“And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested” (1 Chronicles 4:9–10).

**Introduction**

In this passage, almost hidden in the genealogies, Scripture presents to the church, particularly the youth of the church, the honorable Jabez.

All that we know of him is what we read in these two verses in 1 Chronicles. The young man is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible.

We know that he belonged to the tribe of Judah, because he appears in the genealogy of Jacob’s son, Judah (v. 1). Judah was the tribe to which God promised the bringing forth of the Messiah for the establishing of his covenant. In this lad the covenant promise worked powerfully, so that Jabez was a worthy member of that honored tribe of Israel.

What little we do know of Jabez is instructive especially for the youth of the covenant. At the time he meets us on the pages of Scripture, Jabez is obviously...
a young man. He is of that age when the whole of life stretches out before him and when he seriously considers the whole of life for himself—what he desires his life to be. Jabez’ age when we meet him is about the age at which covenant young people make confession of faith in the church today.

There is this too about Jabez that specially concerns or ought to concern the youth of the church: Jabez was honorable, according to the word of God. Youth esteems honor. In their contemplation of the life that lies before them, they are determined to be honorable humans, and uppermost among their desires is the desire for honor. The covenant request of Jabez reveals what genuine honor consists of.

Such was his request that every young person who confesses his or her faith from the heart makes the same request of the God of Israel/the church: “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed,” and what follows.

I set before the young people in the Protestant Reformed Churches who consider making confession of faith or have already made confession of faith, the honorable Jabez and his covenant request.

Who He Was

We do well to remember that there was something special about Jabez. He was a member of the covenant people of God. His name is included on the lists of the generations of the people of God. His request shows that he was not merely a member formally and outwardly. He was a living member of the covenant people by the Spirit’s work of circumcising his heart.

Today’s Jabez is the young man or young woman who became a member of a true church by baptism, because he or she was sanctified in Christ and was already at baptism a member of the church by eternal election from infancy.

This is honor!

But Jabez was one of the ordinary members of this special people. There were exceptional members—the officebearers; those who performed heroic deeds; those who stood out because of a notable child or grandchild. They were on the foreground of the history of the Old Testament church. Jabez was not among them. You do not find Jabez in Hebrews 11 as one of the heroes of faith.

There were also ordinary members of the special people of God in the Old Testament. They were in the background. They did not receive special gifts or perform mighty deeds of faith. They were the majority, as is the case in the church also today. Jabez was one of these ordinary members. He comes briefly to public attention here in two verses of 1 Chronicles 4, and then, as if in embarrassment, disappears again forever.

Indeed, there was something positively unpromising about Jabez, as his name brings out. “Jabez” means “sorrow.” This was not a nice name. His mother named him Jabez, “because I bare him with sorrow” (v. 9). Now all children are born with some sorrow to their mother. This is what God imposed on women as judgment for woman’s part in the fall: “in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children” (Gen. 3:16).

That Jabez’ mother named him “Sorrow” because of the pain he caused her in the birth points out that he was an exceptional case. Hers was a very hard pregnancy with Jabez. His entrance into the world was a hard delivery. The delivery may very well have left its mark on Jabez, whether physically or mentally. Jabez was an “uncomely” member of the church, one of the “weak” (1 Cor. 1:26–28).

You would not expect much from Jabez, from the one who caused pain to his mother, from the “Sorrowful One.” Indeed, Jabez was not motivated by his mother to expect much of himself.

So often in the church today we look to the few who are prominent and specially gifted. This is not wrong, for God raises up a few for special labor and gives them extraordinary gifts for the welfare of the church—a King David; an apostle Paul; a church father Augustine; a Reformer Luther.

But so easily we suppose that nothing can be hoped for from the ordinary many. They receive the impression that they are shut up to a small spot in God’s covenant and a puny portion of God’s covenant salvation.

Jabez shows that this is a mistake.

This ordinary church member was honorable.

The honor was spiritual. He was a God-fearing young man. He showed this by praying: “Jabez called on the God of Israel” (v. 10). The young person who is spiritual prays. Jabez could pray because he knew God as the God of the covenant: “God of Israel.” He knew this covenant God as almighty, capable of doing all the wonderful things that Jabez requested in his prayer. Jabez depended upon this almighty, covenant God with the trust of faith in him. Jabez made no boast of his own worth. Neither did he declare what he would do for God. He only asked of God to give to him.
Ordinary member of the covenant though he was, Jabez was no spiritual lightweight, but a spiritual heavyweight. “Honorable” in the Hebrew language of the Old Testament has the root meaning of “heavy.” Jabez was heavy with the weight of the glory of God’s grace in him.

These are the honorable people, as judged by God: those who know him as God of the covenant; those who seek communion with him in prayer; those who seek the blessings of salvation from him as purely gracious gifts.

Not only was Jabez honorable, but he was also more honorable than his brothers (v. 9). There was a distinction in the family between Jabez and his brothers. Jabez was more honorable than those who seemed more promising and from whom, perhaps, their mother expected more than she expected from “Sorrow.”

This distinction could have been absolute. Jabez was honorable; the brothers were dishonorable. The brothers rejected the God of Israel. They despised the covenant. They sold their birthright for a mess of pottage.

Today there are in the same family, among offspring of the same parents, those who confess their faith and then keep their vow—the children of promise—and those who, having made confession of faith, break their vow and forsake the church for the world of the ungodly—children of the flesh. The eternal decree of predestination, election and reprobation, distinguishes between the children of believers.

But the distinction between Jabez and his brothers could have been relative. They were honorable, but Jabez was more honorable. The brothers feared God, but not with the zeal of Jabez. The brothers had regard for the covenant and its sign in their flesh, but for Jabez the covenant was everything. The brothers too sought the blessings of the covenant, but not with Jabez’ ardor.

God’s covenant grace was rich and abundant in the sorrowful one.

There is this distinction among the saints also today. The distinction is not of office, or gifts, or work in the church. But it is of spirituality; of covenant life; of godliness. Some are spiritual lightweights. They show this by contenting themselves with a minimum of the truth, a minimum of sound doctrine, a minimum of attendance at church, a minimum of the covenant blessings of salvation.

Jabez showed himself a spiritual heavyweight by his request of God, by the content of his petitionary prayer.

**His Request**

In general, the request was spiritual blessings. Even though in the time of the old dispensation, when everything spiritual had an earthly, typical form, these blessings had an earthly appearance, Jabez did not request merely earthly riches and comforts.

The request of Jabez showed his honor, and there is no honor in the natural, fleshly desire to be rich and comfortable.

To dare to appear before God asking for material wealth is shameful behavior.

The blessings Jabez asked of God were spiritual blessings, and they all were blessings of the covenant God had established with Abraham and Judah—Jabez’ ancestors—and thus with Jabez—their descendant. Every one of the blessings was promised by God to his covenant people.

The covenant blessing for which Jabez prayed was three-fold. First, God would enlarge Jabez’ coast, that is, the boundaries of Jabez’ portion of the promised land of Canaan. Jabez desired a spacious area in which to enjoy God and his rest. He desired a large territory in which to serve God and praise him.

Those young men and women who make Jabez’ request today desire all of the riches of God’s truth; the fullest possible enjoyment of the life of a true church; and the privilege of serving God, not as little as possible, but as much as possible. They ask God for sharing in the riches and comfort of Jesus Christ by the Spirit in abundance.

The less honorable in the church are willing to lose their territory for some earthly gain. They settle for as little truth, as little preaching, as little holiness, as little of Jesus Christ as permits them still to go to heaven when they die.

The young person who leaves a true church, which preaches the pure, full word of God, for weakened and corrupted preaching, probably for the sake of a wife or a husband, is no Jabez.

Young man, young woman—pray: “Enlarge my coast!”

The second blessing for which Jabez petitioned was that God’s hand would be with him. This was the request that God’s almighty power uphold, protect, and bless him and all his life in the world. For the hand is the hand of the God of Israel—a hand exercising love towards and doing good to Jabez, a
true, living member of the covenant people of Israel. The one who makes this request trusts in and commits himself and all he has and does to the care of the God of Israel.

This second blessing is also that God governs Jabez’ life. God’s hand is a ruling, directing, authoritative hand. Jabez was no rebellious, independent, autonomous young man, doing “his own thing.”

It is no insignificant aspect of the second blessing that Jabez requested the presence of God himself with him in life. Where is God’s hand, there is God himself—with Jabez. This is the blessing of the covenant above all else: God is with us, and we therefore are with God.

The less honorable young people in the godly family and in the church are content to forget God, to live and work pretty much in their own strength, and even to direct their life according to their own whims and pleasures. Their own hand plays too prominent a role in their life.

Young man, young woman—pray: “That thine hand might be with me.”

The third blessing that made up the prayer of Jabez was that God would keep Jabez from evil. It was not that God would keep evil from Jabez, that is, all kinds of earthly evil, as humans esteem evil—sickness, poverty, family problems, and the like. But Jabez desired that God keep him from the evil of sin. He willed and prayed that the power of sin might not rule him, that no besetting sin, whether lust or drunkenness or pride, or any other, get mastery over him even in his soul, that he never fall into presumptuous sin.

Jabez knew that the real evil threatening human life is sin.

He knew also that it is sin that causes the worst misery. His reason for the request to be kept from evil was “that it may not grieve me!” Sin separates from God. Sin deprives the child of God of the experience of the covenant. Sin dams up the outpouring of blessings. Sin exposes the sinner to the painful chastisements of God.

The third blessing is the petition of the young person today, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

It is the prayer for Jesus Christ, the Savior from sin, and for his salvation from sin.

The less honorable young people are concerned more about God’s keeping earthly evils from them than they are about his keeping them from the spiritual evil of sin.

Young man, young woman—pray: “Keep me from evil.”

**His Joy**

“And God granted him that which he requested” (v. 10).

He always does, when the covenant young man or woman requests the spiritual blessings, riches of Christ, fellowship with God, protection and guidance, and holiness that God has promised to his covenant people.

To those who desire the world, God gives the world.

To those who are satisfied with a bare minimum of blessing, God gives the bare minimum.

To those who desire spiritual abundance, God gives abundance.

The life of Jabez, therefore, stretching before him in his youth, would be satisfying and profitable, whereas the life of so many is vanity. And it would end in the enlarged coasts of the new world in the day of Christ, from which evil is banished. For the hand of God with a young person in this life leads him or her unto eternal life.

Granting Jabez that which he requested, God made Jabez joyful. His life would be a joyful life. This is implied in Jabez’ request that God keep him from evil, “so that it may not grieve me!” “Grieve,” in the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, is the same word as Jabez’ name. Jabez was very much aware of his unhappy name. The sorrowful one prayed that evil might not make him sorrowful. By answering Jabez’ prayer, God made him joyful, with real, lasting joy.

The sorrowful one became the joyful one. This is our desire for all our children and all the young people of the congregations.

This, young people, desire for yourselves! 

*Prof. Engelsma is professor emeritus of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches.*
Some months ago Prof. David Engelsma preached a sermon in a number of the Grand Rapids area congregations on two verses buried in the genealogies in 1 Chronicles. This obscure passage formed the basis of an eminently practical sermon for all the hearers, but particularly for the covenant young people. Beacon Lights requested that he put the sermon into written form for the benefit of the young people throughout the denomination, and he has acceded to that request.

Having heard the sermon and having read it in its written form, I decided that it deserved a place of prominence in the magazine. Therefore it appears as a guest editorial in this issue.

Young people, read it and take it to heart!

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**Letter to Schuyler**

**Dear Schuyler,**

In 1 John 2:15 we read: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Who/what is the world? If I live the antithesis, does the world become bigger to me? If we may not be friends with the world, who is this world?

**Response**

The “world” is a concept in Scripture with different meanings. It can mean the physical creation, the inhabited earth, the world of men, elect humanity, or the world of the ungodly. Therefore, when God’s word commands us, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,” the questioner brings up an important point. What does this mean?

Clearly, we are not called to hate the creation: the trees and flowers, the mountains and valleys, and the animals that God has made. We are also not to be misanthropes, that is, haters of humanity. We are also not called to live as do the Amish and have nothing to do with modern “worldly” technology.

The error of the Amish is to equate what the world does with worldliness. The world uses electricity, TV, and computers; therefore, these things are worldly. But that cannot be true. Why is it worldly to drive a modern automobile but not worldly to ride a horse and cart? Why is black a non-worldly color, but red, green or pink are worldly colors? Is there something more spiritual about living in a pre-industrial age?

Would Calvin, if he were alive today, not use a laptop computer to write his *Institutes*? Modern legalists often fall into the same error: worldliness is not found in things per se; worldliness is an attitude.

The Greek word translated “world” is kosmos. We can readily recognize words derived from it: cosmos, cosmetic. The basic idea of kosmos is that of an orderly and unified system. But the issue with kosmos in the New Testament is that it refers to the world system ordered and unified in opposition to God. The whole world, writes John, “lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). This happened when Adam fell into sin. Remember that Adam was the head of the human race. When Adam fell, therefore, he
dragged the world and humanity down with him. Immediately after the fall God created the antithesis between the church and the world (Gen. 3:15). In Scripture there are two kinds of people: some are “of the world” (John 15:19; 1 John 4:5) and others are “chosen out of the world” or “of God” (John 15:19; 17:6, 14–16; 1 John 4:6). Those who are “of the world” hate those who are “of God.” They are spiritual enemies, having different lords, different aims, and different loves. The world serves sin and the Christian serves Christ. The world then in 1 John 2:15 is everything that opposes Christ and the Christian: its philosophy, its worldview, and its wisdom (which is foolishness).

About this world John commands, “Love not the world” (1 John 2:15). Love in Scripture means devotion, allegiance, fellowship, and friendship. Do not love the world but stand against it because its entire system is opposed to Christ. James writes that those who love the world are spiritual “adulterers and adulteresses” (James 4:4), and there he uses the word “friendship”. Since the world is the enemy of God, friendship with the world is enmity against God. To love the world is a kind of spiritual adultery, as the Old Testament often describes it, a whoring after other gods.

The apostle sums up the things of the world in three expressions: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). The world appeals to our totally depraved flesh. The lusts of our flesh demand to be gratified. We must mortify, crucify, and deny the flesh (Col. 3:5; Tit. 2:12). It would be tempting for us to list the things which are “worldly” in this sense (books, magazines, websites, music, etc.) but the Bible does not spell it out. Since the Bible is a timeless book, applicable to all ages, we must apply its principles to the modern age. Worldliness for one might not be worldliness for another. This principle applies: whatever feeds our lusts through the eyes (or even the ears) and thus turns us away from God must be rejected.

The way to drive out the love of the world is to love God. Love of God and love of the world are mutually exclusive. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15). The questioner asks, “If I live the antithesis, does the world become bigger to me?” I do not know what this means, but I would say this: the more we love Christ, the less attractive the world is to us, so if anything, when we live the antithesis, the world becomes smaller! Besides, the more we live in opposition to the world, refusing to adopt its worldview, principles, and philosophy, the more the world will hate us, and that will make loving the world even more difficult for us, which is surely a good (but painful) thing. “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19).

This means too that we cannot be friends with worldly, ungodly people. We will have to work with them. They will be our neighbors and acquaintances and we will be kind and considerate neighbors. But we cannot befriend them in the Biblical sense. We have nothing in common, and the only way we can befriend them would be for us to compromise with them, and that is impossible. “I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts” (Ps. 119:63). Let us find our friends and companions in the church.

Therefore, young people, “set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2) for “the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever” (1 John 2:17).

Schuyler
The twenty-fourth century of history begins with Jacob, the weary pilgrim, coming to live in Egypt. By now his family had grown considerably because his twelve sons had families of their own, and the total count of people had reached 70 souls. This move into Egypt marks a significant change of life for the church, which had been very small and wandering in the promised land as pilgrims; now the church moves into the heart of a powerful foreign nation, settling down in the land of Goshen (Gen. 47:1), in the area of the city Rameses (v. 11), and there multiplying in numbers. The hundred year period we consider in this installment is described in Exodus 1:6–7 as follows: “And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.” In some respects we as Protestant Reformed people have experienced a similar pattern—our founding fathers dying, and then the generation following growing old and dying, and now an increase in numerical growth.

Concerning the time spent in Egypt, there is some disagreement, and I will briefly describe the two options. Some say they were in Egypt for 430 or roughly 400 years, and others say Egypt was the final stage of 430 years of oppression. Having read through the argument of Henry Ainsworth, a British theologian from the 1600’s, I am inclined to think that the latter is a very straightforward and biblical explanation: the four hundred years of affliction came to its greatest depth in Egypt, but the persecution began when Ishmael mocked Isaac (Galatians 4:29). Using the chronology in the Bible from Abraham to Moses, it can be calculated that Israel was delivered from Egypt exactly four hundred years after Ishmael mocked Isaac, the child of the promise. This mocking took place thirty years after the promise of Genesis 12:2 which is why we read in Galatians 3:17 that the law was given four hundred and thirty years after the promise. Abraham himself as the father of the nation was, for a time right after this promise, in Egypt, and we read in Exodus 12:40 that the four hundred thirty years of the sojourning of the children of Israel had come to an end when they were delivered from Egypt.

With this understanding, Jacob’s coming into Egypt took place right in the middle of this period of affliction. The beginning of the four hundred years of affliction had begun shortly after God had revealed it two hundred fifteen years earlier to Abraham when God said, “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” Genesis 15:13–16. Both Isaac and Jacob had lived under
the growing pressure of affliction all their lives as strangers moving from land to land from the time of the promise until the oppression culminated as slavery in Egypt (Psalm 105:10 ff). It would be about a hundred years yet before there arose a king over Egypt who knew not Joseph.

So Jacob and his sons left Canaan and settled in the land that Pharaoh had appointed to them. From an earthly and financial perspective, this move opened up some very good opportunities. Not only was this prime land for raising their own cattle, but Pharaoh had also instructed Joseph to select the best cattlemen of the family to supervise the management of Pharaoh’s cattle (Genesis 47:6). While the famine wore on for another few years, and the whole land of Egypt came under the control of Pharaoh through the management of Joseph, all the needs of Jacob’s family were provided for by Joseph. In fewer than twenty years, we read in connection with Jacob’s death, “they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly” (47:27). Jacob, however, did not express any interest in this material growth in numbers and wealth, but was only concerned about their return to the promised land of Canaan, and the promise of salvation (chapters 48–49). Joseph as well died with the words, “God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob” (50:24), and made his sons swear that they would take his bones with them.

We might wonder how it was that after such slow growth in the one hundred years prior, that the church now experiences exponential growth. The world points to the natural factors mentioned in the previous paragraph: the abundance of resources, good health, and safety; and there is some truth to that. But at the heart of this growth is the sovereign purpose of God. We read in Psalm 105:23–25, “Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies. He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilely with his servants.” God himself increased his people. This great increase was the work of God as he prepared to demonstrate his power to save and deliver the church from the power and bondage of sin.

When we stop to think about the pattern of church growth that we noticed in previous articles, this exponential growth in the middle of a period of affliction and persecution for his people is quite remarkable. At the time of Enoch we saw a church that was gradually being crushed by the power of the world. After the flood the church experienced some growth, but again was gradually reduced to scattered remnants such as Job, Melchizedec, and Abraham. Abraham and Isaac lived long, lonely years with no children and only one child after they were old. From an earthly perspective it would seem as though sending the wandering family of Jacob into Egypt would quench this smoking flax, but instead, God breathed new life into his church and increased his people greatly. God’s ways are not our ways. Living by faith as pilgrims in this earth, the people of God “out of weakness were made strong” (Heb. 11:34).

Secular historians speak of changes in Egypt about this time, as waves of immigrants called the Hyksos moved into Egypt from the east, and for a time took control of parts of Egypt. They are said to have introduced horses and chariots as well as new food crops to Egypt. Perhaps these are the foods and horses that impressed the Israelites and tempted them after they left Egypt. God sovereignly directed all these events also for the purpose of his church in Egypt.

Though the word of God places great emphasis on Israel’s living in Egypt and then being delivered with a mighty and glorious deliverance, the records in Egypt show nothing of it and secular historians dismiss the stories as myth. The world has never paid much attention to the true church, and we would not expect Egypt to pay much attention either, even though they felt the heavy hand of God.

Secular history gives much more attention to the Babylonian king Hammurabi, who had conquered much of Mesopotamia to create the first Babylonian empire and unify it with a single law code. This is also the time when the descendents of Japheth were beginning to form the nations of Greece and Persia. In what is now Britain, the last set of stones had been set to build what is now known as Stonehenge. In China the Shang dynasty of rulers had begun, and they set down the first historical written record of their rule. The Assyrian kingdom had gained considerable power, but at this time was being overrun by the Harrian people from Armenia. These nations too are under the sovereign rule of God as he prepares them to display his glory in the future as they interact with the church.

The only other historical information that God’s
What exactly is engineering? That was a question I had asked myself during my junior and senior years of high school. I generally understood engineering to be designing products, and I knew that engineering required a solid grasp of mathematics as well as science. Those areas seemed to align with my general interests and academic abilities, so I decided to study engineering. However, I was unable to answer this question fully until I had worked in the field for several years, and I think the way I would answer the question has also changed over the years. The question has many answers, as there are many different fields and types of work under the umbrella of “engineering.” So an engineer’s specific area or field of work will shape this answer significantly.

What is required to begin an occupation as an engineer? Generally speaking, an engineering job will require a bachelor’s degree in engineering. I attended Grand Valley State University in Michigan and was impressed by their engineering program in how it prepared me for the workplace. Advanced degrees in engineering are also available if one desires to specialize further in a certain area, but this is not required for a majority of engineering jobs.

What does an engineer do? That also was a question I had asked and was unable to answer in detail, even after completing my schooling and several internships. I understood parts, but couldn’t figure out what could keep all these engineers busy week after week. It turns out that the process for designing and developing new products is very detailed and time consuming.

If one would conduct a brief internet search, the following definitions would be found:

**Engineering** is the creative application of scientific principles used to plan, build, direct, guide, manage or work on systems to maintain or improve our daily lives.

An engineer is a professional practitioner of engineering, concerned with applying scientific knowledge, mathematics, and ingenuity to develop solutions for technical problems.

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The work of engineers forms a link between scientific discoveries and their subsequent applications to human needs and quality of life.

So what exactly does this mean? Engineers are involved in a variety of industries in a broad range of specialties. Engineers design roads and bridges, plastic soda bottles, buildings and homes, cars and trucks, furniture, children’s toys, software and applications, satellites, shoes, airplanes, leaf rakes, cell phones, and virtually any other product that you could imagine. Engineers also design and develop the equipment needed to make these products—assembly machines, stamping presses, injection molding machines, machines that create circuit boards, and many more.

My occupation is in the field of mechanical engineering, and I work in the automotive industry for a Tier 1 supplier. That means that my company designs and manufactures certain parts for cars/trucks, and we sell these parts directly to the OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers—Ford, GM, Chrysler, Toyota, Honda, VW, etc.).

The specific products that I work with are the exterior mirrors that are placed on cars and trucks produced by Ford Motor Company. These are the mirrors attached to the drivers and passenger sides of the car with the words “OBJECTS IN THE MIRROR ARE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR” on the glass.

These mirrors are custom designed for each vehicle based on the styling and features that the customer wants in the mirror for that specific vehicle. The process for designing, developing, and producing a mirror is lengthy (typically 2–3 years of work prior to developing the product, followed by 5–6 years of production). The process begins with the customer (Ford, in my case) deciding to design and produce a new vehicle (sometimes this is a brand new model and other times a redesign of an existing model). There are a number of companies competing for the job of supplying the mirrors for a particular car model, and once the car maker decides who will supply the mirrors, the work beings.

Initially, for a period of around 6 months, we (the mirror engineers) will work with the engineering and styling team at Ford. The objective is to agree on the size and appearance of the mirror. This is a significant challenge because typically the goal of the styling team is to make the mirror as small and sleek as possible, while the goal of the mirror engineer is to have enough room to design all the internal parts of the mirror and make it easy to assemble while meeting all the specifications and requirements that apply.

Once the surface design is agreed to and released, we work on designing each component that makes up the mirror assembly. This process takes around four months. There are the structural pieces that attach to the vehicles, motors to move the glass, lights that blink with the turn signals, 360 degree cameras, glass of different types (some with lights that illuminate when a car is next to you, others that have a convex spotter in the corner, and still others that dim at night to reduce the glare when a car is behind you).

Once each piece is designed, then it is time to build the tools required to manufacture each component. This typically takes 4–5 months. In the mirror business, these tools typically include plastic and metal injection molds, metal stamping tools, and machinery to assemble all the pieces of the mirror into one assembly.

Once all the tools are completed, all the components can be made and the first mirror assemblies can be put together. This begins the part of the launch in which the mirrors are tested to ensure that they meet all the customers’ requirements, and solutions are developed for the parts of the design that do not meet the customers’ requirements. The testing and design refinement phase of the project lasts for about five months.

Once the mirrors have met all the customers’ requirements, they are submitted to the customer for approval (along with a significant amount of test reports and other paperwork). This begins that phase of the program in which the customer is assembling the mirrors and the rest of the components onto the complete vehicle and getting the vehicle ready to sell at the dealerships. This phase consists of several different builds at the customer’s assembly plant. The builds are separated by several weeks, and during each build problems are identified that need to be corrected. By the end of the builds, the objective is that all the problems are solved and the vehicle is ready to go into high volume production and be available for purchase at the dealerships. This phase of the project lasts about four months.

Once the project starts high volume production, the work is not over. Inevitably there are problems that appear on a few parts that need to be investigated and corrected, as well as changes to the prod-
ucts that are requested by the customer—perhaps a new feature or a new paint color.

A mirror engineer will have multiple projects going simultaneously, and these projects will all be at different stages, so there is truly no typical day as far as the specific work you would be doing. It might consist of arriving at the office at 7:30 a.m. and reviewing emails that have come in overnight from suppliers or customers in Asia or Europe. Each week there will typically be a team meeting for each mirror program that is being developed, and also meetings with the customer to keep them apprised of the status of the mirror development and any problems that are being encountered. There will be parts that need to be built for testing, designs and drawings that need to be completed or updated, testing that needs to be completed, reviewing with the manufacturing team the ease of assembly, and developing ways to improve the assembly process. Time will also be spent updating the budgets of the program to ensure that the project is still on track to be profitable, and creating and submitting quotes to the customer for requested changes.

Each engineering or manufacturing company is different in the specifics of how it is structured and who does which tasks of the project, but at my company the engineers are divided into project teams. A project team is led by a program manager and consists of a project engineer, a design engineer, a tooling engineer, a quality engineer, and a manufacturing engineer. The objective of the program manager is to lead the project team through the design and development of the mirror, while meeting the customers’ requirements within the cost quoted to the customer through a design that is able to be consistently manufactured and assembled with ease for the workers who put the mirrors together, and at a high quality level.

I enjoy this work because it is always challenging and fast paced. Although you may think that two years of work on a single mirror would be dull, it is far from that. There are always a host of problems that need to be resolved, and there is pressure to solve all the problems so that they do not impact the development and launch of the entire vehicle.

In this field of work, I am always awestruck by the amount of effort, thought, and labor that goes into the construction of a single vehicle that will be useful for 10–15 years of transportation and then be sent to a scrapyard. This is magnified when I see God’s creation in all its majesty, changing from season to season, exactly as God has designed it. Man’s creations, with all the thought, energy, analysis, and technology, are still fraught with problems, but God’s creation, which is incomparable in its complexity and vastness, even now in its fallen state, is magnificent—from the minutely tiny subatomic level to the incomprehensible galaxies that are unfathomable distances away.

This is something of which my occupation makes me keenly aware. While it may take me seven months to complete a flawed design of a few plastic pieces that can be assembled together into a mirror that is a small piece of an entire car, it took God six days to create perfect this entire world and all the universe.

My occupation in engineering has also required some business travel. This travel has been either to meet with customers or to meet with suppliers. These travels have brought me to various places in the USA as well as Germany, Costa Rica, China, and South Korea. While it is difficult to grasp fully the size of this earth, these travels have brought the expansiveness of the world into a frame of reference for me. God’s power, as displayed in the passages below, becomes more and more vivid as I realize, in part through these travels, how massive the earth is and how incredible it truly is that God is completely in control of all things, not only on the earth, but in the entire universe of which this earth only comprises a tiny portion.

Hebrews 1:3: “…upholding all things by the word of his power…”

Matthew 10:29–30: “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”

Isaiah 46:10: “…declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done…”

It is my prayer that you will continue to look to our great God to guide you as you embark on the paths to various occupations. If you have any questions related to the engineering field, please feel free to contact me via email at nathan.pastoor@gmail.com.

Proverbs 3:6: “In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths.”

Nathan is a member of Grandville Protestant Reformed church in Grandville, Michigan.
January 10 Read Ezekiel 43
After showing to Ezekiel the expanse of the new temple that was symbolic of Christ's church, the angel now shows Ezekiel the worship that must be performed there. The church of the old dispensation had to worship through the priests and with only the Shekinah cloud. The church of the new dispensation will worship in heaven with the true glory of God shining around them. Ezekiel has seen this glory before in some of his earlier visions. Notably missing from the new temple is the ark of the covenant. Destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's army, it was never replaced. The church of the new dispensation has a high priest who has removed the veil, and now we worship in spirit and truth through Christ our savior. Sing Psalter 137.

January 11 Read Ezekiel 44
In this chapter Ezekiel is shown more concerning the worship of Jehovah in the new temple. He is shown that a prince will come and sit in that temple. Israel is chastised for their allowing those into the priesthood whom God did not ordain. That profane worship would not be tolerated in the new temple. As we worship on the Lord's day, is our worship fit for the prince who sits in God's temple? Do we worship in a way that is pleasing to our most glorious God? This is what is required of us as the church of the new dispensation. Sing Psalter 256.

January 12 Read Ezekiel 45
By vision God describes to Ezekiel that land should be set aside for the temple and those who serve in the temple. This is to show to Ezekiel and to those that hear the prophecy that there will be a proper resumption of the worship of Jehovah. That worship is to be carried out according to Jehovah's ordinances and not man's whims or inventions. The church of the new dispensation also has that calling. Our formal worship of Jehovah must be in spirit and in truth according to the regulative principle as set forth in God's word. Do we follow that principle with our hearts? Sing Psalter 261.

January 13 Read Ezekiel 46
As the vision continues, new ordinances are set forth for the worship of Jehovah. Since this is visionary in nature it is hard to know what was actually carried out. The understanding we must have was that there was to be a change in worship from the Mosaic law. Not a change in the spirit of that worship was indicated, but a change in form. The spirit that God was to be glorified was still upheld. This is the spirit that we must hold as well. Our worship cannot be for our convenience, comfort, or pleasure. Our worship in all aspects must serve to glorify God as the church is edified. Sing Psalter 251.

January 14 Read Ezekiel 47
After being shown the temple and the worship therein, Ezekiel sees a river of water that issues forth from the temple. It is not just a trickle, but a gushing stream. This water brings life, even as Christ is the living water. Israel is brought back to the land; the land is not only restored to the Old Testament nation of God, but strangers are brought in and given an inheritance. We see again the typical picture of the reality of the Gentiles being brought into the body of Christ. We see the living water nourishing that body now, and especially as the whole church is gathered into the Canaan of heaven. May this be our hope and our desire. Sing Psalter 195.

January 15 Read Ezekiel 48
After reviewing the organization of the renewed nation, the book of Ezekiel closes with a final description of the city. That city has the name, “The Lord is there.” Once again we see not only a prefiguring of what will happen on earth after Christ comes, but we also see the reality of the new heavens and the new earth where Christ will dwell with his church eternally. As we know from the book of Revelation, there will be no need of the sun, as Christ is the light. May we live lives looking for Christ’s return and our entrance into eternal glory. Sing Psalter 237.

January 16 Read Daniel 1
God has different responsibilities for different people. While Ezekiel was ministering to the captives by the River Chebar, Daniel was serving in the king’s court in Babylon. Daniel too was part of that first group of captives. As a young man, he and his friends were chosen to be part of the king’s court. Like Joseph, he had to face temptation in that court. Like Joseph, he triumphed over that temptation by faith, as we read in Hebrews 11. Young people, do you exercise the faith that enables you to “dare to be a Daniel” and stand alone? Sing Psalter 158.
January 17 Read Daniel 2

We must always remember that Daniel, even though it gives us historical accounts, is a book of prophecy. In this chapter the prophecy is a widely encompassing one that reaches to the world’s end. While it is a very simple prophecy, it will later give way to more complex ones found in the end of the book. When faced with hard situations, as Daniel was, do we first fall to our knees in prayer? Or do we try to solve the situations in our own power? Daniel not only is able to stand alone in a wicked place, but by faith he is able to remember his God. May we never forget whose we are and whom we serve. Sing Psalter 207.

January 18 Read Daniel 3

Antichrist seeks to rule instead of Christ. This may well be a title for this chapter. After learning from the image in his dream that he was the head of gold, Nebuchadnezzar erects a large statute in his honor and orders all to bow before it. God’s three servants refuse. As we read in Hebrews 11, they do so by faith. They are not cowed by the king, neither do the positions to which they had been elevated cause them to compromise their faith. Are we ready to be tested by fire? Are we ready to stand alone in the face of all the onslaughts of Satan and his hosts? By faith we can, and by faith we can seek God’s assistance in the war we must wage against Satan and his hosts. Sing Psalter 129.

January 19 Read Daniel 4

In his own words Nebuchadnezzar gives an account of his challenge of God’s sovereignty. By the Holy Spirit’s direction Daniel inserts these words into his writings that make up this part of holy writ. Nebuchadnezzar’s pride was Satan’s root sin, is the root sin of the world today, and will be the root sin of antichrist. Our sovereign God will give us the strength to withstand such pride and be ready for antichrist’s defeat, which will usher in the kingdom of Christ in the new heavens and new earth. Are we watching? Are we waiting? Are we praying? Sing Psalter 273.

January 20 Read Daniel 5

In this chapter we see that the sands of time were sinking for Babylon and its kingdom. Persia had been outside the city walls for a period of time. However, even with the enemy outside the gate, Belshazzar felt secure in his man-made fortress. But God’s ways are unstoppable. It was not time for an antichristian kingdom to rule on this earth. God was also shown to be the sovereign God. His prophet Daniel once more proclaims the greatness of Jehovah in the midst of the drunken revelry that was Belshazzar’s undoing. As the night wore on, the head of gold was toppled and the Medes and Persians took their place. The whole antichristian kingdom will end when Christ returns and reigns over all. Sing Psalter 252.

January 21 Read Daniel 6

Once again Daniel dares to stand alone. Like Joseph, it seems that no one would notice if he did not worship Jehovah, but Daniel knows what he has to do when he throws open the window and prays as Solomon bade Israel to do when they were in a captive land. Like his three friends before him, he “was not careful” in his actions. By faith he knew that all was in Jehovah’s hand. Will we serve our Lord in the strange land in which we live? Sing Psalter 379.

January 22 Read Daniel 7

Everyone is familiar with the first six chapters of Daniel. How many know much about the last half of the prophecy? Christ points to this prophecy as he instructs his disciples about his second coming. May we too be instructed. Daniel is given a vision in which he sees a prophecy about the coming history. Commentators are perplexed if this vision concerns only the Jews’ immediate history, or if it is more far-reaching. As we know, prophecies can concern more than one period of time. It seems that the prophecy portrays what will happen not only up until the time of Jesus’ birth, but it also gives to us insight about the final antichristian kingdom and its judgement by almighty God. Sing Psalter 106.

January 23 Read Daniel 8

In the original languages the book of Daniel is written in both Aramaic and Hebrew. From this chapter to the end of the book, only Hebrew is used. Daniel is given a vision about the immediate future of God’s people. World powers would arise and would culminate in the Grecian empire of Alexander the Great. Out of that empire would rise the very heathen Antiochus Epiphanes. While this fantastic vision perplexed and astounded God’s faithful prophet, we must be instructed by it and know that more fantastic events are coming, which will herald the coming of Christ. May we be instructed, in order that we might watch and pray as Christ returns upon the clouds of heaven. Sing Psalter 188.

January 24 Read Daniel 9

Daniel had access to the writings of Jeremiah. As he studied the prophecy, he saw that the seventy years of captivity would shortly come to an end. He then breaks into a beautiful prayer of confession of sin and an asking for Jehovah’s mercy. He receives an immediate answer to his prayer. The angel Gabriel comes to him and shows him that the restoration is only a type of a further restoration in Christ. That restoration would end not in a renewed earthly kingdom, but in a new, heavenly, spiritual kingdom. May we learn from this chapter to search the scriptures, to confess our sins and guilt before almighty God, and to watch and wait for the final coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Sing Psalter 141.
January 25 Read Daniel 10
The last three chapters of Daniel concern one vision. Chapter 10 is introductory to it. While on the king’s business, Daniel is fasting and praying by the river, which is understood to be the Tigris. Once again we see this characteristic of God’s prophet in that he is often found praying. Is this how we are found? His prayer is answered by an appearance of the Old Testament Christ who will guide him through these visions. He is brought comfort, as his work as God’s prophet will soon come to an end. May we also be strengthened and comforted as we “pray without ceasing” living a life that is pleasing to God while we await the coming of Jesus Christ. Sing Psalter 58.

January 26 Read Daniel 11
Any study of ancient world history should include a study of Daniel 11. In this chapter we have a prophecy of what will happen in the world from the time of Persia’s rule until just before Christ returns. In great detail Daniel is shown what will come to pass in the future. There are at least two things to which we must give heed in this chapter. First, we must see that because these things did come to pass, we can be assured that all that prophecy is true. Second, we see in these historical events types of what will happen at the end of time. Nations will rise up against nation, and there will be an antichristian power that will arise against the church of Christ. We need not fear antichrist because when the time is ripe Christ will return and redeem us unto himself. Sing Psalter 49.

January 27 Read Daniel 12
Daniel was not permitted to know the answer to his question about the “when” of the end of all things. So too must we learn the signs of Matthew 24, watch for those signs, and give heed to those signs. The day of Christ’s final coming is known by no man. But when the time is right, he will descend upon the clouds and receive us unto himself. Like Daniel, in this must we rest. Sing Psalter 33.

January 28 Read Hosea 1
Hosea is one of the prophets sent to Israel as the northern kingdom is falling farther and farther into idolatry and farther away from God. Judah too is mentioned in this powerful, figure-filled prophecy. Israel’s connection with God is likened unto a marriage in which Israel is an adulterous wife. She is warned that if she continues to seek after the idol gods of the heathen, she will be punished severely. But there is hope found for the true people of God—a people, as we find in this chapter, who will be made up of people of Israel, Judah, and from outside Judah. God is gracious; for this we must be daily thankful. Sing Psalter 12.

January 29 Read Hosea 2
The thoughts of chapter 1 continue in chapter 2. Israel is brought to face the results of their idolatrous life. During the time of this prophecy, Israel has been living a prosperous life, but they have been using the results of that prosperity to worship idols. God says that he will draw the chosen out of Israel back to him and restore to them his mercy. This is all of grace. There is nothing in Israel that deserves such treatment. How do we use the gifts that God has given to us in our lives? Do we serve him, or some god of our own making? Let us see our sin and let us run from that sin and return unto the gracious, living God of heaven and earth. Sing Psalter 222.

January 30 Read Hosea 3
We do not deserve the love of God. In this chapter Hosea is commanded to reclaim his wife, who has been living a life of adultery once more. God reclaims us who have been saved by him, but who leave him for the adulterous life of following the world, and then brings us back into that blessed marriage of Christ and his church. We can be reclaimed, redeemed, and re-formed only by his love. Nothing that we do will save us. To him be all glory! Sing Psalter 246.

January 31 Read Hosea 4
Without figure or symbol Hosea brings the message of God to backsliding Israel. What is at the root of their problems? They are being destroyed because of a lack of knowledge. God’s people who have had every advantage in knowing the true knowledge were slowly being taken away because they have left that true knowledge. Where does that leave us? In the history of the world, no society has as much access to knowledge as we do. There is no one who can say, “I did not know.” Do we take advantage of the good Christian schools? Do we take advantage of the inculcation of catechism from youth on? Do we take advantage of pure preaching of the word week in and week out? If not, the condemnation of verse 6 will be upon us. Sing Psalter 333.

February 1 Read Hosea 5
In this chapter the prophet enumerates the sins committed by Judah and Israel. In plain language they are accused of many evils. In verse three God proclaims that he knows their sins. Nothing is hidden from him. We too are guilty of many sins. Nothing is hidden from our God. In the end of the chapter there is a clue that the faithful will return to God. Let us be faithful, let us quit our wicked ways, and let us return to our God, our creator and redeemer. Sing Psalter 221.

February 2 Read Hosea 6
The beginning of this chapter is the faithful’s response to the end of the previous chapter. They encourage their neighbors to return to God and to walk in his ways. We must do this as well. We must not be busybodies, yet we must carry one another’s burdens. In verse 6 God...
reminds Israel and us of the right way of worship. Yes, we must carry out worship in a right way, but we are also commanded to live a life of mercy and truth. We must see that it is our sin that causes our distress. We must flee those sins and walk in the right way as ordained by our covenant God. Sing Psalter 109.

**February 3 Read Hosea 7**

Succinctly the prophet enumerates Israel’s sins and then describes its punishment. In the first verse God reminds them that he had sent his prophets with the word to them. Their response was to rush headlong into every type of sin, committing them to the worst degree. They were not content with sins within the nation; they went outside the nation to learn sin. They are finally described as a cake not turned. This figure is that of a piece of dough laid by the fire but never turned over. The result is this insipid cake burned black on one side and a doughy mass on the other. The prophet finally tells them that they will call upon heathen Egypt for help, but that they will be carried away captive by Assyria. We must take heed to this prophecy and flee from our sins and return to our God. Sing Psalter 216.

**February 4 Read Hosea 8**

There are several striking passages found in this continuation of God’s denunciation of Israel. First, their cry in verse 2 is false. They did not know God. In fact, they have cast off what is good, as is explained in verse 3. The result is found in the following verses. They will be consumed by enemies. Verse 7 is used in many contexts, but we need to see the meaning found here. Israel in its wickedness has sown the wind, a practice that is useless. From that wicked seed came an even worse wickedness. A storm of sins has come down upon them and will consume them. Finally, in verse 14 we see they have forgotten their maker. Have we forgotten God? Sing Psalter 123.

**February 5 Read Hosea 9**

The message of this chapter is plain. The ten northern tribes, the nation of Israel, part of the people that God had made his own, had fallen so far from him that they would be destroyed by the nations around them. Egypt would be no help. Those who went there would die in that heathen land. The rest would be taken captive to Assyria, where they would perish. God has given to the church today many good things. How have we used them? If we have preferred the things of this world, we will find ourselves as forsaken as Israel. Let us flee the lusts of the flesh, and let us daily walk in the law of our God. Sing Psalter 213.

**February 6 Read Hosea 10**

This chapter is much like the ones before it. The sins of Israel are pointed out to them. These sins are not just ones that happened in their present history. God reminds them of terrible sins that had been committed during the time of the judges. Gibeah was a sad day in Israel’s history. But in verse 12 there is a call to repentance. There is a remnant left in Israel. To them God will be gracious in the way of repentance from sin and a seeking after his way. Do we hear and heed that call to repentance? Sing Psalter 206.

**February 7 Read Hosea 11**

In this chapter we find a summary of the contents of the previous ones. It is as if there is a debate going on between God and wicked Israel. God reminds them how he had treated them many generations before. He had taken them from oppressive Egypt, led them safely through the wilderness, and established them in the land flowing with milk and honey. Their response was to tread upon the holy things of God and treat them and him with despite. There is a word of grace found in this chapter. That word is the prophecy of Christ’s returning from Egypt to live his life on this earth, so that his people may live in the new Canaan, the new Jerusalem. Let us hold onto this word of grace and not fall into the sins of Israel. Sing Psalter 164.

**February 8 Read Hosea 12**

Not only the northern kingdom comes under the righteous scrutiny of God, but the southern kingdom does as well. They are not without reproach in the matter of fleeing from God and seeking gods on this earth. God reminds them of his mercies of old, and to the remnant he promises future mercies. As we read through this prophecy to the church of old, we must see the lessons we must learn, as well as the mercy and grace that will be ours through Christ. Let us learn these lessons and live to God’s honor and glory. Sing Psalter 244.

**February 9 Read Hosea 13**

Parents and teachers alike use repetition to teach lessons that must be remembered for a long time. God uses the same technique in this chapter. Once more he points to idolatry as the cause of their problems. They sought other gods, causing them to be abandoned by the true God, the maker of heaven and earth. This chapter is not without hope, however. Like the previous ones, the remnant is promised the care and love of their faithful shepherd. Let us hold on to that hope and live in the love of our God. Sing Psalter 308.

**February 10 Read Hosea 14**

The beautiful strains of the gracious songs of God run through this chapter. The remnant is given instructions in the way of their return to God’s favor. Upon that return they will see the grace that is theirs through the sacrifice of Christ. The elect will never be cast off in spite of their sins. God will gather them to him as the shepherd gathers the wandering lambs. May we use this chapter to guide us in our daily lives as we seek to live in and out of the goodness of Jehovah. Sing Psalter 241.
Greetings from the Federation Board! It is our duty to report to you, young people of the PRC, regarding who we are and what we do.

**Federation Board: Who Are We?**

The Federation Board is a 10-member group that works for the Protestant Reformed Young People’s Societies. The president, Brian Feenstra, leads the monthly meetings. The Vice President, Matthew De Boer, assists the president, leads certain board sponsored activities, and prepares to take over the president’s position the following year. Joseph Holstege, our treasurer, takes care of all the board’s finances, including convention costs. Brad Ophoff, our vice treasurer, assists Joseph and prepares to take his position the following year. Our secretary, Erica Schipper, prepares all the secretarial work, such as agendas and convention binders, and stays in contact with each society. Lynette Kleyn, our vice secretary, assists Erika and prepares to take her position next year. Our youth coordinator, Dan Van Uffelen, works with the Young Calvinists group to coordinate events for the Young People’s Societies. We have a librarian, Lydia Koole, who plans mass meetings, and contributes important materials to meetings. Our spiritual advisors, Rev. C. Haak and Rev. W. Langerak, advise the board in its decisions from their extensive experience.
What Is Our Duty?
Our greatest duty is to serve the young people. We serve you by uniting all of your individual Young People’s Societies under the Federation Board. The official link between your Young People’s Society and another Protestant Reformed Young People’s Society is this board. This link is crucial for the unity of all the Young People’s Societies. In addition, it is the duty of this board to guide your societies collectively in development of faith and doctrine.

How Do We Carry Out That Duty?
• Meetings: The Federation Board holds meetings every month to make decisions regarding your societies.
• Committees: The Federation Board oversees different committees, such as the PR Scholarship Committee. This committee serves all the young people of our churches by providing scholarship opportunities for those who desire to be pastors and teachers in our churches.
• Events: The Federation Board carries out this calling by planning events for the Young People’s Societies. The Board hosts mass meetings, holds a pre-convention singspiration, and assists in convention planning. These are ways in which your societies are united by the Federation Board.
• Publication: The Federation Board also oversees committees such as Beacon Lights, which is designed to guide your societies in the development of your faith and doctrine.
• New Events and Publications: In addition, the Federation Board is working with a new group, the Young Calvinists, with the goal of further promoting unity and fostering a godly zeal. You may have heard of the Young Calvinists in the last year. They maintain a Protestant Reformed blog specifically meant for you, young people. They also host different events to encourage you to interact with other society members. These events serve the purpose of both unification and edification.

Your Involvement
Young people, participate in your societies, both in the Bible discussion and in the activities. Seize this opportunity to grow spiritually. After all, you will be the next generation of the church. For the sake of God’s beloved church, participate! You will undoubtedly profit from the Young People’s Society in your church, and in turn you will profit the church. Make it your goal both to read Beacon Lights and to attend the broader activities sponsored by the Federation Board. Our work is for you, and you can profit from it only if you participate.

To that end, young people, we welcome your suggestions and ideas. We would love to know how we can serve you better. And we covet your prayers. Pray for us concerning our decisions, brothers and sisters, as even we pray for your spiritual growth. May God’s name be magnified by us all.

Brian is president of the Federation Board and a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.

Called to the Ministry

The task set to me is to explain briefly something of my life and call to the ministry for the purpose of the recognition of the glory of God who calls and sends, and for the benefit of young men whom the Lord may be calling to the ministry.

I grew up in Loveland Protestant Reformed Church. In many ways that means I am a product of the church planting efforts of the PRC. Although my mother is Dutch, on my father’s side I trace my family history back to the Volga Germans in Russia, as many in Loveland PR Church do. These Reformed Germans immigrated to Russia for free land, but eventually were cast out. Many of them came to the United States, settling in South-Central Nebraska.

Called to the Ministry

Rev. Cory Griess
and establishing German Reformed churches. My paternal grandparents were products of this settlement. Eventually my grandparents and others came to the Loveland area intent on preserving the doctrines of sovereign grace, which led them to contact with the PRC. A mission was started which eventually grew into a Protestant Reformed Church. Growing up therefore in a sound Protestant Reformed home, I was taught by God’s grace vibrant love for the Reformed faith coupled with pious devotion to King Jesus. The Reformed faith was a religion of the mind and the heart to my parents, and for that I give great thanks to God.

I attended the Protestant Reformed grade school in Loveland, which the Lord used to bolster my understanding of and love for his word and the excellence of all his created world. From there I attended a Baptist high school along with the rest of the youth from Loveland PR Church, as there was no Protestant Reformed High School. I grew much in this time, learning to think through the biblical faith and to defend it with wisdom. From there I attended the University of Northern Colorado where I received a Bachelor of Arts degree in history. This time in a secular university was difficult, as I was confronted with postmodernism and the denial of the authority of God’s word on every front. I was not very prepared intellectually to face the challenge and struggled. Yet in God’s sovereign providence and mercy he held on to me. The living tether of faith rooted in eternal election is never broken (God be praised!), yet my testimony during the first half of my college years is that of the great Russian novelist, “My Hosannas have come forth through the crucible of doubt.” Looking back, all worked together for good, as the Lord brought me to a position of resting in him and his Christ revealed in Scripture with a greater conviction and devotion than before.

I married my wife Lael before my second year of seminary training, and the Lord has blessed our marriage in his grace. We have four children, two boys and two girls. The first two are the boys and are twins, the third and fourth are the girls.

I knew I was called to the ministry since the time when I was a young boy. The problem for me was not so much in determining whether or not I was called to the ministry, but it was in submitting myself to that call. In my late high school years and college years I tried to flee from that call. Part of the time in college I was intellectually struggling with whether or not God was there. The other times I thought if I went to school to be a teacher, God would let me off the hook, so to speak. However, peace was never there in that way, and finally, matured in mind and heart, in my fourth year of college I dropped the education side of my major and submitted myself to what I knew was right.

Once in seminary, I can’t say I ever really doubted my call to the ministry. There were difficult times in seminary, but doubt was not the reason. The work load was difficult, and other things going on in my life made it difficult, but I never doubted the call. There were, however, things that the Lord used to confirm the call to me. Working in young people’s society before seminary and in seminary did that. Practice preaching did that—not because I was so wonderful at preaching—but simply because I knew there were gifts there that could be molded and developed by the seminary. In addition, once being a part of delivering God’s word in that fashion, I knew I could do no other. Of course, receiving the external call to the ministry was the final confirmation from the Lord that indeed this was God’s will for me.

One may think they are confident of the call before this, but it is at the end of the day the external call that God uses to place his will upon his servants.

Now that I am in the ministry it is enjoyable to do the work that I am called to do to his glory. There are times when it is difficult—much more difficult than seminary. There are joys and sorrows. There are the pains of watching a sinner follow his sin. There are the pains of reflecting on one’s own sin in the work. One does not generally see his own sin in the work until after the fact, and one laments that and sorrows over it. There is perhaps the deepest pain of errant young people.

There are the great joys, however, of seeing God’s people grow in faith and be restored from ways of sin. One of the greatest joys is the opposite of one of the greatest sorrows, seeing the youth grow in doctrine and life. There is the look on their face when they “get it” in catechism; the delight in watching them make godly decisions. And there is the joy of growing oneself as one carries out the work. The chief delight, however, in my opinion, is to be deep in the study of the word of God regularly. Just when one thinks he could not delight in the word and the God of that word any more than he has, there is another passage that thrills the soul. There are times when I have stopped in the middle of writing...
a sermon to pray in joy, sing in joy, shed tears in delight, cry tears of conviction, simply because God’s word is so powerful and rich, and I know my fellow colleagues in the ministry have the same delight and experience. The Reformed faith is the biblical faith. And the biblical faith is a beautiful faith to the believing mind and heart, and it is a wonderful thing to discover both anew week after week. I was asked to give words of advice to those who may think they are being called to the ministry. I will pass on some wisdom granted to me from a sound theologian of a bygone era. He said once that to be an under-shepherd of the Great Shepherd requires the God-given natural and spiritual ability to exegete two books. The first book is the word of God. One must be able to lead out of the text what truth is taught and what the Spirit intends to communicate. The second book is the human heart. One must be able to lead out of the human heart the motivations, reasons that lie behind man’s sins and hopes and fears. And one must be able to show how the first book one has properly exegeted speaks to the second book one has properly exegeted. Such gifts are God-given. They are developed in seminary and must be developed in seminary, but seminary itself cannot give them. If the young man has something of those gifts and delights in the use of them for the glory of God and the good of God’s people, and not for his own glory, and if others who are mature in the church see that he has something of those gifts, he may indeed be called to develop that ability in seminary with a view to the gospel ministry. At the end of the day we labor not for ourselves, nor in our own strength, but for him, and in the power of his might. May God continue to grant our churches such young men by his grace, and may God continue to bless our seminary with faithfulness in the development of such young men.

Rev. Griess is pastor of Calvary Protestant Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa.

A Brief Summary of Our Current Work in the Philippines

About the time that you readers in North America come home from the morning worship service, we are in the midst of the morning worship service, or perhaps still travelling to the morning worship service. Depending on which time zone you live in, your fellow saints of like precious faith here in the Philippines are at the end of their Lord’s day. The word of the gospel has run its westward course on the Lord’s day through most of the world by the time that you hear it. In fact, you are some of the last of God’s people on earth to hear the fading gallop of Christ’s white horse and rider for another Lord’s day.

That reminds us that the work of the Lord in the gathering of his sheep is his global work. His sovereign guidance of the running of the white horse and rider each Lord’s day from time zone to time zone, through the many islands of the sea, through the continents of the earth, and through every nation, is his wondrous work for the ingathering of his sheep. The Lord in his good pleasure and mercy has given our churches a small place of labor in his harvest work, particularly in missions in the Philippines, a group of islands located in a time zone 12 to 16 hours ahead of many of you. Here are some of the highlights of our labors in the islands of the Philippines.

First, Rev. Daniel Kleyn and I currently are assisting the Berean Protestant Reformed Church in Cubao, Metro Manila, and the First Reformed Church in Muzon, Bulacan, in the formation of a denomination of churches. This work began almost three years ago, in December 2010, and is nearing completion soon when the churches plan to feder-
ate officially on Reformation Day. That’s right. On October 31, 2013, Reformation Day, the federation of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippine Islands will become a reality, the Lord willing and by his grace. What a joyful occasion that will be for the churches here!

Second, we both are working with other congregations with the goal that they might join the federation, the Lord willing. Rev. Kleyn is working with the Provident Christian Church in Marikina, Metro Manila, and I am currently working with the Maranatha Protestant Reformed Church in Valenzuela, Metro Manila. These congregations have left their former denominations, and they have begun for some time the process of reformation from Arminianism, Pentecostalism, Anabaptism, and independentism. They receive instruction in Reformed doctrine and in Reformed church government with the hope that with the Lord’s blessing they may become sister congregations of the PRCP.

Third, we lead a class in the metro Manila area called 7M, which is for pastors with whom we have contact in metro Manila. This class meets twice a month, and the class meets from 9:30 a.m. to noon. We are currently studying Eschatology and New Testament Greek reading and exegesis. Of course, you may wonder why 7M is the name of this class? Well, 7M is an acronym that comes from the first letters of the following phrase: “Metro Manila Monthly Ministers Monday Morning Meetings.” Our first 7M meeting began three years ago on August 23, 2010, and we have been meeting regularly ever since for study and Christian fellowship.

Fourth, we lead a similar class for pastors in southern Negros Occidental. (By the way, “Occidental” means “Western.”) In Sipalay (pronounced see-pah-lie), at the southern end of Negros Occidental, we conduct our pastors training class once a month. We call this class the PRPTSNO (“Protestant Reformed Pastor Training in Southern Negros Occidental”), or we more commonly call it SNO, for short. The class is held on the third (or fourth) Tuesday of each month; it begins at 9:00 a.m. and continues until 3:00 p.m., with time for two coffee or tea breaks and a lunch meal. The SNO class began to meet regularly in January 2013. Currently, Rev. Kleyn is teaching a course on Reformed church government by a thorough study of our Church Order, and I am leading a study of the introduction to Reformed Dogmatics and then very soon a study of Theology.

Fifth, we have been asked recently to assist the consistory of the Berean PRC in the preparation and training of Pastor Oseas Andres, a confessing member of the Berean PRC and a pastor without a fixed charge. His preparation and training has the goal of his eventual examination by a future classis of the PRCP according to article 9 of the Church Order. This preparation will begin in October and continue for half a year or so until an examination is scheduled at a future PRCP classis meeting. We are thankful to the Lord for the possibility of another Reformed pastor, the Lord willing, for the work of the churches here.

Sixth, concerning our Sunday preaching, we preach regularly in our respective congregations of focus: Provident Christian Church (Rev. Kleyn) or the Maranatha Protestant Reformed Church (myself), and in the Berean Protestant Reformed Church, the First Reformed Church, and the All of Grace Protestant Reformed Fellowship in Gabaldon, Neuva Ecija. The AGPRF is a mission work of the Berean PRC, and we have been helping the BPRC in that work with monthly preaching (in Tagalog) and catechism instruction since January 2010. Our preaching schedule for September to December 2013 has us listed for preaching every Lord’s Day, except for a one Sunday break for each of us, the Lord willing.

Finally, we make available our sermons in English and Tagalog, Reformed Witness Hour sermons in Tagalog, Bible study outlines, catechism outlines, and other materials through the Internet at our website, “prcaphilippinesaudio.wordpress.com.” The Kleyns manage the “Reformed Bookshelf” through which we can provide at an affordable level many RFPA books, Psalters, and Bibles (in Tagalog and Hilagaynon) available to our contacts in the islands of Luzon, Negros, and elsewhere in the islands.

As far as we can tell, the work seems to develop and grow under the Lord’s blessing. We continue to keep busy, for which we are thankful to the Lord. We are thankful to the Lord that we may be used by him in the service of the coming of his kingdom in his people here in the Philippine Islands.

If you really want to stay up to date with the latest about what is happening here, then I suggest that you not only read our quarterly newsletters, the latest of which is the December 2013 newsletter, but also take the time to read through all of our past newsletters, which go all the way back to early 2009. These newsletters can be easily found at our
mission website or in the Foreign Mission section of the prca.org website.

In addition to the newsletters, I suggest that you subscribe to the Kleyns’ blog at “kleynsphilippines.blogspot.com”. There is a little button on their homepage that you can hit, and through that you can sign up. By your subscription you will be notified right away whenever the Kleyns add news and information to their blog. This is an easy way to remain current with the latest news and information in our life and labors here.

In addition to the newsletters and the blog, you might also consider reading the weekly church bulletins from the churches here that are sometimes posted on the church bulletin page at “prca.org/current/bulletins” from the prca.org website. This will give you a better understanding of the worship and the congregational life of the local churches and mission stations here.

We trust that you will continue to develop a good awareness of our small mission work in the Philippine Islands, in a time zone that is 12 to 16 hours ahead of yours. Yes, when you are finishing up your chores and preparing for the Lord’s day on Saturday night, we, our families, and our Filipino fellow saints of like precious faith in Southeast Asia are already busy in the worship of our covenant God in spirit and truth as he has commanded us in his word, just as you will have the privilege to do half a day later.

As we remember you in our prayers, please remember your Reformed friends in Southeast Asia in prayer to our Lord of the harvest.

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

The Lord Makes Good Wine

“Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed” (Jeremiah 48:11).

The word of God has a fair amount to say about wine. We read throughout scripture warnings against consuming wine in excess. We are familiar with these passages concerning the danger of alcohol. However, we may be unfamiliar with the Bible’s teaching of the Lord’s making wine. I refer not to the first miracle our Lord Jesus performed here on this earth by turning water in wine (John 2:1–11). Instead, we will consider an Old Testament passage concerning the Lord’s work into making wine—good wine.

The prophet Jeremiah labored in the midst of Judah for forty years, from the time of King Josiah to the carrying away of Jerusalem into captivity (Jer. 1:2–4). The book of Jeremiah repeatedly proclaims God’s forthcoming judgment on his chosen people, calling them to turn from idol worship and repent.

However, in the final chapters of the book we read of the judgment of God reserved for the heathen nations that surrounded Judah. Specifically we consider the proclamation of God against Moab in Jeremiah 48.

Moab, as you remember, was one of the two sons born to Lot, the nephew of Abraham, when Lot’s daughters sinfully conspired to make him drunk with wine and then lie with him (Genesis 19:37). The resulting child gave rise to the nation of Moab who therefore had blood relations with the children of Israel. However, despite this common ancestry, these two nations stood at enmity with each other throughout their histories. Moab exerted great effort to plot against Israel. For example, recall the efforts of Balak, king of Moab, to summon Balaam in order to curse the Israelites as they journeyed to the doorstep of Canaan (Numbers 22:6).

In spite of their efforts to aggravate God’s people, Moab enjoyed peace and prosperity throughout most of its history. The prophet indicates this in Jeremiah 48:11: “Moab hath been at ease from his youth.” Evidently Moab did not experience times of...
great difficulty. All seemed well for this people despite their departure from serving the Lord. Thus Jeremiah can say they “have not been emptied from vessel to vessel.” What does the prophet mean by these words? In declaring God’s judgment on the nation of Moab, Jeremiah uses the illustration of making wine. In order to understand this text, we will need to explore this process.

To make wine, yeast is added to grape pulp to convert the sugars within the grapes to alcohol, a process known as fermentation. During the fermenting process the yeast slowly collects along the sides of the barrel or vessel containing the wine. This yeast that collects on the side of the vessel is referred to as “lees.” If the wine remains in that same barrel or vessel for too long, the lees slowly begin to impart a bitter or sour taste to the wine. In addition, the lees hinder the wine from developing a sweet and pleasant aroma.

To prevent the wine from taking on these undesirable qualities, a skilled winemaker will pour the wine into a new barrel or vessel after a certain amount of time. This process serves to agitate the wine and unsettle the yeast. In addition, the wine no longer contacts any yeast that did collect on the side of the previous barrel. Therefore by emptying the wine from one vessel to another, a winemaker prevents the wine from becoming bitter or sour because it settled on the lees for too long. This process of emptying the wine from one vessel into another vessel must be repeated several times, until the wine has matured and can be placed in a glass bottle.

Now that we understand the process for making wine, we can return to God’s judgment on Moab. The prophet Jeremiah proclaimed that Moab “hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel.” In this figure the skilled winemaker that we described depicts Jehovah, the vessels represent the different states or conditions of our lives, and the wine refers to the nation of Moab. We read that God did not go through the trouble of pouring the nation of Moab from one vessel and into another vessel. God did not utilize his might and skill to prevent Moab from becoming bitter or sour to the taste. Instead he sovereignly determined to let Moab “settle on his lees.”

What then do the lees refer to? The lees here refer to sins in general, but more specifically, to the sin of spiritual indifference and complacency. Therefore settling on one’s own lees represents our natural tendency to allow sin to remain undisturbed within our own hearts. This settling on the lees refers to times in our lives that we lose the sense of true sorrow for our sins that we ought to have, and instead become unconcerned about and even comfortable in our spiritual lethargy. This figure depicts the power of sin to cleave to the inner walls of our hearts, just as the lees to the inner walls of the wine barrel, resulting in the whole of our life, as with the wine, becoming unpleasant both in taste and smell to God. This sin characterized the people of Moab, who left off the service of the Lord because they grew comfortable in their spiritual indifference. God allowed this to happen; he allowed Moab to “settle on his lees.” Therefore Jeremiah brings a word of judgment against the nation in this chapter, for God will punish those who settle on their lees (Zeph. 1:12).

In contrast to Moab, God did not allow his chosen people to settle on their lees. Throughout the Old Testament we see God busy in the work of emptying his people from vessel to vessel. God used a famine to empty his people into Egypt; after delivering them from bondage, he poured them into the wilderness; once his people were brought safely into the promised land, God repeatedly emptied his people from vessel to vessel during the time of the judges. As the master winemaker, God did not allow Israel to be at ease for an extended period of time. In doing this God prevented Israel from settling on the lees of spiritual apathy. God repeatedly emptied his people from a vessel that had become lined with the sins of idolatry and mixed marriages into a vessel that brought out the sweet scent of true repentance and faith in Jehovah.

That God dealt differently with Israel compared to Moab is brought out in the text when Jeremiah draws attention to the fact that Moab has not gone into captivity. Remember that Jeremiah lived and prophesied during the time of the captivity. No doubt, Jeremiah recognized the sovereign hand of the Lord in leading Judah into captivity as his handiwork in keeping his people from becoming bitter and distasteful. By leading Judah into the Babylonian captivity, God once again emptied his people from one vessel into another.

God continues his work as a master winemaker in the lives of all his children. He empties us by sending sickness and disease; he turns our plans for the future upside down through financial struggles; he upsets our way of life in the death of a loved one. When God sends trials, afflictions, or hardships,
he is emptying his people from one vessel and into another. God does this repeatedly. Time after time the Lord disturbs our lives so that it seems to us that he will not let us catch a break. Therein lies the temptation to wish in our hearts that God would just leave us alone for a time. By nature we long for the ease and relaxation that Moab experienced. We say to God, “Do not upset my life; just leave it alone.” However, we must recognize the purpose of God in all of this.

What then is God’s purpose in emptying his people from vessel to vessel? Negatively, he does not do this in his wrath and judgment upon us. This must be stated, because these massive upheavals that God sends upon us are very painful and unsettling. Thus we are inclined to perceive this process as God’s disfavor toward us. However, in emptying us from vessel to vessel, God exhibits his grace. Remember, Jehovah does not do this for the Moabites, but only for his people. God displays his wrath and judgment by not performing this work. Therefore we must see that as God’s elect people, he desires to keep us from settling on the lees. God seeks to purify us from the sins of spiritual apathy and indifference. More clearly, in sending us trials Jehovah aims to sanctify his people. Figuratively, God desires that we taste and smell good to him.

The ultimate purpose of God in emptying his people from one vessel into another is to make us more Christ-like. All of our trials and afflictions serve this purpose: to make us more and more like God’s beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. To use the figure of the text, Christ represents the finished and complete product of the winemaking process. The tribunal of God perceives the work of Christ on the cross as a sweet taste and a pleasant aroma. God desires that we also become desirable to the mouth and the nose. Therefore he faithfully prevents us from settling on the lees of spiritual complacency by emptying us from vessel to vessel through the hardships of life.

The figure in this passage serves to remind us of God’s purpose in sending trials. Thus we are called to evaluate our lives in times when we recognize God’s sovereign and gracious hand emptying us from vessel to vessel. It may be that we have settled down into certain sins. If so, this word calls us to repent and turn from them. This passage also provides great comfort to the believer. We know that the master winemaker, having begun a good work in us, will see through to our purification so we are made as good wine, pleasing to the Lord.

Matt is a Contributing Editor Correspondent for Beacon Lights and is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.
Bless This House

Within these bright and solid walls,
God holds a golden key;
to rooms of safety, warmth and pride,
a place called “family”.
May all our days be filled with trust,
nights blessed from up above,
and as the years pass tenderly,
may this roof shelter love.
From month to year...
from friend to kin,
God bless the hearts
that dwell within.

Submitted by Sadie Knoper, a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Wyoming, Michigan.

There be three things which go well,
Yea, four are comely in going:
A lion which is strongest among beasts,
And turneth not away for any;
A greyhound;
An he goat also;
And a king,
Against whom there is no rising up.
—Proverbs 30:29–31
BAPTISMS
“But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children.” Psalm 103:17
The sacrament of holy baptism was administered to:
Bennett Carl, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff & Sara VanTil—Byron Center, MI
Caleb Andrew, son of Mr. & Mrs. Phil & Emily Miersma—Grace, MI
Kensley Kay, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Doug & Emily Zwak—Grace, MI
Olivia Lee, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. John Jr. & Ashley Cleveland - Hope, MI
Lucy Daniellle, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dan & Kate VonUffelen—Hope, MI
Brylee Grace, daughter of Mr. Dolan DeRoon—Hull, IA
Summer Rainbow, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tim & Bridget Postma—Hull, IA
Elsa Claire, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Thomas & Courtney Andringa—Hull, IA
Skyler Hope, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joel & Leah Nieuwenkamp—Immanuel, Lacombe, CAN
Colton Grant, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jared & Janice Kooienga—Lynden, WA
Kayla Rose, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Matt & Stacy DeJong—Peace, IL
Tyler Phillip, son of Mr. & Mrs. Peter & Megan Cnossen—Southwest, MI/ Pittsburgh, PA
Zachary Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Michael & Tammy Hanko—Southwest, MI
Nolan Miles, son of Mr. & Mrs. Matt & Kim Kuiper—Southwest, MI
Owen McConaughey, son of Mr. & Mrs. Fred & Becky Johnston—Spokane, WA
Thaddaeus Jay, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kirk & Carrie Karsemeyer—Trinity, MI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH
“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:1)
Public confession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was made by:
Brad DeVries—Byron Center, MI
Ethan Hassevoort—Byron Center, MI
Ashley Huisinga—Grace, MI
Erin Huizinga—Grace, MI
Seth VanDenTop—Grace, MI
Trent VanDenTop—Grace, MI
Travis Hanco—Grace, MI
Tyler Koole—Hope, MI
Kayli Kamps—Hope, MI
Michael Terpstra—Hope, MI
Chad Jessup—Hope, MI
Brianna Langerak—Hope, MI
Seth De Jong—Hull, IA
Brady Kooiker—Hull, IA
Peter Lanning—Hull, IA
Amy Lanning—Hull, IA
Eric VanDenTop—Hull, IA
Kelsey Pryor—Kalamazoo, MI
Danielle Bauer—Peace, IL
Joseph Ekl—Spokane, WA
Miriam Koerner—Southeast, MI
Molly VanBaren—Southeast, MI

MARRIAGES
“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.” Psalm 127:1
United in the bond of holy matrimony were:
Mr. Jared Verduin and Miss Amanda Zwak—Georgetown, MI
Mr. Jeremy De Jong and Miss Brittany Gastra—Redlands, CA
Mr. Kevin Westra and Miss Qian Sah—Sioux Falls, SD
Caspar Olevianus was a boy born into a wealthy family in the city of Treves, a stronghold of the Roman Catholic Church. His father was head of a baker’s guild, and in the 1500s if parents had money, they sent their children to school. Caspar was sent to many Roman Catholic schools.

One day at one of these schools a faithful priest put his hand on Caspar’s shoulder and said, “My boy, you must never forget that salvation and comfort are found only in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.” Olevianus could not know what those words would mean to him some day, but he never forgot them.

For now he was a growing boy, busy learning and going to more schools. When he was fourteen years old, his grandfather sent him to France to study law. At one of the schools there, he met Herman Louis, a son of Heidelberg’s elector, Frederick III. The two boys became close friends.

France was not only a good place to learn law, it was also home to the Huguenots. Some of these persecuted Calvinists were students there as well. Caspar and Herman Louis met with them in some of their secret meetings. These new Calvinist ideas began to take root in Caspar’s soul—maybe deeper than he realized.

One day Caspar Olevianus, Herman, and Herman’s servant valet were walking along the river that ran close to the school. Caspar and Herman wanted to go to the other side in a small boat that was tied to the shore, but a group of loud and riotous drunken students was already climbing in. The boat dangerously rocked.

“Come on! Come on!” they shouted for Caspar and Herman to join them.

Caspar refused, but Herman decided to get in the boat with them. The other side was not so very far away, though the current was swift. They pushed off while Caspar looked on.

In midstream the drunken students took up another of their loud songs and swayed even more. Suddenly—the boat capsized!

“Herman!” Caspar jumped into the cold waters of the river. He must help his friend—but how? He could not find him, and now Caspar himself was being swept away. Fear engulfed him as the water completely surrounded him. It was in this terror and panic that the Reformed faith he had begun to learn sprang up in his heart. He vowed at that moment to devote his life to preaching the true gospel of grace, even to staunchly Roman Catholic Treves, if God would spare his life. Finally his head was above the surface of the water and he gasped for air.

Trying to save Herman, Herman’s valet managed to grab Caspar instead and pull him to shore. Sadly, amidst all the chaos and confusion, Herman still could not be found.

Caspar’s close friend had drowned, and now the whole direction of Caspar’s life would change. In the providence of God such would be the turn of events...

Unscramble the letters to read the words of Psalm 31:7:

I LLIW EB LAGD DAN CEEROJI NI HYT

REYMC: ORF HOUT SHAT DOINEEDSRC

YM LORBTUE; OTUH HATS WONNK

YM LUSO NI RADESSIVITE.

Connie is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
LIVING IN THE LAST DAYS

Monday, August 4 - Saturday, August 9
IDYLLWILD PINES CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER

"Ye are all children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

I Thessalonians 5:1-8

http://prcconvention.com