

BEACON LIGHTS

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EDITOR

Dewey Engelsma, editor@beaconlights.org

CONTENTS COMMITTEE

Ryan Kregel (Managing Editor), ryankregel@gmail.com
Jake Dykstra (Contributing Writer Correspondent), dykstrjh@mail.gvsu.edu
Josh Moelker (Contributing Writer Correspondent), josh.moelker@gmail.com
Macy Schimmel (Promotions Manager), promotions@beaconlights.org
Joel Rau (Archivist), archives@beaconlights.org
Matt Rutgers (Business Manager)
Abbie Kooienga (Secretary)

BUSINESS OFFICE AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Matt Rutgers
PO Box 37
Hudsonville, MI 49426-0037
(616) 209-2824
subscriptions@beaconlights.org

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Melinda Bleyenbergh, dmbleyenbergh@gmail.com

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(616) 534-2835

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Last month's issue was a special issue. Instead of a variety of topics being addressed, we examined only one subject, bullying. This allowed us to look at several different aspects of a matter that affects our young people. In that one issue, we confronted the harm that bullying does to its victims, our calling when witnessing such bullying, the reality of cyber-bullying, and finally, comfort for the bullied child.

Bullying is not something that our youth alone have to face. It occurs throughout all of life, and we hope that our adult readers were able to profit from that issue as well.

Jon Van Overloop's article on cyber-bullying should serve as a wake-up call to all parents. An article that was forwarded to me from the website drove this point home, "If your child does not maintain an online self, chances are her social circle is small—friends from school, neighbors, family. If she has a rough day at school, a bell sets her free each afternoon. The jerks who taunted her at lunch aren't

coming home with her for the night. She has space to think, to be with you, to read, to hug her dog, to recover, to get brave. Online, there is no school bell, there is no escape; she exists globally, and so do her mistakes. The ridicule is permanent. Puberty is harrowing enough in physical form, asking a child to also manage an online ego is like asking them to thread a needle while the plane is going down."

Did you like the layout and the concept of the March issue? It is something we hope to do more of so we would appreciate your feedback. Are there topics you would like us to address in the future? Please let us know at editor@beaconlights.org.

One thing we realized soon enough was that doing a special issue requires additional funding. The subscription price does not cover the cost of our regular issues; we rely on the beneficence of our supporters! If you are willing to help subsidize the cost of future special issues we would greatly appreciate it.

We look forward to hearing from you.

THE STRANGE WOMAN AND THE SIMPLE YOUNG MAN

Proverbs 7 paints for us a vivid picture of a young man being led astray by a strange woman. He is described as "simple" and "void of understanding" (v. 7). Knowing exactly where he was going, he walked down the street to her corner. No surprise, there she was. "There met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart" (v. 10). She caught him and caused him to take part in her adulterous ways. Scripture, especially the book of Proverbs, in no uncertain terms describes the seventh commandment and the temptation to violate it. Although the scenario given to us in Proverbs describes a young man falling prey to the seduction of a strange woman, it can go both ways. Young women can and do fall prey to strange men.

Who was the strange woman? She was a "woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart (v.

10). Her description begins with what she was wearing. You might say there was no mistaking what her occupation was. You may have heard the phrase "dressed to kill" used to describe someone. The strange woman really was dressed to kill because "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death" (v. 27). When we give in to temptations to violate the seventh commandment, we are defiling our bodies, which are temples of God. Whoever defiles the temple of God, God promises to destroy (1 Cor. 3:14–15).

Proverbs 7 also describes the strange woman as having "cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her" (v. 26). It doesn't matter who you are, all people—rich and poor, old and young, weak and strong—are tempted to violate the seventh commandment. Some have the gift of

not falling easily into this sin, but those are very rare persons indeed. As our society plummets into the depths of depravity, it seems as if it is getting more and more difficult not to be tempted. Adultery and fornication are everywhere, and they are accepted as normal.

After the strange woman caught the foolish young man, she seduced him by describing to him all that she had to offer him. “I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon” (vv. 16–17). Proverbs does not skirt around the fact that there is momentary “sweetness” in the sinful pleasure of following after her. “For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil” (5:3). That being said, the next two verses continue by describing the aftermath of falling prey to her ways: “But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell” (vv. 4–5). The momentary pleasure of giving in to sexual temptation ends in bitterness. Beware of her kiss, for it is the kiss of death.

Who was the simple youth described in Proverbs 7? “Passing through the street near her corner...he went the way to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night” (vv. 8–9). He was alone and he was browsing. He knew it was dangerous, but being “void of understanding” (v. 7) he went anyway. When the strange woman caught him, he was easily overcome in his lust for her and he went “after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter” (v. 22). He became so blinded in his lust that he knew not that it was for his life (v. 23). “Her house is the way to hell” (v. 27) and he went willingly. We would call him a fool and rightfully so but would we do the same thing? Do we do the same thing? Do we go where we should not?

These days we don’t have to go walking down the street to find the strange woman. She is in our living rooms and in our pockets. On a smartphone, TV, or computer we can access almost anything we want with a few clicks or swipes and no one would be the wiser. We need accountability. We need help from our parents and our friends in order to resist temptation. We are out of our minds if we think we can browse the internet without accountability. Parents, you might agree that giving your child unrestricted access to the TV is like letting them play with matches. If that is true, then surely handing them a smartphone without restrictions and accountability is like handing them a grenade. It is only a matter of

time before it explodes. Caution is to be exercised. Accountability is needed.

What are we to do about this sin? How can we fight against it? It may seem at times that we are overwhelmed with this enemy of ours. We can’t get away from it because it’s everywhere. We can’t drive more than a few miles down a highway without seeing an advertisement from a company trying to use sex to sell whatever it is they are selling. We try our hardest to fight against this sin, but as soon as we think we have gained some ground, we drive past a billboard or we see an image on social media or a news website and our gaze lingers. Even in that split second of our lingering gaze, we have violated the seventh commandment. This is frustrating for the child of God and downright exhausting at times. We know we cannot fight it ourselves, so how do we fight it?

One way we can fight this sin is through obeying our parents. Wise sons and daughters obey their parents in *all* rightful matters, but obedience to father and mother is specifically stated regarding this sin. “My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother...For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman” (Prov. 6:20–24). Our parents have been battling the strange woman their whole lives long. They have good advice and encouragement to offer us and even reproofs when necessary, so when they speak to us about these matters, we need to be open to listening to them.

Another way we fight against sin as it presents itself to us in the seventh commandment is through wisdom. “When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee...To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words” (Prov. 2:10–11, 16). How do we get wisdom and learn discretion? By walking in the green pastures of God’s word instead of the dark street near the strange woman’s house. There is great blessing in being in scripture day after day. This is not the fleeting pleasure of the strange woman that ends in destruction. The blessing of walking in God’s word is true pleasure, everlasting pleasure. By the grace of God working in us we can make ground against this sin. By his grace he sanctifies us as we put to death our sins of adultery and fornication. “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Thess. 4:3).

THE EARTHQUAKE AT JESUS' DEATH

There were two earthquakes that took place within the span of three days. The epicenter of both was near Jerusalem. The first earthquake occurred late Friday afternoon (Matt. 27:51) and the second took place early the following Sunday morning (Matt. 28:2). The first marked the death of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God (Matt. 27:54), and the second announced his resurrection from the dead.

In this article, we would like to consider the first earthquake. Two very striking and miraculous events took place with this earthquake. First, the thirty-foot-high veil of the temple was torn into two pieces with the tear beginning at the top of the veil and going down to the bottom. Second, certain graves were opened, but the bodies remained in the opened graves until the second earthquake. When the second earthquake took place, the bodies in those opened graves arose from the dead.

We would like to focus our attention on the second result of the first earthquake: the opening of certain graves. First, let us consider six important details about this miracle. Second, we will consider five things which the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ bring to light about this most unusual event.

The first detail has to do with earthquakes in general. Earthquakes are very significant works of God. They express God's judgment by destroying things of this earth. Earthquakes also announce God's great renewal of things. Consider Hebrews 12:26–27. Earthly things are removed (destroyed) by earthquakes, but also there are things which remain. We learn which things are lasting by looking at what remains after an earthquake. The greatest earthquake will accompany the great fire which ends this present world. By showing what remains, this final earthquake will announce what is eternal. All prior earthquakes proclaim that eternal life in Jesus Christ is coming.

The second detail we are to note is that this first earthquake that took place at Jesus' death opened graves. We have to understand that in that day graves were different than they are today. Today's graves are made out of holes in the ground. But these graves which were opened were often cut out of a stone wall. Imagine the face of a cliff with a

hole cut into it, which led into a larger cut-out room. A human would enter by bending down low or by crawling into it. The entrances would be closed by large stones which were cut into the shape of wheels. This stone wheel would be set in front of the grave opening. When setting in front of the opening, the gravesite would be closed, but when rolled to the side, the grave would be open. The women who wanted to anoint Jesus' body wondered who would roll the stone away from the door of the grave (Mark 16:1–4). When the first earthquake took place, the stones which had covered the grave entrances rolled to the side, resulting in several graves being opened.

A third detail is that only specific graves were opened! The graves which were opened were the graves of "saints." When scripture identifies these dead people as saints, we are to believe that they were holy ones who had been living in the hope of the promised coming of the Messiah. They were fellow-saints of Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25–38). That they lived in the hope of the Messiah is what set them apart. They had died and had been buried in graves.

Fourth, these dead saints experienced a real, bodily resurrection. Their souls, that had left their bodies when they died, had been immediately glorified at the moment of their death. Now those glorified souls were reunited with their raised, resurrected, heavenly, and glorified bodies. As a result, their bodies were like those of Moses and Elijah and not like that of Lazarus. Lazarus' resurrection was a return to his earthly, humiliated body. He would die again. The resurrection of the bodies of these saints was to a heavenly glory. This is evident from the fact that they had to "appear" to be seen by people in Jerusalem. They "appeared" just as Moses and Elijah appeared on the mount of transfiguration. They "appeared" just as Jesus did ten times after his resurrection and prior to his ascension. Their bodies were so glorious and heavenly that they could not be seen by earthly humans unless they made appearances.

Fifth, note that "many" arose. We are not told how many. But it is likely that there were more saints raised than we might first think. So many

were raised that it is likely they appeared to most of the residents of Jerusalem.

Sixth, these saints arose with a specific mission and purpose. They were to appear! They were recognized as those who had formerly died. And they were recognized as having been raised from the dead. Their mission and purpose were that their appearances would proclaim the powerful effect of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God.

There are five things about this unusual and marvelous miracle which we must consider in light of Jesus' death and resurrection.

First, Jesus' death and resurrection are inseparably connected to the opening of the graves, to the many bodies being raised, and to these resurrected saints appearing to many. When Jesus died, these graves opened. The opened graves show that the cross was victorious over death. Jesus had conquered the power of death. The Spirit inspired these events to be recorded at the time of Jesus' death in order to show that it is a part of the power of Jesus' death. The graves were opened by God when Jesus died. His death conquered death and the grave which is a part of death. The people around Jerusalem knew about these opened graves, but they were kept from closing them because of the nearness of the Sabbath (at sunset). If one would have looked into those opened graves on that Sabbath, they would have seen the bodies of these dead saints.

Second, Scripture records that the bodies "came out of the graves after his resurrection." This clearly shows the inseparable connection between Jesus' resurrection and the bodily resurrection of these saints (and the bodily resurrection of every child of God). Now is Christ risen from the dead and is the first-fruit of them that slept. Christ arose and after him those who are his (1 Cor. 15:23). Our resurrection is only possible because of Jesus' resurrection (1 Cor. 15:13). Christ's resurrection is the power of our justification (new life in regeneration), of our sanctification, and of our bodily resurrection.

Third, the open graves and the appearing saints vindicate the cause of God as represented in Jesus. The chief priests wanted Jesus dead and they had Pilate seal Jesus' grave, thinking to end Jesus' influence on the people. But God opened all these other graves. And when Jesus came out of his sealed tomb God raised from the dead the many saints out of the opened graves. This vindicated the cause of Jesus. This truly is the Son of God!

Fourth, this is a call for us to live holy lives. Only "saints" were raised. Not the unholy (Eph. 5:5). All the resurrected ones were known as saints. They had

lived holy lives in anticipation of Jesus' coming. Not a single, self-righteous Pharisee arose that morning. The general resurrection that will take place when Jesus comes again will be as discriminating as this resurrection was. John 5:29 declares that they that have done good will arise unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. Only the holy will know the resurrection to life—real life.

Fifth, great encouragements are given in the appearances of these resurrected saints, just as it was and is true with Jesus' appearances. Presently, it often seems as if the cause of Christ in this world is defeated. Saints now experience afflictions, pain, sorrow, and death. But the appearances of these resurrected saints declared loudly that God's work in them is victorious. The second encouragement is expressed in the word "slept." The dead saints who arose had "slept." The deaths of believers are to be viewed as though they are sleeping and they will awaken soon. So certain can believers be of the resurrection of the dead, that they consider the deaths of their believing loved ones as one who is sleeping. They will awaken. Do not despair at the grave of a believer. It will be opened and they shall arise to live forever. The third encouragement is found in the way scripture here identifies Jerusalem. It is called "the holy city." The saints who arose at Jesus' resurrection went into the earthly Jerusalem, identified as "the holy city." So it is with every believer who dies. When Jesus comes again, then every saint will enter, not into the earthly Jerusalem, but into the "great city, the holy Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:10). They will live forever in the city of the great King. In this "city" they will experience the joy of a most wonderful fellowship with their Savior and Lord and with each other. The holy life and fellowship earned, established, and maintained by the Savior's death and resurrection will be experienced by the holy ones in the new Jerusalem, the holy city.

Two great earthquakes! Two great miracles!

They are a proclamation of severe judgment on the unbelieving. And they are a declaration of a most wonderful hope for every believer.

Rev. Van Overloop is a spiritual advisor for the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies and is the pastor of Grace Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY (1)

The statistics on teenage depression are rather startling. About 20 percent of teens (that's 1 out of 5) will experience depression before they reach adulthood. Between 10 to 15 percent of teens have some symptoms of depression at any one time. About 5 percent of teens are suffering from major depression at any one time. Episodes of teen depression generally last about 8 months. About 8 percent of those experiencing depression will suffer with it at least a year. Most teens with depression will suffer from more than one episode. Of those suffering depression, 20 to 40 percent will have more than one episode within two years, and 70 percent will have more than one episode before adulthood.

Another startling fact is that most people don't know what is happening to them when depression hits. They are mystified by what is happening. The result is that they usually don't get help until they are severely depressed.

So let's examine the symptoms of depression.

Depression comes in degrees. Various circumstances in life can bring on short term depression. One can easily become depressed when he doesn't make the varsity team, when she didn't get the grades she worked so hard to get or because of a breakup with a girlfriend or boyfriend. These can be depressing, but in a couple of weeks one is back on top again. This isn't the depression we're dealing with here. We're dealing with a deeper depression that last for weeks and months and is debilitating to one degree or another.

There are a number of classic symptoms to such depression.

- Physical exhaustion. Depression leaves one physically exhausted.
- Change in sleep patterns. One who is depressed either cannot sleep well or he sleeps too much. Interestingly, one can be physically exhausted and yet can't sleep well. This is true when a person can't stop fretting over mounting problems that depression brings.
- Change in eating habits. The depressed person often has no appetite and begins to lose weight. In some cases one handles the terrible stress of depression by overeating.

- Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions, and remembering things. This makes it difficult to perform one's normal tasks.
- Feelings of sadness, which can include crying spells for no apparent reason.
- Loss of interest in normal activities. The joy of life is gone for those with severe depression.
- Irritability. The depressed person can be very irritable towards those around him, finding every day annoyances to be almost intolerable.
- Feeling of worthlessness and self-loathing. This is true especially when depression makes it impossible to carry out everyday responsibilities.
- Loss of assurance of salvation. The severely depressed person sees himself as such a failure that he questions God's ability to love him.
- A feeling of hopelessness. This is perhaps the worst part of deep depression. There appears to be no way out.
- Thoughts of death or dying as a way to escape.

The deeper one's depression is, the more of these symptoms a person will experience and the more intense they will be.

Anxiety often accompanies depression. They are brother and sister to each other. Usually one will be more prominent than another, but they almost always team up together.

Anxiety is a sense of dread that seizes hold of one so that there is inner uneasiness. The Bible describes this as the soul that is cast down and disquieted (Ps. 42:5, 11). This is accompanied by consuming worry over things that ordinarily would not bother a person and fear over the future, often with nothing specific in mind. This can be accompanied by physical reactions such as muscle tightness, sweating, rapid heartbeat, inability to relax, and even hyperventilation.

This anxiety can attack at any time and last for a few to several hours. Sometimes it can last for days with little relief.

These anxiety attacks obviously are debilitating to one degree or another.

Depression and anxiety often lead to other disturbing and dangerous behaviors. These include anorexia or bulimia, cutting, drinking, and sexual

sins. These are all sinful ways to mask and deal with the pain of depression and anxiety.

What should you do if you find yourself floundering under one or both of these scourges?

You need to get help as soon as possible.

A common mistake is to wait too long to get help. There are two things that contribute to this. First, the person that falls into depression or anxiety is ashamed and doesn't want anyone to know. This is especially true when he isn't able to keep up with his daily responsibilities. He sees himself as failure and is ashamed. Second, depression and anxiety cloud person's judgment. As one sinks deeper and deeper into the pit of depression or anxiety one tends to grasp for straws in an attempt to find a way out of this horrible dilemma. When he finally turns to others for help his depression or anxiety has become almost completely debilitating.

Should you experience depression or anxiety that affects your ability to function for over a few weeks, you need to get help!

Where can you turn for help?

First, be assured that there is help. Perhaps the most terrible feature of severe depression is the loss of all hope for recovery! But with God nothing is impossible (Luke 18:27). He is near to all them that call upon him in truth (Ps. 145:18). Although the day of miracles is past, the God who did the miraculous in Bible times has the power to heal the broken soul that is devastated with depression and anxiety. He who sent his own Son to the cross to secure the salvation of his people will certainly hear them when they call to him from the depths of depression. In severe depression one's faith is also "depressed" so that he can hardly believe this to be true. In fact, he often can hardly pray. But God's promises are true. He will hear those that cry to him in need.

How and where will that help be found?

God provides a number of different sources to deliver his people from the ravages of depression and anxiety.

This may surprise you, but teenagers struggling with depression issues can find a great deal of help from their parents. It is true that the teenage years are often filled with conflict with parents. However, in a covenant home the teen that turns to his parents for help will most often find a listening ear, a compassionate heart, and a readiness to do whatever is necessary to help.

With the help and input of parents, the depressed teens need to connect with those who understand depression and anxiety. To many these things are a mystery and they find it difficult to help apart from offering encouragement. But there are those that do understand depression and can provide invaluable help. This can be a pastor, an elder, a fellow member of the church, and/or a Christian counselor. With the help of those that truly understand depression and also with the support of those that do not, the depressed teenager will be led out of his depression and anxiety by a compassionate and understanding God.

In the next article we will discuss certain things that the depressed and anxious person must learn to do differently. This may include abandoning a sinful lifestyle. It usually involves correcting one's view of self and the expectation set for self to match what the Bible teaches. Medication may also be an important part of recovery. And the recovery will be a process. But by God's grace the depressed teen can be delivered from despair to joy and in the process become a much more productive and happy Christian.

Rev. Slopsema is minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

CHRISTIAN LIVING Meghan Van Overloop

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S CONTROL IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

It is seemingly impossible to turn on the television, open a website, or scroll through a feed without seeing the fallout of man's sin. We are spectators

to horrific mass shootings, human trafficking and all the abuses associated with it, addictions, violent disputes within our borders and around the world,

and tragic warfare. Man brings devastation by his sin, and the church is not immune to sin within its walls or the effects of the world's hatred of Christ and Christianity.

Creation also groans in pain, manifested in the intense earthquakes and numerous, powerful hurricanes we have witnessed this year and in years past. We see and hear creation's pain in the wildfires, the flooding, the famines, and the epidemics. There seems to be a chaotic, unending stream of news regarding these events too, each event an obsession for a time only to be forgotten as another takes its place.

We are clearly living in a fallen, sin-laden world—a world filled with violence and devastation at every turn. We as God's saints groan with creation as hatred-driven rampages and geographic events fill our media. And yet it is neither shocking nor unexpected by the people of God. We anticipate these events because God himself, through his Son Jesus Christ, has brought us the warning in his word. We know the church will suffer in the perils of this fallen creation and at the hands of its persecutors, and are reminded in both Matthew 24 and Revelation 6, among other passages of scripture, that these are the "signs of the times," and all of these happenings are evidences of the truth found in the word.

Clearly men have no ability to stand against the powerful travail of the creation that God has established, or against the consequences of their own sin. Most are impacted by sickness, disease, and warring in some way too. While mankind continues to fear and wonder at the confusion, and while he continues to store up iniquity to himself, we stand humbled and amazed at the assurance we have in God. "Though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof," we will not be afraid because, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Ps. 46:1–3) He is our refuge from this world and he is our salvation from sin.

As a world history teacher I am keenly aware of examples in history demonstrating our defender God in the midst of trouble, and our faithful God in the midst of a faithless world. When the church was persecuted in ancient Rome, it was purified and it grew. When it faced the troubling events of the fall of the Roman Empire, the church filled the chaotic void, bringing stability and the gospel to the people. When it was stricken by corruption and vile sin as the Middle Ages wore on, and failed to guide

the people in a time of rampant disease, warfare, and death, the church by God's grace "fought the good fight of faith" in the Reformation. And when it seemed that persecution might truly have a hold on truth and true believers, God made for the church a home in the New World, a place of refuge again for his people. He motivates us to join in the cause of the gospel as it moves to the corners of the globe even as the church still experiences the trials of oppression. The church has endured through the perils of the fallen creation and through persecution, by God's grace alone and by his promise to remain faithful to his own.

We further confess with Reformed believers in the Belgic Confession, Article 12, that "[God] doth also still uphold and govern" the entirety of his creation "by His eternal providence, and infinite power... to the end that man may serve his God." We know that all things are controlled from the throne of our Lord God. Revelation 6 gives us the perspective of earth from heaven as the first four seals are opened and the four horsemen are released. They bring with them the very tragedies that we witness in our world today. But the Lamb is in control of their release. This Lamb of God on the throne is our God. Colossians 1:16–17 considers this too, that all things are subservient to Christ and the whole creation will bow before him and confess that he is Lord. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

As we witness the depravity of man and the destruction of sin all around us, as we hear the groans of creation in the trembling of the earth, and as we experience the buffeting of believers on this pilgrim journey, these events serve as a visible reminder that God's word is true and infallible. His warning in scripture rings clear that this time would come, and although we too cry, "How long, O Lord?" with the saints before the throne, we also confess with the psalmist David, "My times are in [God's] hand..." (Ps. 31:15a).

Meghan is a teacher at Covenant Christian High School in Walker, Michigan. She is a graduate of Calvin College and attends Zion Protestant Reformed Church.

THE DAILY PRESS

“press toward the mark...”
(Philippians 3:14)

April 8

Read Psalm 109

I am Prayer

How do we reconcile Scripture’s command to love our enemies with Psalm 109’s seemingly vindictive tone? Notice, David *does love* these wicked, but they return evil for his good and hatred for his love (vv. 4–5). Likewise, our enemies must not be people whom *we* hate, “but him who entertains enmity towards *us*” (Calvin). Nor does David seek to revenge their unmerited and malicious hatred. He brings his case to Jehovah in prayer and leaves the matter there (Rom. 12:19). Psalm 109:4b can be read, “But I am prayer.” Do we follow his example?

David first prays about his enemies in the plural. Beginning at verse 6, he prays in the singular, either focusing on them individually or singling out their leader. Some commentators suggest that the explicit petitions he prays correspond to the hate-filled words with which they surrounded him (see v. 3 and Deut. 19:16–21). Perhaps we’re uncomfortable reading these petitions because our prayers tend to be so very general. Note, David simply prays—and his prayer is the inspired prayer of Christ!—that God will chastise or judge these wicked men with the natural fruits of their sinful walk. These are the wages—the reward—that Jehovah pays sinners (v. 20). Do we pray that he will justly recompense the unrepentant sinners whom we know? *Sing or pray Psalter #300.*

April 9

Read Psalm 110

Priestly King, Enthroned Forever

Psalm 110 teaches that Jesus Christ is not only God’s anointed King: he is God’s anointed Priest-King. Other passages make clear that he is also ordained and anointed “to be our chief Prophet and Teacher” (HC, LD 12). Still more: he is God. As Jesus noted to the Pharisees, David refers to his promised Son as “my Lord.” He didn’t look only for a king that would sit on his earthly throne; he prophesied of the divine King who would rule from God’s right hand.

Verse 3 describes Christ’s people this way: “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness.” Do we obey King Jesus willingly? Other translations render “the beauties of holiness” as

“in holy garments” or “in holy array.” The holiness of Christ’s subjects is not inherent in themselves; they’ve been clothed with it. Our garments distinguish us as those who are consecrated to his service. As his friend-servants, we’re called to confess his name, present ourselves as living sacrifices of thankfulness to him, fight against sin and Satan in this life, and look forward to the day when we will reign with him eternally over all creatures. *Sing or pray Psalter #302.*

April 10

Read 1 Chronicles 23

Fruitful Age

David is “old and full of days.” Still he numbers and organizes the Levites. This was no small feat, for the tribe of Levi had grown more than four-fold, from 8,580 to 38,000, a proportional increase greater than any other tribe (see Num. 4:48). Joab had not numbered the Levites previously (1 Chron. 21:6); David counted them now not in pride, but with purpose. We learned in Numbers that the Levites did not begin to serve in the tabernacle until age 25 and that they were not responsible for carrying the tabernacle and its furnishings until age 30. Now David employs them from age 20, for God had given them rest from the laborious task of transporting the tabernacle (1 Chron. 23:24–27).

David’s dearest desire had been to build God’s temple, and he had diligently amassed materials to that end. Jehovah denied him that privilege, but David did not, “like so many peevish persons when their wills are crossed, mope and fret, and then lose all interest in the Lord’s service; but readily acquiesced in God’s will and continued his preparation...Advancing age and increasing infirmities quickened him to increased diligence and effort...Those who are mature and experienced should consider the younger ones who are to follow, and furnish all the help they can to make the work of God as easy as possible for them” (Pink). *Sing or pray Psalter #350.*

April 11

Read 1 Chronicles 24

For the Work of Ministry

David organizes the descendants of Aaron in 1 Chronicles 24. These were the priests who would

preside over the affairs of the sanctuary in turn. Their rotation was assigned by lot, that the whole disposing thereof might be of the LORD (Prov. 16:33). It's noted that there were 16 chief men in Eleazar's line, while Ithamar's family had only eight. This makes sense, since the house of Eli, which God had judged for their iniquity, descended from Ithamar.

Still today the rule and worship of the church requires order and structure. That order is determined by King Jesus through his word and Spirit. And still today our Lord assigns to each member of the body certain gifts and a specific place, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). Do each of us cheerfully serve in the place we've been given? *Sing or pray Psalter #368.*

April 12

Read 1 Chronicles 25

Sing unto Him

1 Chronicles 25 records David's organization of the Levite singers and instrumentalists. This new office was dear to the heart of the "sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam. 23:1). These men were appointed to "prophesy." Likewise, we're appointed to praise and confess the name of our God. Let's edify one another and glorify our God also in song! The Levites appointed to this position were privileged, yet note: their role is referred to as a *service*, and they, *workmen*. Matthew Henry comments that this "intimates that it is our duty to make a business of [praising God]...and that, in our present state of corruption and infirmity, it will not be done as it should be done without labour and struggle."

Verses 3 and 6 emphasize that these things were done according to the order of the king. That's the principle that regulates our worship too. Those same verses emphasize that the fathers presided in this service, their children learning under their hands. Are we faithful to train our children in this service? *Sing or pray Psalter #289:1-4.*

April 13

Read Psalm 131 and 138

Put on Humility

(In a couple of weeks we will consider Psalm 119. I'd like to devote several days to that lengthy psalm, so, with that in mind, we will study several of this month's shorter psalms in pairs.)

Psalm 131 is humble psalm that extols that very virtue: humility. David sings that his heart, his eyes, and his mind are not lifted up in pride. He compares his humble state to that of a toddler, who, now weaned, rests serenely in his mother's arms. Humility frees him

from anxiety, restlessness, and despair: he is content to lean on Jehovah. Humility enables him to trust that "that all things work together for good to them that love God," and to exhort his fellow saints, "Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and forever."

In Psalm 138 David gives thankful praise to Jehovah. He had cried to Jehovah, and Jehovah had answered him that very day, strengthening him with strength in his soul. Though king, David recognizes that he is but one king of many on the earth, and that God is King over all. Though God is great, he regards the lowly, or humble. Those who are proud he knows only at a distance. Do you or I presently lack the experience of God's nearness? Perhaps our pride is to blame. *Sing or pray Psalter #381.*

April 14

Read Psalm 139

Our Omniscient, Omnipresent Owner

David celebrates Jehovah's omniscience in Psalm 139:1-6. Our God searches, knows, understands, and surrounds his people. This knowledge doesn't frighten David: it's wonderful to him (v. 6), for Jehovah is his friend. Not only is he an *omniscient* God, he is also *omnipresent*. In verse 7 David asks, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" He answers his own question in verses 8-12, delighting in the reality that escape from Jehovah is an impossibility. This all-knowing, everywhere-present God also owns David, for he has created him and redeemed him. David traces his life from conception (v. 13) to resurrection ("when I awake," v. 18). He also considers that Jehovah is Lord of his entire being, from his emotions ("reins," v. 13) to his physical frame.

This meditation compels David to respond in hatred to those who speak lies about God. "The Bible is outraged by sins of speech;" are we characterized by "the proper radicalism of Psalm 139?" (Motyer). The psalm, which began with Jehovah's searching, comes full circle when David prays, "Search me...and lead me in the way everlasting" (vv. 23-24). *Sing or pray Psalter #384.*

April 15

Read Psalm 143

Threefold Distress, Threefold Discipline

A troubled David again appeals to Jehovah in Psalm 143. Before he presents his case against his enemy, he admits his own guilt (v. 2). If David himself is guilty, on what grounds does he plead? On the basis of Jehovah's faithfulness and righteousness (v. 1). David's case against his enemy is threefold. First, the enemy has persecuted his soul, intent on his life. Second, the enemy has smitten him "down to the ground." His

threats and slander have crushed David's spirit. Third, he has made David to "dwell in darkness." David cannot find any comfort or light. All of this he presents to the Judge.

David regains a right perspective when he exercises three spiritual disciplines (v. 5). First, he remembers the days of old. How do his current troubles compare with trials he has faced in the past? Second, he meditates on all Jehovah's works. He cannot reflect on former days without acknowledging God's gracious interpositions on his behalf. Third, he muses on those works. His meditation moves him to lift his hands and praise God in song (verse 6 ends with the word "Selah," which denotes a musical interlude). Let's follow his example of prayer, meditation, and praise when we lack a proper spiritual perspective. *Sing or pray Psalter #389:1-3.*

April 16

Read Psalm 144

Blessed God, Blessed People

Psalm 144 begins with a list of 10 of Jehovah's glories. Its opening verses are peppered with "my" and "I," but David switches to the plural pronoun "our" in the latter verses, praying on behalf of all God's people. David's faith is personal, yet he recognizes that God saves him as a member of a body. On behalf of that body, David makes an urgent, repeated request: "Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children." (vv. 7-8, 11). David is requesting that Jehovah will purge his people of the unbelievers that dwell among them.

What makes that petition so very urgent? David knows that the antithesis is essential to the prosperity of God's people. He prays that Jehovah will rid Israel of the unbelievers who dwell among them so that their covenant children may thrive. He desires sons like "plants grown up in their youth," and likens Israel's daughters to corner pillars that support and beautify a structure. Do we desire that the children of the church prosper spiritually? Then, for the sake of their welfare, we must be willing to pray, "Rid me...from...strange children," even when those strange children are our own family members or friends. *Sing or pray Psalter #393.*

April 17

Read Psalm 108

An Unsearchable Greatness

Like Psalms 25 and 34, Psalm 145 is originally an alphabetical acrostic. This style of poetry likely aided God's people in memorization, but it also suggested a totality of the treatment of its subject, similar to our expression "from A to Z." Interestingly, one letter of

the Hebrew alphabet—the letter "*nun*"—is absent from Ps. 145. Perhaps that verse was lost in translation. More likely, David intentionally excluded it to suggest the infinite, incomprehensible glory of God. "His greatness is unsearchable" (v. 3b). Though we will never be able to wrap our minds around Jehovah's glory, we may not shrink back from studying his self-revelation. The Christian faith requires "a certain knowledge"; repudiates willing ignorance; engages the renewed mind.

Psalm 145:9 reads, "The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works." Does that verse teach common grace? No. Jehovah is indeed "a gracious God" (Jonah 4:2). But he is also "righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (Ps. 145:17), near *only* "to all that call upon him in truth" (v. 18). He preserves *only* "all them that love him; but all the wicked will he destroy" (v. 20). *Sing or pray Psalter #394.*

April 18

Read 1 Chronicles 26

Doorkeepers, Treasurers, Judges

In 1 Chronicles 26 David appoints 4,000 porters, 24,000 treasurers, and 6,000 officers and judges from among the Levites. The porters' duty was to guard the temple entrances, encouraging those who were timorous and excluding strangers, unclean, thieves, and enemies of God. Those who kept the temple treasures saw to the stores of flour, wine, oil, salt, and fuel, attended the priests with the sacrifices, readied the meat and drink offerings, cleaned the vessels, utensils, and sacred garments, and ensured that everything was in its place, "that the service might be performed both with expedition and with exactness" (Matthew Henry). The officers and judges were stationed throughout the kingdom and assisted the princes of every tribe with the administration of justice.

Compared to the priests, these men held humble positions, but God called and equipped them. He describes them as "mighty men of valour" (v. 6, 30-32), "strong men" (v. 7), "able men" (v. 8), and "wise" (v. 14). Do you and I accept our God-assigned places with the attitude that "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness"? (Ps. 84:10). *Sing or pray Psalter #228.*

April 19

Read 1 Chronicles 27

Counsellors and Companions

We've been considering David's divisions of the Levites. Now, in 1 Chronicles 27:1-15, we turn to the military divisions that David assigned. Twelve captains were each assigned a second-in-command and 24,000 men.

Each group of 24,000 served the kingdom one month out of the year; the remainder of the year they attended to their own labors and affairs. Verses 16–22 name the civil rulers of each tribe (Gad and Asher are not listed. They could have been joined with another tribe, or their records may have been lost). Verses 23–24 briefly note David’s command to number the people, a command which displeased the Lord and brought judgment upon the people. The remaining verses list the names of the stewards of David’s property and the officers of his court.

Among the men who attended to David was his uncle, “a counselor, a wise man, and a scribe” (v. 32). This man knew the Scriptures. Interestingly, the cunning Ahithophel is listed as David’s counselor, but Hushai is named as his *companion*. Are Jehovah’s testimonies our delight and our counselors? Are our companions those that fear him? (Ps. 119:63). *Sing or pray Psalter #323.*

April 20

Read 1 Kings 1

The King Anointed

David is nearing the end of his earthly sojourn. His servants pursue an ill-advised plan for his comfort: Abishag. “If the danger of [youth] is to disdain the advice of seniors and be too self-willed, the infirmities of [old age] place them more in the power of their juniors, and they are apt to yield to arrangements which their consciences condemn” (Pink). Jehovah’s displeasure becomes readily clear. “It is true that [Adonijah’s rebellion] was the fruit of his earlier laxity in ruling his children...yet *the time* when this impious insubordination occurred leaves us in no doubt that it is to be regarded as a divine chastening” (Ibid).

Adonijah, David’s oldest living son, who had never been denied anything by his father, attempts to usurp the throne. Fellow parents, those who refuse to discipline their children “are only preparing a rod for their own backs” (Ibid). Adonijah is joined by opportunistic Joab and Abiathar. Bathsheba and Nathan establish the matter before David, who acts unhesitatingly. Jehovah had been faithful to him; he would also be faithful to his vow that Solomon would reign. Even before Adonijah’s celebration ends, Jerusalem rejoices as Solomon, chosen to rule before he was born (1 Chron. 22:9), comes riding upon a mule and is anointed king. *Sing or pray Psalter #4.*

April 21

Read 1 Kings 2

The Kingdom Established

David charges Solomon to keep Jehovah’s law in 1 Kings 2. Jehovah swore in truth: David’s Son would

sit upon the throne. But the temporal kingdom was contingent on the conduct of David’s descendants. We know the sad sequel: soon the ten tribes would be taken away because of Solomon’s idolatry. “Was then the divine purpose thwarted? No indeed...the counsels of God are made good in the Second Man...in Him the kingdom of God is *spiritually* realized” (Pink).

In accordance with David’s commands, Solomon administers justice to Joab for the willful murders of Abner and Amasa (see Lev. 24:17). Solomon removes Abiathar from the office of priest for joining with Adonijah, and, when Shimei fails the test of his integrity, has him executed as well. But first, Adonijah, still pining after the throne (v. 15), is put to death. Though David had not “known” Abishag, she had the status of a concubine. Like his brother Absalom, Adonijah knew that taking the concubines of the king implied a right to the throne (see 2 Sam. 16:20–23). At the very least, he intended to disturb his younger brother’s infant rule, and he is executed for his duplicity. *Sing or pray Psalter #367.*

April 22

Read 1 Chronicles 28

Constancy and Courage

In 1 Chronicles 28 David formally charges the representatives of Israel and his son Solomon publicly to know God and to keep his commandments. How those men must have paid attention when their beloved—yet old and sickly—king rose to his feet and addressed them as, “My brethren.” David encouraged Solomon in his high, holy calling to build Jehovah’s house. First, he gave him a pattern of the temple. Second, he gifted him with gold and silver for the precious furnishings of the temple. Third, and perhaps most importantly, he assured him of Jehovah’s aid and reminded him that the priests, Levites, princes, and “all the people” would be wholly at his command. Solomon typified our Lord Jesus Christ, *the* chosen Son, the builder of the house of God and the one whose kingdom is established forever.

Along with Solomon, we need to be exhorted to the attributes of constancy and courage. Are we faithful, willing servants of King Jesus? And do we find in him the strength we need to face the trials and temptations that confront us each day? *Sing or pray Psalter #45.*

April 23

Read 1 Chronicles 29

All Things are Thine

David has charged Solomon and the princes of Israel. Now he addresses the congregation before he dies. He reminds them that Solomon is young—he was not yet twenty—to assume the heavy responsibilities of ruling

the kingdom and building the temple. David also reminds the people how he made the house of Jehovah his care and encourages them to do the same. The people respond by giving willingly, and David gratefully, humbly blesses Jehovah for their eager, abundant offering. Before the people he confesses, “All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee” (v. 14). Is that the attitude with which we offer ourselves and our possessions to our God?

The people then join David in corporate worship, and on that high note, the reign of David ends. “For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers” (Acts 13:36). “May we too be enabled to serve our generation as faithfully as David did his” (Pink). *Sing or pray Psalter #383.*

April 24

Read Psalm 127

Except the LORD

The heading of Psalm 127 attributes its authorship to Solomon. Perhaps he penned this song early in his reign, before his own deplorable family life led to his idolatry. It’s likely he has two houses in mind in verse 1. First, the building of God’s temple weighs heavily on his mind, but the encouragement of his father still rings in his ears, too: “Fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD” (1 Chron. 28:20). The second house is the house of David, now established in him (see 2 Sam. 7:11–16). Though tempted to anxiety, Solomon comforted himself with the promise of Jehovah’s provision (v. 2). Solomon’s personal name was Jedidiah, “Jehovah’s Beloved” (2 Sam. 12:24–25).

Although fruitful labor, watching, and rest require human activity, their outcome is God’s gift. It is likewise with children. “Babies cannot be conceived and born without the human activity of procreation, but the Bible insists, it is not sexual intercourse as such that leads to conception. Only God can ‘open the womb’” (Motyer). Children are an inheritance—a free gift, not a payment. *Sing or pray Psalter #359.*

April 25

Read Psalm 111 and 112

Works Remembered

Psalm 111 is a communal celebration of Jehovah’s wonderful works. His works are great, honorable, glorious, enduring, right, and just. They are the meditations of the godly and the source of their delight. The font of these works is a God who is himself grace and compassion. He gives his people all that they need. He makes

them to know his mighty deeds, for by themselves they would be blind to his works. Among the greatest of his works is that which the psalmist mentions twice: he is faithful to his covenant.

Psalm 111 teaches that not only is Jehovah’s covenant everlasting: his praise and his commandments also endure forever. Psalm 112:1 declares that the person who delights in those commandments is blessed. His children will be mighty upon the earth, and wealth and riches will fill his house (vv. 2–3). That’s not always the believer’s experience in this life, however, for the psalm speaks of the spiritual riches that belong to the godly and their children. But already in this life the righteous bear the image of their heavenly Father. Psalm 111 notes that Jehovah is gracious and full of compassion: so are the upright (Ps. 112:4–5). *Sing or pray Psalter #305.*

April 26

Read Psalm 113 and 114

Who is Like our God?

Psalm 113–118 comprise the Hallel psalms, songs of praise that were sung at Passover. Psalm 113 can be divided into three sections. In verses 1–3 Jehovah’s people bless his name, “the compendium of who and what he is” (Motyer). In verses 4–6 they consider Jehovah’s exaltation and self-humbling. He is so great that he not only humbles himself to behold the things of earth: he condescends even to behold the things of heaven! Yet this exalted God takes thought for the poor and vulnerable; he is sovereign in both the affairs of the state and the home (vv. 7–9).

Psalm 114 is a poetic celebration of Israel’s exodus from Egypt, a poetic celebration of our redemption! It affirms the principles set forth in Psalm 113. The God who is sovereign over all things, including the creation, identified himself with the poor and transformed his people’s identity from slaves to victors. In his presence the Red Sea fled, the Jordan River turned back, the mountains and hills skipped, and the earth trembled. This God cared for his people as they journeyed through the wilderness. He provides for us on our pilgrimage to heaven, too. *Sing or pray Psalter #306.*

April 27

Read Psalm 115 and 116

Renewed in Knowledge

Psalm 115 begins and ends with Jehovah’s earth-dwelling people blessing their God, who dwells in the heavens (vv. 1–3 and 16–18). Verses 4–15 contrast Jehovah, who alone deserves all glory, with the images of the heathen. The psalmist observes seven things about those idols: his is a “comprehensive charge list” (Motyer). He first notes that they are made by the very

men who worship them! Yet, though dead, each idol “had the dreadful capacity to transform its worshippers into its own image” (Ibid). Then the psalmist lists reasons why Israel should trust in Jehovah. He ends with this motivation: Jehovah made heaven and earth. Have we been renewed in knowledge after *his* image? (Col. 3:10).

In Psalm 116 the psalmist recounts a time when Jehovah delivered his soul from death. In response, the psalmist asks, “What shall I render [that is, *give*] unto the LORD.” He strikingly answers, “I will *take*” (vv. 12–13). The psalmist knew that all that we have, we have been given. As the apostle Paul asks rhetorically in 1 Corinthians 4:7, “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” Do you call upon Jehovah’s name in thankful praise for the overflowing cup of salvation he has given you? *Sing or pray Psalter #426.*

April 28

Read Psalm 117 and 118

All Nations Blessed in the Cornerstone

Since they belong to the Hallel psalms, some think that Psalm 115–118 comprised the “hymn” that our Lord and his disciples sang in the upper room (Matt. 26:30). At first glance, Psalm 117 may seem remarkable only in its brevity. But pause a moment and consider that the saints of the Old Testament sang this song of praise: they looked forward to the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 22:18).

Psalm 118 is a psalm of grateful, jubilant rejoicing. Why does the psalmist rejoice? He rejoices because the Lord is on his side, and in his joy he calls on Israel, the priests, and all who fear Jehovah to enter the gates of the tabernacle and join him in worship. The occasion of the psalmist’s praise is the foundation of all our prayers, for he speaks prophetically in verse 22 of our savior, Jesus Christ, the elect, precious cornerstone of God who was rejected by the builders. The man that believes on him will never be confounded. *Sing or pray Psalter #427.*

April 29

Read Psalm 37

The Righteous Shall Inherit the Land

Beautiful Psalm 37 is an acrostic psalm in the Hebrew. It doesn’t have the tell-tale 22 verses, but that’s because most of the Hebrew letters are followed by a section that is two verses long in our English translations. The psalm gives very straightforward instruction to the Christian. First, we’re commanded not to envy evildoers. From an outward point of view, they lead lives of ease and prosperity. They are also hostile to God’s people. But the one who views them with eyes of faith

understands that their doom is imminent. Other passages of Scripture describe the righteous like fruitful trees: the wicked are like the short-lived grass.

Second, we’re instructed to delight ourselves in Jehovah and commit our way unto him, trusting that he will act at the right time (v. 5). That doesn’t mean that the Christian life is one of inactivity, however! We must “depart from evil, and do good” (v. 27). Such responses require diligence in the disciplines of worship, prayer, Bible study, etc. As Matthew Henry wrote, “The instructions here given are very plain; much need not be said for the exposition of them, but there is a great deal to be done for the reducing of them to practice.” *Sing or pray Psalter #101.*

April 30

Read Psalm 71

Our God for Life

Jehovah is no fair-weather friend: he is a faithful, life-long God. In Psalm 71 the psalmist rejoices when he reflects that the one who took him from the womb taught him throughout his youth. Children and young people, do you see the hand of God in your lives? Throughout his middle years, Jehovah proved himself faithful again and again—more times than the psalmist can count. Is that your experience, adults? Now as the psalmist reaches his later years, he comforts himself with the knowledge that Jehovah will also sustain him in the trials of old age. For his enemies are still mighty and still just as determined to do him harm as they were in the past. He rejoices to know that not only will Jehovah be his refuge and strength; after he faces the last great enemy, death, Jehovah will also raise him again (v. 20). Is that your hope, aged saint? Do you testify of Jehovah’s strength to the generation that follows you?

Jehovah’s faithfulness compelled the psalmist to sing and shout his praise throughout the day. Is that our response as well? *Sing or pray Psalter #190.*

May 1

Read Psalm 94

An Appeal to the Judge

The psalmist of Psalm 94 is troubled. The proud wicked, who “speak hard things” and “boast themselves” (note again the Bible’s horror at sins of the tongue!) seem to triumph over God’s people. These wicked proud are not heathen: they are Israelites who persecute the true Israel of God (v. 10). The psalmist is awed by these unbelievers’ lack of spiritual discernment. He considers the revelations of God in creation—he formed and knows the ear, the eye, and the mind—in redemption—he will not forsake his inheritance—in faithful care—he is his people’s help and defense—and in

judgment—in due time, he will reward the wicked for their iniquity. By God’s grace he understands that these wicked are tools in Jehovah’s hand, tools that he uses to chasten his people. “Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law” (v. 12). And just as certainly as Jehovah will reward the wicked with trouble, so certainly will he reward his people with rest (v. 13).

“When we look around at the world we are living in, what should we see? Psalm 94 replies, we should see a call to prayer... ‘God is still on the throne’” (Motyer). *Sing or pray Psalter #253.*

May 2

Read Psalm 119:1–32

Cling to Jehovah’s Testimonies

Psalm 119 is the greatest of the alphabetic acrostic psalms. All the verses in each eight-verse section begin with one of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The psalm is united by the theme of God’s special revelation. The psalmist uses a variety of words, each of which has a different emphasis, to describe this revelation. The word translated “law” includes all of God’s teaching. The root of “testimonies” means “to witness.” What a wonder that God witnesses of himself to us! When the psalmist writes of Jehovah’s “ways,” his focus is the godly lifestyle that conforms to God’s revelation.

Each section also has a sub-theme. In *Aleph*, the psalmist uses the word “keep” four times: he is resolved to keep Jehovah’s statutes. In *Beth*, we see that he keeps this determination with integrity. He desires to be taught of Jehovah, so he meditates on Jehovah’s revelation and, in response, he declares Jehovah’s judgments. In *Gimel*, he acknowledges his pilgrim status and his dependence on Jehovah, even in keeping his word. The psalmist is depressed in *Daleth*: he describes himself as clinging to the dust. But from the dust he prays, “quicken me,” “teach me,” “make me to understand,” “strengthen me,” “remove from me,” and “grant me.” God answers his prayer, and he resolves to cling to Jehovah’s testimonies instead (v. 31). *Sing or pray Psalter #322.*

May 3

Read Psalm 119:33–64

The Quickening Word

When the psalmist uses the word “statutes” to refer to Jehovah’s revelation, he underscores its permanency: it is as if his word is engraved in stone. “Commandments” stresses that Jehovah’s revelation must be obeyed.

Like *Daleth*, section *He* contains many prayers to God to act: ten prayers, in fact. Twice the psalmist prays that Jehovah would “quicken” him, that is, give

him life. Of himself he would focus on vain idols; it is Jehovah who must turn his heart to his word. And yet, the psalmist isn’t idle. His ten prayers are punctuated with six resolutions. According to one commentary, every verse in *Vau* begins with the word “And” in the Hebrew, indicating the close relationship between all its clauses. Verses 42–48 all flow out of the wonderful reality expressed in verse 41: Jehovah is the psalmist’s salvation. The four middle verses of *Zain* note derision of the wicked and the psalmist’s horror at their ungodliness. These verses are balanced by verses 49 and 55, which speak of remembrance (Jehovah’s and the psalmist’s) and verses 50 and 56, which emphatically begin with “This.” Jehovah’s word brings life to the psalmist, fueling his word-devoted life. *Cheth* begins with the confession that Jehovah is the psalmist’s portion and ends with the confession that the earth is full of his mercy. How does the psalmist live in response to these two realities? He answers that in verses 58–63. *Sing or pray Psalter #327.*

May 4

Read Psalm 119:65–104

Wise Through His Commandments

The word “precepts” highlights the application of the principles of Jehovah’s revelation to all the details of life. When Jehovah’s revelation is referred to as his “judgments,” the emphasis is on its authority and righteousness. His are the standards according to which all men are judged.

In *Teth* the psalmist confesses that God is good all the time, even when he sends affliction, for it is through affliction that the divine Teacher teaches his people his word. In *Jod* the psalmist declares, “Thy hands have made me and fashioned me.” God formed his physical being and established him in a specific time and place, amid “the proud” and before fellow God-fearers; the psalmist also desires the *inward* work of Jehovah in his mind and heart. The eight verses in *Caph* are a model for our prayers. In the odd-numbered verses, the waiting psalmist tells God how things are. In the even-numbered verses, he pleads for God to act. In *Lamed* the psalmist rejoices that Jehovah’s word is eternal. Where is true liberty to be found? In the way of keeping his commandments (v. 96). How he loves those commandments: through them he has wisdom and discernment (*Mem*). *Sing or pray Psalter #329.*

May 5

Read Psalm 119:105–136

A Shining Light

In *Nun* the psalmist twice refers to an oath he has freely sworn: he will keep Jehovah’s judgments. Though afflicted and persecuted, he confesses that there’s a lit

pathway through the valley of this life: the pathway is God's way, illuminated by his word (vv. 1–2). The psalmist doesn't only follow this way outwardly, with his feet, but inwardly with his heart (vv. 105–106). The psalmist notes his distinctiveness from evildoers in *Samech*. His perceived eccentricities arise from his adherence to Jehovah's statutes. His obedience is driven by fear—not terror, but reverence for his holy God and his holy law. “The Word of God and the God of the Word are inseparable” (Motyer).

In *Ain*, the psalmist begins by testifying that he has acted according to the principles of that word. But his persecutors have not, and he calls on Jehovah to intervene. In verse 124 he pleads with Jehovah to deal with him in mercy. What form does that mercy take? The form of instruction in Jehovah's word. In *Pe* the psalmist returns to the metaphor of light. As he walks in Jehovah's ways, he experiences blessing: the very face of God shines on him. *Sing or pray Psalter #334*.

May 6

Read Psalm 119:137–176

Jehovah is Near

In *Tzaddi*, the psalmist contrasts Jehovah—“Righteous art thou, O LORD”—and himself—“I am small and despised” (vv. 137 and 141). Mindful of his own frailty, the psalmist delights in Jehovah's testimonies, which are as righteous and faithful as their divine source. As in verse 136, in verse 139 he grieves at those who despise that life-giving word. In *Koph* the psalmist, his enemies pressing close, longs for Jehovah's nearness, and his desire is answered with an assurance of Jehovah's presence. In *Resh* the psalmist again juxtaposes his devotion to God's law with the willing unbelief of the wicked. Why is he so devoted to Jehovah's precepts? He loves them. That love is the fruit of the life that only God himself can give. Knowing this, the psalmist thrice prays, “Quicken me,” that is, “Give me

life” (vv. 154, 156, and 159).

Schin is replete with the psalmist's awe of Jehovah's word. His word is like *great* spoil and gives *great* peace. In response, the psalmist loves them *exceedingly*. *Tau* is a fourfold prayer. A. Motyer captions each two-verse section as follows: “Hear my prayer” (vv. 169–170), “Let me praise” (vv. 171–172), “Grant me help” (vv. 173–174), and “Bring me home” (vv. 175–176). *Sing or pray Psalter #342*.

May 7

Read 1 Kings 3

A Wise and Understanding Heart

Matthew Henry comments on Solomon's union with Pharaoh's daughter: “We will suppose she was proselyted, otherwise the marriage would not have been lawful; yet, if so, surely it was not advisable.... Yet some think...that she was a sincere convert (for the gods of the Egyptians are not reckoned among the strange gods which his strange wives drew him in to the worship of, (ch. 11:5–6)) and that [the Song of Solomon] and the 45th Psalm were penned on this occasion, by which these nuptials were made typical of the mystical espousals of the church to Christ, especially the Gentile church.”

1 Kings 3 also records Solomon's generous sacrifice at Gibeon and his ensuing dream. In that dream, Jehovah grants Solomon's request for wisdom with a “a wise and understanding heart” as well as riches, honor, and, if he walks in God's ways, long life. Solomon's request, giving evidence of Jehovah's own work in his heart, pleased God. He rejoices at his work in us, too. If like Solomon we desire discernment more than anything else, let's pray for it, “nothing wavering” (James 1:5–6). Let's also attend regularly to God's word and faithful preaching of it, for there is the source of all wisdom. *Sing or pray Psalter #325*.

CHRISTIAN LIVING Aaron Van Dyke

THEY'RE NOT PR

On September 14, Young Calvinists held a Talking Points meeting dealing with the truth of the catholicity of Christ's church and how that truth is worked out in our lives. Most of us as young people could give a pretty good definition of the “holy catholic church” that we confess every week; we have been

taught its meaning since we were small. How do we view and relate to the members of the holy catholic church who are not in our denomination, however? That is harder to answer. The relatively large group that attended the Talking Points meeting was an indication that Protestant Reformed young people

can sometimes grapple with this question and other questions like it. Rev. Jon Mahtani led our discussion and gave us biblical, reformed principles to apply when considering this topic.

Rev. Mahtani began by laying a scriptural and confessional foundation for our discussion. He demonstrated from passages such as 1 Corinthians 1:2 and Revelation 5:9 that scripture plainly sets forth the truth of the catholicity of the church. He demonstrated from Article 27 of the Belgic Confession and Lord's Day 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism that our confessions hold the truth of the church's catholicity in very high esteem. Our other binding creeds do as well. He made the point that it is *confessional* to place a strong emphasis on the catholicity of the Church. It is *confessional* to glory in the doctrine that Christ saves a people from "all nations and kindreds and people and tongues" (Rev. 7:9).

After establishing that the truth of the catholicity of the Church must be treasured and lived out, Rev. Mahtani drew a picture of a road with a ditch on either side of it. The picture illustrated the two dangers that people can fall into when dealing with the truth of the church's catholicity. On the left hand is the ditch of overemphasizing the catholicity of the church at the expense of the importance of the local congregation and her doctrines. On the right hand is the ditch of overemphasizing the importance of the local congregation or denomination at the expense of the truth of catholicity. The truth of the church's catholicity is so important that it may not be obscured by the promotion of the local congregation or denomination. The importance of the local congregation and of the fight for pure doctrine is so important, that it may not be obscured by the promotion of the truth that God's church is catholic. Neither ditch is preferable over the other; both are serious errors.

Most in the United States who call themselves Christian fall into the left-hand ditch. They claim that the church is bigger than it really is and minimize the importance of the local congregation. Such people ultimately sacrifice pure doctrine and a holy walk of life in the name of unity. Properly confessing "an holy catholic Church" does not mean ignoring or minimizing doctrinal differences. Nor does it mean compromising the truth in order to adopt a blind acceptance of all who claim to be Christians. Sadly, this is exactly what we see happening in many denominations today. In our own denomination we are not immune to falling into the left-hand ditch. Rev. Mahtani warned us against minimizing the importance of Protestant Reformed doctrines and

distinctives. He warned us against using the truth of the church's catholicity as an excuse to participate in worldliness with nominal Christians, or to date those outside our denomination while ignoring the doctrinal differences. He forbade us from twisting the doctrine of the catholicity of the church to justify fellowship with those whom the church is officially disciplining or with those who knowingly continue in presumptuous sins. A compromise of either doctrine or holy living is never the proper expression of unity within the Church catholic.

On the other hand, there are those who fall into the right-hand ditch; those who view God's church as being smaller than it really is. These people dwell on denominational differences, ignore the areas of unity in doctrine and sanctified living, and are quick to make damning implications about other denominations. In some areas of church life they mistake *preference* (that which is strictly tradition) for *principle* (orthodoxy), and inevitably end up looking down on those from other denominations whose practices in these areas do not align with their own. Where real doctrinal differences arise, they say, "I either agree with another denomination on all points of doctrine and have unity with them, or I disagree with them on certain points and will have no unity." Rev. Mahtani pointed out that we may not say this. "Unity is not an all or nothing idea," he said, "You *do* have doctrines that you have in common with other Reformed believers." We also share a common holiness with those other believers that flows out of the same Holy Spirit. Those who fall into the right-hand ditch essentially cut themselves off from a great portion of Christ's church, depriving themselves of a wealth of legitimate spiritual insights and support. Additionally, their appreciation for the magnitude of Christ's saving work is stunted.

Few have ever accused our denomination of tending toward the left-hand ditch. Instead, the accusation is often: "You PRs think you're the only ones saved." This is a sinful accusation for someone to make, and we know that it is not true. It is worth noting that this accusation often comes from those who themselves have fallen into the ditch on the *other* side of the road. We should not completely ignore this accusation, however. Rev. Mahtani urged us to examine ourselves and work toward ensuring that we do not give an inaccurate impression of how we view God's precious people in other denominations. He instructed us to judge their doctrines, judge their walk of life, and to witness to the differences, but to do so meekly and in love. This means showing them *why* you believe what you believe and praying

that they come to a better understanding of what is truth. “Call sin, sin. Call heresy, heresy. But do so carefully, and unless they undoubtedly deny Jesus Christ do *not* judge their salvation.” He made the point that our spiritual (not denominational) unity with members of other true denominations is to exist in as far as we are unified in doctrine. Just as there are degrees of doctrinal unity, so there are degrees in our expression of spiritual unity. This means that we have the strongest spiritual unity with our own denomination and no spiritual unity with a denomination that is completely apostate. In that regard too, we must prioritize our friendships and fellowship according to this standard.

It is worth recognizing that in an age where church after church is apostatizing and (to use the picture of Israel in Elijah’s day) “bowing the knee to Baal,” it is of utmost importance that we do not write off “the 7,000” who have not. God’s church is perfect and unified in number, but imperfect in her

representation here on earth. This truth is somewhat of a mystery, and many stumble at it. We thank God for our denomination and pray that he will continue to lead our churches by his word as we make confession of his one, holy, catholic church. How we look forward to the day when Christ will return and as his church we will behold perfectly what John beheld in Revelation 7:9-10: “After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

Aaron is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan. He is currently majoring in Secondary Education at Calvin College.

CHRISTIAN LIVING Dale Mansona

THE CHALLENGES FACING A (CHRISTIAN) YOUNG PERSON IN IRELAND

In this article I will be discussing the Limerick Reformed Fellowship (LRF), the struggles of the young person, and some of the differences between us and the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC).

Limerick Reformed Fellowship

Life out here is very different. We are a small congregation, a fellowship, not a church. Eventually, we hope to establish ourselves as a church.

A fellowship is a gathering of the saints to worship God. We are few, but we are increasing in number and growing in the faith. For the past eight years, God’s work can be seen, as he has called his people in Limerick and in Ireland, our family being one of them. Unfortunately, some have left us in that period for various reasons due to work or a romantic relationship.

Being a small congregation has its advantages. You know everybody, and if there’s a problem the whole congregation knows about it and is there to help. It is a safe haven for the young person, a place of rest and fellowship for the bruised and battered

saints. We are very thankful for our Fellowship, because in Ireland there are few churches that truly preach the word. The churches here are gradually falling away from the truth. God’s word is leaving Europe and heading to Asia.

The Struggles

Having only two teenagers (actually one because my brother is now in his 20s) in the congregation can be a bit lonely, for the following reasons:

First, there is no one to talk to who is around your age. This can cause a problem due to the feeling of isolation in the congregation. Having someone your age makes it easier for you to talk to them and relate to.

Second, having a young person in the congregation means that you can do fun things together. But can’t you do that with the adults or children? You can, but if they’re married and have kids, they will be too busy.

Third, one does not have a “true friend.” The lack of young people in the congregation makes it hard to

have someone who you can call a friend. Outside the Fellowship, you can make friends at school, university, or at work. But when you discuss your beliefs, there tends to be a friction in the relationship, especially if they are atheists. The more they know us and see how we lead our lives, the more they view us as weird and different. There is a gap between you and your friend which cannot be crossed. You may be friends for years or he may be your best friend. But is he a “true friend,” a person that believes in Jesus Christ who came to this world to save his people through his death on the cross? Is he one with whom you can discuss the word of God and praise the name of the Lord? The bond with the saints is that of a brother and sister in the faith. It is a unique and deep love towards one another. Not having a “true friend” can be lonely for a young person.

In addition, as a college student I face certain struggles and temptations. First, fellow students, lecturers, and professors use God’s name in vain. They use it to swear and curse as if it is a common name. Witnessing this happen eight hours a day for five days a week is agony. This makes me sick to my stomach, not just because they use it in vain, but because I have little to no power to stop them. But be of good cheer, by leading godly lives we can show them that God’s name is precious and sacred. Hopefully, this prompts them to ask why we lead such different lives from them. We can then explain to them what God has done for us and why we serve him. In doing so, we may put an end to their vain use of God’s name. If not, at least we make them conscious that we do not use his name lightly. Also, living in Ireland, one lives with the constant threat of alcohol. Ireland is known for its drunkenness. Drinking is a cultural thing, most prevalent in events such as Christmas, New Year’s Eve and St. Patrick’s Day. Almost everything revolves around alcohol. Drugs are also common and easy to acquire. Young people who do not use drugs are mocked. Provocation and ridicule wear down a young person tempting them to partake of the forbidden substance.

How do we differ?

In terms of church members, we pale in comparison, but the relationship we have is more intimate, like a family. We have fewer than 20 members, while most of the churches in the PRC have hundreds of members.

The PR young people have Christian schools, which are of great benefit. The children and teenagers are brought up in the faith, without much interference from the outside world. They are reared

up in the safety and comfort of Christian homes, churches, and schools. Here the children are home-schooled with the families helping and encouraging one another. Instead of a church building, we rent a building every Sunday. Also, the PR young people enjoy more social activities with other Christians throughout the week, such as sports, music, Young Calvinists meetings, and young people’s meetings. In Limerick, we only have one Bible study a week (for all members, both young and old), we have catechism, and sometimes lectures. These may be few, but they are a precious blessing to us.

The Irish universities offer a study abroad program. International students spend 3–4 months in Ireland as part of their course. So far we have had Americans and Singaporeans come over, which was refreshing, because we were able to meet people of different backgrounds and cultures. Not only that, but we get to hear how the churches and missionaries are doing from the other side of the world. We were always sad to see them go home again at the end of their short stay.

The PRC young people have the Young People’s Convention. Having been to one of them is both a relief and comfort to know that you are not alone. It is one of the best things a young person can go to. All sorts of activities are arranged. You meet people your age, make friends, and have fellowship with one another. If it is your first time going to one (as it was in 2015 for my brother and me), it will be shocking and awe-inspiring to see so many of God’s people. I urge you to go if you have the time and money. We have the British Reformed Fellowship (BRF) Conference, a meeting held every two years in the United Kingdom. It is an action-packed week, where there are fun activities arranged and great lectures. The BRF Conference brings people together from different countries. Through the lectures, we are sanctified, refreshed, and strengthened. The activities we share together deepen the bond we have toward one another.

The LRF is a growing fellowship and a refuge for the saints. It is a help for the Christian young person. The churches in North America may have more members, Christian schools, and social activities, but we also have the BRF Conference. We are thankful for what we have, although we are small in comparison to the PRC. We pray that God will increase us, and we ask for your prayers for us, as we pray for you.

Dale Mansona is a young person in the Limerick Reformed Fellowship in Limerick City, Ireland.

THE BLESSING OF ELDERLY SAINTS

Over the past year I have had the opportunity to work at Sunset Manor and Villages, and I cannot say enough of how great a blessing this job has been in my life. It's hard even to consider it a job anymore. Yes, I am paid by the company, but I have been given so much more than money. I am privileged to spend a part of every week with elderly saints, building relationships with them and learning from them as they near the end of their lives.

In all honesty, before starting my job at Sunset I was never one to walk up to an elderly person and start a conversation with them. If anything, I avoided them. I believed they were not in the right state of mind for a valuable conversation, so I thought it best not even to try. I believe this was a sin. I was not fellowshiping with the saints as I should have. I felt compelled to write an article about my experiences with the elderly saints in order to encourage you all to talk and build relationships with them as I have.

Many aged saints have been teachers decades before now, and yet they still teach valuable lessons as they near the gates of their heavenly homes. Without trying, they have taught me three very important things.

First, they have encouraged me in the growing of my patience. It isn't easy to be loving and patient when there are fifteen people all wanting different things at once. Frustration becomes apparent very quickly, and you often end up saying things and doing things in a manner you should not have. I am guilty of this. They have taught me patience in another way as well. Since starting a new position (Resident Aide), I have come to realize that nothing goes quickly with the residents. Everything is taken at a slow pace because of their frail bodies and minds. I tend to be more of a fast-paced individual because of my busy schedule, so it was challenging to adjust to the heavy neediness of the residents. Acts 20:35 is a great reminder: "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." We are not to support the weak in frustration and anger, but we are to support them in love and patience.

Second, I have been taught not to take the small,

everyday things that we do for granted. These include seemingly simple tasks such as standing up, getting dressed, going to the bathroom, showering, and eating that become wearisome, frustrating, and tedious to the elderly residents. Once strong, independent, and full of life, they depend on us completely to help them with tasks they crave to do on their own. I have been brought to tears several times while helping residents. And yet through all the pain and frustration the elderly saints endure. God is immensely faithful.

This brings me to the final lesson that I have learned: God's faithfulness and preservation. Isaiah 46:4: "And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." God does not abandon his people in their old age. He still carries them through each day as he has done for the entirety of their lives. This is a comfort for us as well. We can trust that God will never leave us or cause us to suffer a pain that is too great to bear. Despite the daily pain endured by the residents, love for God is very evident. I often walk into rooms where a resident is reading the Bible or listening to a sermon on tape, or when a resident with dementia who cannot walk breaks into a song about God's grace. One resident asks us to read her Bible and devotional to her every single night before she lays her head down to rest. It is in these moments that I tear up, seeing how faithful our God is in preserving his small remnant and giving us these elderly saints who share their wisdom and lessons through their daily walk as they near their final days.

So, young people, I encourage you to get to know the elderly saints. I even encourage you to work at a retirement home if possible. They have so much to offer us as we are entering a very vulnerable time in our lives; a time that they have already lived through. Job 12:12 speaks of this when it says, "With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding." They understand what we are going through and can give us their advice. The elderly are as much God's children as we are, and they need to be treated that way. They are so appreciative of any visitors who come to talk because it breaks up their lonely

days. It also makes them feel more connected to the church because many are physically unable to attend each Sunday. After visiting with them I guarantee you will see just how big of a blessing they are to us.

Isaiah 40:31: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Kendra is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed church in Jenison, Michigan. She is currently majoring in K-12 Spanish Education at Calvin College.

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L is for Leopard
A fearsome cat of prey;
But in God's new creation,
A child will lead his way.

"The wolf...shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid...and a little child shall lead them."

—Isaiah 11:6

Church News Melinda Bleyenbergh

BAPTISMS

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
Mark 10:14

The sacrament of holy baptism was administered to:
Samantha Beth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ryan & Joni Buitter—Doon, IA

Miriam Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Phil & Emily Miersma—Grace, MI

Devorah Ann Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Adam & Beth Fennema—Edgerton, MN

Wesley Paul, son of Mr. & Mrs. Andrew & Cori Peterson—Hudsonville, MI

Marcy Bethlin, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Keith & Holly Feenstra—Hudsonville, MI

Tate Alexander, son of Mr. & Mrs. Alex & Angela Postma—Hudsonville, MI

Nolan Dayne, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brian Brummel—Sioux Falls, SD

Theodore Charles, son of Mr. & Mrs. Charles & Monica Hoekstra—Southeast, MI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Matthew 10:32

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

Jalen Van Dyke—Georgetown, MI

MARRIAGES

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

Mr. Joel Peterson and Miss Davinia Lotterman—Hudsonville, MI

Mr. Brett Feenstra and Miss Laura Rau—Trinity, MI



SYNOD OF DORDT PART 3: PERSECUTION IN THE NETHERLANDS

In 1555 the Holy Roman Emperor was growing old and decided to split up his large kingdom. He gave the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands to Philip II of Spain. Philip II was an ardent Roman Catholic who believed he had to wipe out any opposition to that view of Christianity, including those who now believed in the teachings of the Reformation.

While the Holy Roman Emperor had given a lot of freedom to the Netherlands, Philip II tightened his control. He set up a Dutch Inquisition to find those who believed in the teachings of the Reformation and force them to convert back to Catholicism or have them killed.

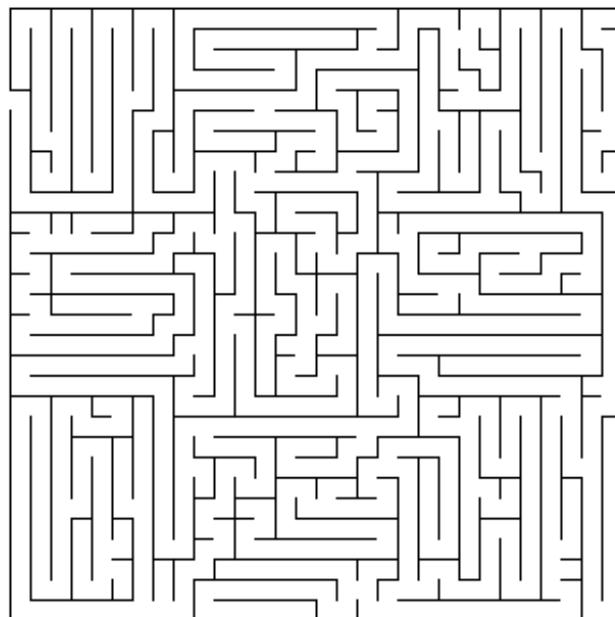
In the Netherlands the growing Reformation now struggled under the persecution by Philip II. People were imprisoned or killed for believing the truths of Scripture that had been brought to light by the Reformation.

In 1561 Guido de Brès wrote what we now call the Belgic Confession. He was a preacher in the Netherlands who would be imprisoned and killed for his faith. A year after he wrote the Belgic Confession, it was sent to Philip II with a plea from Reformed believers in the Netherlands asking for Philip II to grant them freedom to worship God as they believed the Bible taught. Philip II ignored their plea and continued the persecution.

While the Belgic Confession didn't convince Philip II to allow the Reformed believers in the Netherlands freedom to worship, the confession became one of the Three Forms of Unity.

Something to think about:

With your parents discuss the importance of the Belgic Confession. Why do we consider it one of the Three Forms of Unity today?



Tricia is a member of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church in Byron Center, Michigan.



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Registration for the 2018 Convention is now open!

“Guided by God”- Rev. Engelsma

“Delighting in God” - Rev. Griess

“Drawing Near to God”- Rev. Brummel

Themes for the speeches are taken from Psalm 73

The convention is **August 13-17** at Lake Geneva Christian Center in Alexandria, MN. To register, go to www.prcconvention.com, and follow the instructions under the **Register** tab. If you have any questions, email us at Registration@prcconvention.com.

Hope to see you there!