad Andrew, son of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Stoel—Grace, MI  
Clair Margaret, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brian  
Kalsbeek—Hope, MI  
Erin Taylor, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Sean Courtney—  
Holland, MI  
Abigail Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mark  
VandenBerg—Holland, MI  
Annikkah Ruth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brad Brower—  
Hudsonville, MI  
Camden Ben, son of Mr. & Mrs. Eric Gritters—  
Hudsonville, MI

Raymond Richard, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kris Campbell—  
Loveland, CO  
Zoe Lyn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Dykstra—  
Lynden, WA  
Macie Kate, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Kyle VanBaren—  
Randolph, WI  
Nolan David, son of Mr. & Mrs. James Kooiker—  
Randolph, WI  
Evelyn Joyce, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Price—  
Trinity, 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:**

Brittany Landheer—Byron Center, MI  
Joe Tolsma—Edmonton, Alberta, CAN  
Jennie Kiel—Kalamazoo, MI  
Katie VerBeek—Kalamazoo, MI  
Elizabeth Noorman—Southeast, MI  
Daniel Schimmel—Southeast, MI  
Carl Vandenberg—Southeast, 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. George & Mrs. Joan (Noordyke) Slopsema —First,  
MI  
Mr. Eric Pastoor and Miss Annie Kalsbeek—Hope, MI  
Mr. Steve Oldenburg and Miss Kathy DeVries—  
Randolph, WI