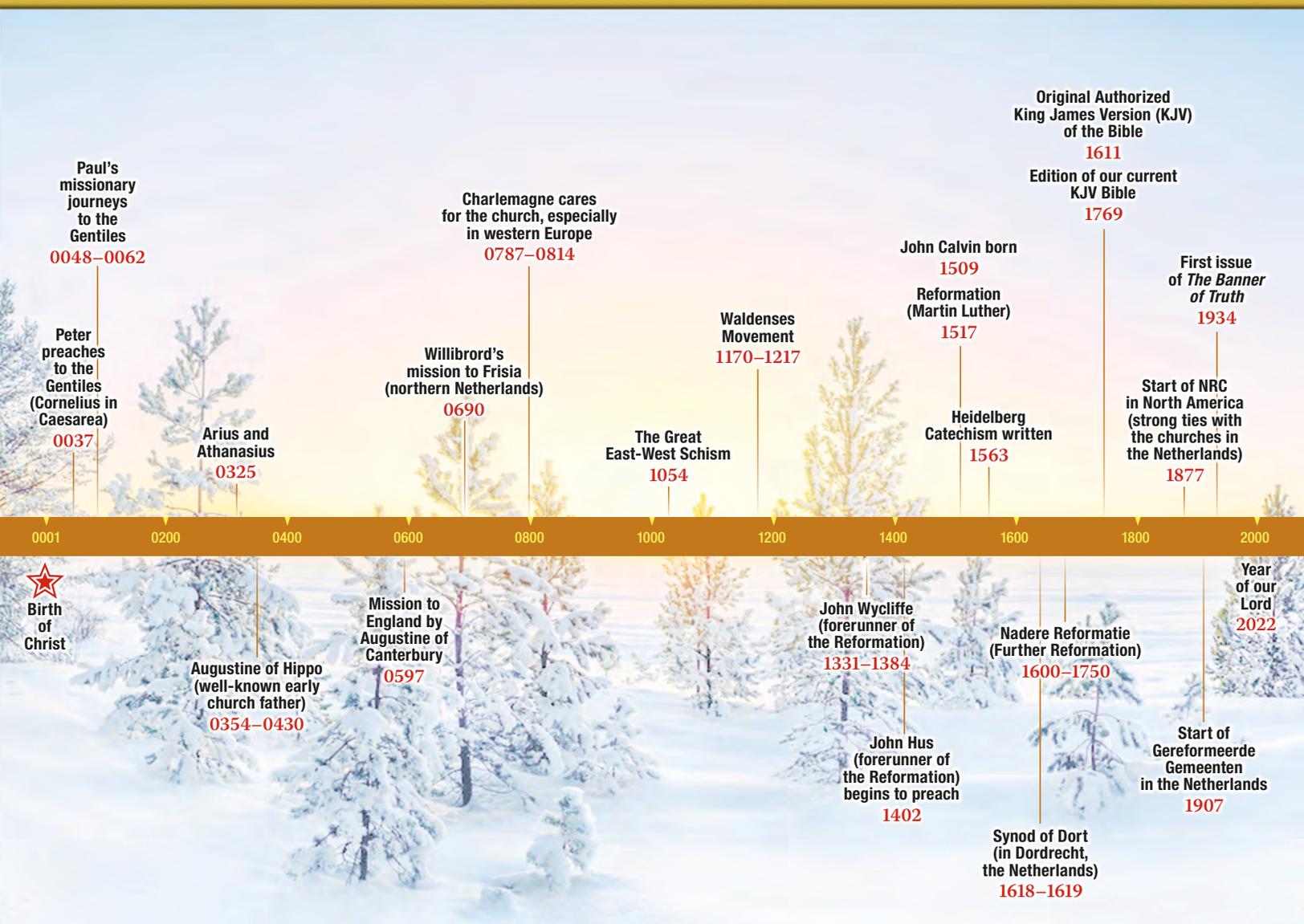


the Banner of Truth

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The Official Periodical
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Congregations of the
United States and Canada



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Cover: Partial timeline reflecting 2000 years of church history
(Some dates are approximate.)

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Meditation

At the Beginning of the New Year

Rev. H.F. Kohlbrugge (1803-1875)

(Taken from the *Amsterdamsch Zondagsblad*, January 6, 1889)

If we would ask what will happen in the new year, then we will receive our answer when we consider to whom the new year belongs. Virtually every calendar bears the inscription, “The year of our Lord Jesus Christ” (A.D.).

Also this year is the year of our Lord Jesus Christ, and if the year is His, then included are the time, the weeks, day by day, day and night, every hour, every minute. Everything is His; everything is in His hand no matter what develops—all circumstances, all that happens; He directs and ordains. It is He through whom the Father rules all things; He directs and shall direct all things for the welfare and the salvation of those that are His. It is for this reason that we may be content and comforted with His guidance and the assurance of the administration of His grace, faithfulness, provision, and our welfare under His just rule.

We may know very well what this year and the future will bring us if we have Psalm 32:1, Psalm 1:1, Isaiah 54:10, or Isaiah 3:10 in our heart. Are not all of God’s promises in Christ yea, and in Him Amen? May we therefore take courage to again enter a new year with resoluteness and with rest in our soul. The year is the Lord’s; therefore, in Him lies the constant strength to look upon Him in all that overcomes us.

We creatures can know nothing more surely of ourselves than that all is vanity, that we must die, and that all that is here below is of the earth earthy and has no continuance. One thing displaces another; generations come and generations go, and the strongest bonds here upon earth are broken. In the meantime, we may, through grace, be assured that the bond which unites us to the Lord and His salvation will never be broken, that Christ lives and will never die, and that the Word of God will remain to all eternity.

“Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine” (Isaiah 43:1b). “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness” (Isaiah 41:10). “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles” (Isaiah 40:31a). These words confirm themselves. With such words, enveloped in faith, thou shalt have the victory; and he who is the victor shall inherit all things. This is an eternal possession. They are eternal, durable riches which remain for us, in as much as we have a living hope which is placed before us as a prospect, and every enemy must acknowledge, “So Thou hast been the Victor, oh Galilean!” (Julian).

Do we consider whose year it is, whose the time; to whom we belong, those who await the Lord, and who extols

His government? What is His name? His name is our Lord, it is Jesus, it is Christ, it is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Eternal Father (Isaiah 9).

What a treasure of comfort lies in this name. Oh, the fountain of God has such an abundance of water, and He gives thirsty ones of this water freely. A landowner works to maintain his dearly purchased possessions. If he has enough strength, then he will maintain his possessions, and they certainly will not become the possession of the enemy. He shall protect that which is his from all violence so that it cannot be harmed. Jesus saves His people from their sins. Christ is the Anointed One and anoints His own. This saving and anointing is a poison for death, a pestilence for hell, and a punishment for the world. This Lord is my Lord. I am not my own but belong to Him with body and soul. He shall care for me, also in this year; He is the life of my life, the death of my death, and that is not only for me; He has many brethren, and therefore I also have many brethren. He cares for us all; He strengthens and perfects us.

Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday and today, and is the same to all eternity; He will always be the same, and since He will always remain the same, so will His Word and Truth. He is the eternal Father. Who can truly fathom what is contained in this name?

On this occasion we wish to place one meaning of this name in the forefront, one which is given us in the translation of the Septuagint which renders it in place of the eternal Father as “Father of the world to come.” What is the world to come? The Apostle Paul writes in Hebrews 2:5, “For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.” So then the world to come—the passage of time from the exaltation of Christ until this year and this day, and the days which must still come—all which will overcome us in this passage of time, time itself, and the people and the things which will come over us during this time, will occur and move as they have been ordained.

This world to come, including the days wherein we are living, is the time of His kingdom and of His rule; as the time is His, so is everything His which is present in this time state as well as what will happen. It all belongs to His kingdom, and He is a Father to all of these things, as Joseph said, “God hath made me a father to Pharaoh.”

If I count the days or the hours, they are His, also the hours of my life. He counts them as a Father. When I look to the heavens, they are His; He guides the sun, the moon, and the stars through their courses as a Father, and the testimony seen in the clouds is certain. When I look upon

the earth and all that lives upon the face of the earth—it is all His. We read in Psalm 8 of our Lord that He has “dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under His feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.” He rules over all of these things, and He watches over all as a Father. All of this is for the benefit of God’s house; this is all for me as one of His members whom He looks upon as His child; this is all for my fellow brethren who share the same faith. The time is for His house; He directs the great clockwork of His house as the sun, moon, and stars are there to serve. The earth with her fullness and the seas with her treasures which lay in the depths, all are for His house. His house is God’s house; we are the house. In God’s house it is the Son who cares for the house. He calls us His brethren and cares for us as an eldest Son. It is He whom the Father loves who cares for His brethren; He calls us His children, and therefore He is our Father.

What can possibly harm us in this year when we as children may tell Him everything, bring to Him all our concerns, and may ask Him for everything? He has removed from us that which is old, and He shall continually remove it. As He, to say it in such a manner, gives a new sun every day, a new moon every night, gives new stars, gives new flowers every year, new fruits, new oil, new wine, and every day grants new bread—in this way He is a Father eternally. Time and again He has something new for the old Adam, the old sin, the old death, the old needs—He sends renewal upon renewal, a new Spirit, a new life, new grace, a new revelation of His help, a new deliverance from all evil, new garments, a new heaven for here and for eternity. Herewith He is an eternal Father. Now there be no need to despair while under His care. The year is His, and eternity is His so that we may inherit eternal life. Let us look away from the year and cast our eye upon Him who guides the sun in its pathway and confirms the stars in their courses. ◻



Bible Study

The Life of Moses (2)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren” (Exodus 2:11).

It was God’s wise providence that brought Moses as a baby back to his own mother. The three years at home were a blessing and joy not only for the mother but also for Moses himself. Jochebed was not only a loving mother but also a praying mother. At a very young age already the seed was sown of which the fruit would be manifested in the life of Moses. He was a proper child, a child destined to be God’s servant and the deliverer of His people. At the end of those early years in his life, Moses returned to Pharaoh’s daughter. There at the court of the Egyptian Pharaoh, he received a high-class education. It was God’s preparation for his future task. He was educated in the following subjects:

1. Religion—so later he would know the dangers of heathen idolatry;
2. Astronomy—which may have been helpful in recognizing the way through the desert even in the darkness of the night, although the Lord would send an infallible Guide with him, a pillar of cloud and pillar of fire;

3. Medicine—which could be used to help the sick in the wilderness;
4. Law—used while he was judge over Israel;
5. Mathematics—used when the tabernacle had to be constructed according to the measures that the Lord gave.

We read of Moses in Acts 7:22, “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.” However, his heart was not in all the worldly wisdom of Egypt. What a blessing it is if our young people are not so impressed with what they hear in colleges and universities that they depart from what they have been taught in their homes, schools, and also in church. My young friends, ask the Lord for what Moses possessed already in his young years.

His choice

We read in verse 11 that when Moses was grown, he “went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens.” He saw the hard bondage in which his people lived and his heart went out to them. He made a choice that God had wrought in his heart. We read in Hebrews 11:24-26a, “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be

called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

- A. His refusal to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter meant he refused wealth, honor, power, and most likely a throne. Josephus says that Pharaoh had but one child, a daughter, and that she had no children. If this was so, then Moses would be a certain heir of the throne.
- B. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God implies he preferred hardship to comfort, shame and reproach to fame and honor, afflictions rather than pleasures.
- C. In this he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. The suffering affliction he esteemed to be of more worth than the wealth of the greatest and richest country on earth.
- D. The object that was set before him was "he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Moses did not look at the things that are seen, the pleasures of sin which are of a brief duration, but he saw what God would give to those who deny self, take up their cross, and follow Him through the wilderness.

One day he walked through the places where the Israelitish men were working as slaves. He heard the sound of whips on naked backs and the cries and mourning of the oppressed. They were his people. Then he looked in all directions, so as an act not made hastily in anger, but as a consequence of an upright choice, he slew an Egyptian who was smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. No one had been watching, and he hid the Egyptian in the sand.

Moses' choice seemed to be wrong but was good. His actions, however, seemed to be good but were wrong. When Moses looked in all directions, he did not do what he should have done—look UP and ask the Lord for guidance.

His error

We may believe that Moses had gradually obtained the conviction that the Lord would use him to deliver His people. However, he was too hasty. He was running before the Lord. God's time had not yet come to deliver Israel. Moses was impatient and acted in the energy of the flesh. Moses' eye was not on God but on man. The fear of man bringeth a snare. He had left the palace to observe, literally "to watch something with emotion," the oppression of his brethren, and it was out of love to them that he could not tolerate what the Egyptian did to one of his own people. Augustine, a church father, compared the act of Moses with that of Peter who wanted to defend the Lord Jesus with a sword.

We are so inclined to run ahead of the Lord. It is a blessing, indeed, if love motivates us to act when the Lord has laid a bond with His own people. In that regard we can say Moses was blessed. The choice of Ruth was also his:

"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Has that also become your choice and confession? When the Lord promises something, this promise is precious, but to wait on God's time is a lesson to be learned. Abram had the promise of a seed, and God's promises are often fulfilled in a way of utter impossibility. We know the history. He did not wait upon the Lord but tried to fulfill the promise himself with Hagar. Moses was not yet sent out to be the deliverer of His people. We read in James 3:2, "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Moses has to learn patience and wait upon God in a painful way.

The next day he went out and saw two men of Israel fighting together, and he reprimanded them. One of the two Israelites appeared to be wrong, but he did not accept Moses' question why he hit his fellow Israelite. His answer was like a cold shower, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" It was evident that Moses had been betrayed by his own fellow countrymen. Then he became afraid. Pharaoh heard it and sought to slay Moses. He fled from Pharaoh and came to the land of Midian which was situated southwest of Canaan.

His training

God would deliver His people at His time and in His way. His ways are higher than our ways. You see that in the life of David also. It was good that it was in his heart, but he was not permitted to build a house for the LORD. He was a man of war. Solomon, his son, would be used for this. Moses would indeed be the deliverer of His people, and when he was about forty years old (when he slew the Egyptian man), he thought he was ready—but he was not. Now for forty years he would receive additional training in the wilderness of Midian. Moses "dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well."

He may have wondered what direction he now would have to take. It was God's way to bring him into the house of Jethro. Jethro was called a priest of Midian and was a descendant of Abraham and Keturah. We read in verse 21, "And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter." What a change in Moses' life—from a palace, a place of government, the court of Pharaoh, and academic training, he now received a place with the sheep. He was reduced to an insignificant man in a lonely place. How did Moses feel? Moses revealed it when he became a father; he named his first son Gershom, which means "I am a stranger here." The second son was called Eliezar which means "my God is help." Yes, the Lord was with Moses though it was not pleasant for the flesh to dwell as a stranger in the wilderness. However, this wilderness became a place of necessary schooling where he learned three subjects:

1. Humility—He now wore rough shepherd's clothes instead of princely garments and was a forgotten man.

2. Patience—He must learn that if you beat sheep, it does not help; one needs patience. That is what he also would need for the leadership of Israel.
 3. Faith—This must have been tried. Have I been wrong? Did I imagine things? His best years were passing by, but it is God’s preparation for later.
- He also learned to know each place in the wilderness,

each valley, the oases. Eighty years are necessary to make Moses the man of God of Psalm 90. No, the Lord has not forgotten him. He remembers His oath, His covenant, also for a people who have so many riddles, and He will make it clear at His time. Then, for all His mysterious leadings, He will be praised. □

(To be continued)

From the Editor of *The Banner of Truth* 2021

Rev. J. den Hoed, Lynden, WA

The year 2021 has come to an end. Because of God’s sparing and protecting hand we may look back and look forward. How swiftly the year has passed into history. What have we done with the time allotted to us? Who are we today? As nations we cannot deny that we have experienced serious callings. It was the Lord who placed these callings upon us. Think only of the continuing Coronavirus concerns. What many calculated would be ended is still an ongoing calling sent by God. How have our congregations been affected by this? There are reasons to be humbly grateful but also deeply concerned.

What is the result of all this? Is there now a forsaking of sin? Is there a bowing and a humbling, a confessing that we have transgressed, causing us to cry, “O Lord, have mercy upon us”? In general, we must answer no to these questions. Must that not cause fear in our heart as we stand upon the threshold of leaving the old year behind and looking forward into the new year?

Why is it that we should feel deeply troubled? Let me share a personal concern with you. In our congregations we hear so little of the new birth. Where do we hear about a missing and seeking soul—about one who may give testimony that he can no longer find life in all the former ways, but now this is uppermost, “I need a God for my soul”?

How is it in the life of God’s people? How quiet it has become, for most mouths are closed. Where is the hungering and thirsting for Jesus? When do we hear that one of the Lord’s people may have come to the inward spiritual knowledge, “I have bought thee with the price of My blood”? Why is it that we miss so much of the work of the Spirit?

David said in Psalm 51:11, “And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.” There he acknowledged what lay in his heart, namely, the Holy Spirit. That was God’s gift in his life, but he had sinned it all away. He had to

acknowledge that God would be just and right if He would take away the Holy Spirit from him. Is that what we miss today? Are there ministers, elders, and people who have become guilty and who may stand in the breach, saying, “Lord, is it because of my sins that Thou must hold Thy hand so still”?

We also have reason to be grateful when we think how much of church life may have continued, and now for the most part we again can meet as usual. Many of us have had our regular church services disrupted during the year, but the doors of our churches have again opened Sunday after Sunday. The Lord gave a handful of seed in the preaching and reading of sermons, and individual families were visited to see whether the seed may have germinated in the hearts of the people. In all this, the Lord continued to say, “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2b).

There is reason to be grateful that there is an editorial staff who labored quietly, selflessly, and prayerfully so that *The Banner of Truth* might be received in our homes every month. We may be grateful that Christian education continues to be provided for our children. Oh, may this have been accompanied with many prayers seeking the Lord’s blessing upon it. Yes, for all these things it behooves us to acknowledge the Lord as the Giver of all these blessings.

In the new year may the Lord yet show favor unto us, so we may continue to live in a land with peaceful borders, where there remains freedom of worship. May the Lord graciously comfort those who are in loneliness and sorrow. May the Lord grant that the Curatorium is enabled to meet again. May He give men to become students in our theological school to become preachers of His Word among our congregations. Our prayer must be, “Lord, work yet among us the wonders of free and sovereign grace.”



From Our Inheritance

New Year's Day: A Grave Incitement

Rev. P. Blok (1920-2019)

(Taken from the December 1991 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

“Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer”

(1 Peter 4:7b).

Beginning a new year should cause us to direct our thoughts to the future. What will it have in store for us? We give and receive many good wishes, but only the future will teach us if they will be fulfilled.

Let us listen now to Peter's sincere incitement. Having a great deal of personal experiences of life and faith, he directs us to some very essential matters for us as we travel to eternity. The first is to be “sober.” Here he points to the evil of spiritual inebriety, although, of course, the physical abstinence of alcoholic beverages is included in this. Peter knew that people are so foolish that in their natural state they will indulge excessively and be unaware of their own and another's foolishness. How necessary to be made sober by the Holy Spirit's work! We stand in need of coming to ourselves like the prodigal son who, having been made sober by the swine's husks, experienced initially that he had forfeited everything. Everyone living on the terrain of God's church stands in need of this.

Consider for a moment the ten virgins of Matthew 25, five foolish and five wise. Even though they were traveling to eternity, all of them slumbered and slept. What a shock when they awoke and realized that some of them were unable to meet the bridegroom! Hear the foolish ones calling after they awoke, “Lord, Lord, open to us,” but... it was too late. What about the five wise ones? Oh, they were not sober either. There are many reasons why God's people can be found dozing. Think of David walking in the night on the roof of his palace, having lost his spiritual watchfulness, drugged as it were by sin. How necessary to be incited, “Be ye therefore sober...” Lot needed these words too when he surrendered to the devices of his own heart in Sodom by showing worldly conformity.

“Be ye therefore sober...” It is even worse when we, by our personal spiritual haughtiness or as a result of the worship of men, think ourselves to be someone special; this will reveal itself in a spiritual sham. If so, we need a double warning of “Be ye therefore sober.” When Peter wrote these words, he spoke out of personal experience. When overcome by spiritual pride he once said, “Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee.” How this changed when the Lord caused him to become sober in the room of Caiaphas!

May the Lord make and keep us sober and cause us to walk in the paths of His commandments with a watchful and prayerful life. “Be ye therefore sober...” For the coming

year this means to be watchful and to avoid an excess of food and forbidden beverages. How should this soberness be exercised? Hear what Peter says further, “and watch unto prayer.” To be on our guard? Yes, this has to be learned, too.

In Gethsemane the disciples had to learn that in their own strength they could not watch one hour with Christ. Therefore, we have to pray watchfully. When the enemy approaches, the sentries are doubly watchful having their weapons ready for use. Well, then, the enemy is “your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8b). Therefore, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation” (Matthew 26:41a). God's enemies were defeated also by a praying and watching Daniel. Prayer is one of the mightiest weapons the Lord has given His Church. Oh, how prayerless God's people learn themselves to be. May Zion's Intercessor put a royal assent upon His example of which we read, “And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly” (Luke 22:44). Being the ultimate and great Intercessor, He sits at His Father's right hand, where He ever lives to make intercession for His people.

In the beginning of a new year, it behooves us to consider what lies ahead of us. May the Lord make and keep us sober and cause us to walk in the paths of His commandments with a watchful and prayerful life. May He help us to walk after Him who said “Follow Me,” to follow in His footsteps in honor and dishonor, by evil and good report, in strife and in peace. “For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

Yes, let us pray, “Lord, teach us to be watchful; teach us to pray.” Our prayer will then be:

*By Thy good Spirit led
From trouble and distress,
My erring feet shall tread
The path of uprightness.
O Lord, for Thy name's sake
Revive my fainting heart;
My soul from trouble take,
For just and true Thou art.*

—Psalter 390:3 □

Only those who have learned well to be earnestly dissatisfied with themselves and to be confounded with shame at their wretchedness truly understand the Christian gospel.

—John Calvin

The Coming of Christ into the World

Rev. M. Heerschap (1911-1993)

(Taken from *God's Strength Made Perfect in Weakness—A Biography of Rev. M. Heerschap*)

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15).

(The following is an extract from the last Dutch sermon preached by Rev. Heerschap to the Lethbridge, Alberta, congregation on the Sunday before Christmas 1991.)

Beloved,

This week we hope to commemorate the fact that Jesus was born of the virgin-mother Mary. He was not created separately, but He assumed what we all have in common, namely, flesh and blood. Jesus came into the world, begotten of the Holy Ghost in Mary, as the true Seed of David, a rod out of the stem of Jesse, from the generation of Judah and from the root of Jesse.

Beloved, He was made like unto us, yet without sin. Thus, He is “over all, God blessed for ever.” As a child He was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Just consider this! He lay there as Surety and Mediator. May the apostle not say, then, that not the Father, not the Holy Ghost, but the second Person came into the world? Oh, wonder of all wonders!

Beloved, where is this declared? What does the Church find in Him? All of this, in which God’s people may delight now and in which they shall rejoice, lies declared in the good pleasure of God, the good pleasure of the Father. Why? Because God has loved with an everlasting love His Church, His people, those who are in Christ, the elect. For “the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.” That is why Jesus came into the world. Just consider this. He came for those who were given Him from before the foundation of the world. They were loved and elected by the Father before they fell and were born again.

The foundation of the Church of the Lord lies in the work of God, in the good pleasure of God, beloved. It lies in the one-sidedness and sovereignty of God’s eternal good pleasure, and that one-sided, sovereign good pleasure of God never conflicts with the justice of God. Why are the elect who were contained in God’s decree from eternity loved by Christ? They were also in the same fallen state of Adam as all other people, were they not? Well, beloved, since the sovereign good pleasure of God never conflicts with the justice of God, the Lord demanded a just satisfaction for His people. Payment had to be made, and where the virtues of God were insulted by sin, His arm hath gotten Him the victory. God revealed a way. God’s virtues shall be adorned, and God’s holy and righteous name will be glorified by the coming of Jesus into this world. “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Therefore, with His heart He became Surety for His people

from eternity in the establishment of the Covenant of Redemption. If you are privileged to know something of that, your heart lies declared in it and not in all that you experienced before. Then the delight of your heart concerns the eternal and sovereign work of God, in the good pleasure of the Lord.

Nowadays, a person must not talk too much about this. You had better not speak about election too often, and you may say nothing at all about predestination. Election and rejection are topics a person should not say too much about today. This past week I was at the specialist who also still goes to church. He asked me, “Can all people be saved?” He wanted me to tell him some things; you can understand that.

I said to him, “Certainly, you can be saved. There is super-abounding grace. There is much more grace than guilt and much more righteousness than unrighteousness, but, if we indeed shall be saved, that is something else.”

He asked, “And who will be saved?”

I said, “Those who are elected.”

He said, “How do you know that?”

Upon this question I answered, “Election is revealed in the fruit. I cannot say, he is elected. I cannot say to you, you are elected, regardless of how religious you are. I cannot say that. Those who are loved and elected by God are comprehended in the Covenant of Grace from eternity. They shall be converted to God in time, and that will be revealed in the fruit. Then one gives up everything of the world, and those shall be saved. It is for those that Jesus came into the world.”

For, beloved, how can there be faith and conversion in our life? Tell me that! How does one attain that faith? How does the Church attain faith and conversion? It cannot be outside of that good pleasure because God performs His good pleasure in faith and in conversion to the glory of His name and the preservation of His own, and that is why Christ came into the world.

This week we shall again commemorate this glorious fact on Christmas Day. Jesus was born of Mary and assumed our flesh and blood. That is how low He descended. He broke down the middle wall of partition between us and Him to save a poor sinner. If you would be privileged to experience that in this week, then the divine wonder of the eternal good pleasure would be declared in your life. You can understand, can you not, that if you receive that Child in your arms as Simeon did, then you would not take pleasure in all kinds of worldly things like a Christmas tree and gifts. Rather, you would rejoice in that Child. “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.”

This is why Jesus came into the world. □



From Overseas

The Wise Men from the East

Rev. A. Moerkerken, *Capelle a/d IJssel, the Netherlands*

(Translated from *Zin en Mening*, den Hertog Houten, the Netherlands 2010, ISBN 978 90 331 2343 6)

Three questions

The history of the wise men from the East has its own special place among the other testimonies of the birth of the Lord Jesus. It is touching each time to read the account of several unknown wise men (Magi) coming from an unknown country, who were willing to make a long journey to worship someone who, for them, was an unknown King's child. The exegesis of these verses from Matthew 2 has led, throughout the ages, to a trio of questions.

Who were they?

The first question: Who were these wise men from the East? We should think of astrologers, probably coming from ancient Persia or Babylon. In the Greek text they are called Magoi or Magi which reminds us of the wise men from the Book of Daniel who kept busy with the interpretation of dreams and astrology. There is an old legend, known since the days of Origen (third century), that gives their number as three, probably because of the three gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Since the sixth century there is another tradition which claims to relate their names: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. There are also some from the same era who claim that these wise men were kings. This has led to the Roman Catholic holiday of the "three kings."

It is clear that we see here the well-known phenomena that human curiosity has tried to fill in where Scripture is silent. Calvin has rightly, in well-understood words, settled the matter of these fantasies. That people on the basis of three gifts want to speak of three wise men, he calls an "error which we must call childish." That they would have been kings because Psalm 72 speaks of kings from Tarshish, Sheba, and Seba, Calvin calls this more than laughable. What imaginative magicians are these Roman Catholics, he mocks, who stand ready to change the entire world and to make of these wise men more than ordinary people. The places listed in Psalm 72 lie to the west and the south, while the wise men came from the east. Therefore, we must be very careful when answering the question as to who the wise men were. They were astrologers from Babylon or Persia; that can be said with some likelihood. As for the rest, we must keep our curiosity in check. There are some very different matters to which our attention is directed in this history.

The star

The second question, which is always asked when the wise men from the East are talked about, is this: What must we understand about the star which they have seen?

According to the history recorded in Matthew 2, they have seen the star two times. They have seen the star in the East before their coming to Jerusalem (verse 2) and again when they traveled from Jerusalem to Bethlehem where it stood over the place where the Babe was (verse 9). It appears that they did not see the star between these two sightings.

What must we understand about this star? Dr. F.W. Grosheide in his *Commentary upon the New Testament (Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament)* names three possibilities. We can read about them, somewhat shortened, in the *Christian Encyclopedia (Christelijke Encyclopedie)*. As a first possibility Grosheide mentions that God has placed a new star in the firmament with the birth of the Mediator. As a second possibility he mentions the shining of a comet, where the tail could have disappeared after coming to Bethlehem, the place where Jesus was. As a third possibility he refers to the potential of the conjunction or aligning of two planets along the same meridian, such as Jupiter and Saturn. Most of the Reformed commentators seem to choose the first possibility. They point to the writers of the marginal notes for the reason of their choice: "that it was not a normal star of heaven, but a special created light, like the pillar of fire which led the children of Israel through the desert." That is a striking thought. Isaac da Costa (a Dutch Reformed poet) describes it even further when, in his impassioned picturesque language, he expresses his opinion that this exceptional star was a "spark from the Shechina (literally from the presence of God), a spark from the uncreated glory of God which appeared and disappeared, and which came down low in the atmosphere to serve as a guide..." Calvin states that he does not consider this an important enough matter about which to strive. He thinks of it as an exceptional star which had some likeness to a comet. We will let this subject rest at this time.

What is more important in relation to this question is how the wise men from the East, the land between the rivers, also known as Mesopotamia (therefore not in the West where Palestine is situated), could by means of the appearing of the star be aware of the fact that the "King of the Jews" was about to be born. Did God, who elsewhere in Scripture so strictly forbids the use of astrology, use these means to reveal to heathen people the birth of His Son? Calvin considers it impossible that the practice of astrology, in and of itself, would have been sufficient to reveal unto them the birth of Christ. He is of the opinion that there was a separate, hidden revelation from the Holy Spirit which had come to pass to point the wise men to understand the meaning of the star. That seems to be a proper explanation.

It is well known that the Lord, according to His Word, has clearly forbidden the use of astrology, but the wise men did not know God's Word. Now God has used an exceptional vision from nature to incline their hearts to go. It is important that we realize that it was ultimately not the star but the prophetic Word which pointed them to Bethlehem! (verses 5&6). As far as the separate revelation of the Holy Spirit about which Calvin speaks, it is quite possible that the Babylonians had not forgotten the work and the writings of Daniel. Did not Daniel leave behind a deep impression upon the magicians of his day? Would it not be possible that some of the portions of the Old Testament were known by these very educated wise men? Have they perhaps known of the ancient words of Balaam, and the other heathen, "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24:17b)?

Ancillary figures

There is still a third question: Were the wise men children of God? To say it in other words, have they seen more in the newborn Child than just an important ruler? Was their coming to Bethlehem a fruit of the drawing love of God the Father, or just a leading by God's providence? There are also differing opinions regarding this question. The writers of the marginal notes did not leave any comments on this subject. Calvin did write about it. He wrote that the wise men did not come to bring godly honors to Christ which would be appropriate for the Son of God. According to his meaning, they have only come, according to Persian custom, to greet him as a venerable King. He does not exclude the possibility that they were seeking the favor of this "King of the Jews" in advance in case He would come to rule over them in the future. We have great respect for Calvin as a scriptural exegete, however in this instance we find his explanation lacking substance, even though subsequent

Reformed exegetes have shared his opinion. Others, however, have dealt more favorably with the wise men. They point to the fact that God the Father has provided for several "ancillary figures" by the manger, who were allowed to be the first beholders of Christ's glory. We all know them: the shepherds, the wise men, Simeon, and Anna. We have reason to believe that all these people did not come to the manger by means of God's providence, but by means of the drawing love of the Father they were led to the Mediator. There by Christ, by the newborn Child, was place for the rich of the earth (the wise men), the poor of the earth (the shepherds), for the true Israelites (Simeon, Anna), and the first Gentiles (the wise men). It is true of all of them, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John 6:44a). That is also how the wise men have come, drawn by the Father's love from out of the power of darkness unto His marvelous light. How humiliating was their coming for religious and pious Jerusalem and Bethlehem! In those places they knew the entire Old Testament with all of the Messianic promises, but hardly anyone had need of Him. They had heard the rich preaching of the shepherds who could not keep silent about what they had heard and seen, but no one believed their message. They lived close to the manger, but no one made the effort to go and look for it...

Here, then, come the wise men. They did not hear the preaching of the shepherds; they barely knew anything of the prophetic word of old. They saw only one star, and they had to endure a difficult journey of a number of weeks—but, they came. Why? Shall not the only just answer to this question be that God had, according to His eternal good pleasure, elected them to be the first of the Gentiles to be observers of the glory of the Word who had become flesh? That is why they came...that is why they found the Child with Mary, His mother, and falling down they worshipped Him. □

The Second Coming of Christ

J.C. Ryle (1816-1900)

The second coming of Christ shall be utterly unlike the first. He came the first time in weakness, a tender infant, born of a poor woman in the manger at Bethlehem, unnoticed, unhonored, and scarcely known. He shall come the second time in royal dignity, with the armies of heaven around Him, to be known, recognized, and feared, by all the tribes of the earth.

He came the first time to suffer—to bear our sins, to be reckoned a curse, to be despised, rejected, unjustly condemned, and slain. He shall come the second time to reign—to put down every enemy beneath His feet, to take the kingdoms of this world for His inheritance, to rule them with righteousness, to judge all men and to live forevermore.

How vast the difference! How mighty the contrast!



Reflections

Brought Home by the Angels (3)

Rev. C. Hogchem, Aalborg, the Netherlands

Those Excellent Noblemen

Rev. Wilhelmus Eversdijk (1653-1729) wrote an introduction for a book called *The Lord's Praises Proclaimed Out of the Mouths of Children in Twenty-Five Singular Examples. The ninth example speaks of a young boy nine years old, in England. He was a small, poor, dirty, and foul-smelling young boy who went his way begging from house to house. (A sample from the 9th printing of 1757 is reprinted below).*

It pleased the Lord “to awaken a great deal of sympathy and tenderness in the heart of a pious man toward this poor child so that he lovingly took him from the street since his parents were unknown.... Seeking God’s honor and the welfare of the undying soul of this miserable creature, he took this child to make him his own with the intention to bring him up for the Lord Jesus.”

The young lad, because of his association with other young beggars who lived on the streets, used extremely coarse and crude language. He cursed and swore, “and did all kinds of wickedness, and as concerning any knowledge of God, he was worse than a heathen.” Yet, the Lord blessed the instruction which he received out of God’s Word, and it did not take long ere there was seen “a remarkable change in the child...and he seemed to be a different creature.”

Free and rich grace

This change in his life was not just an outward change, for he went often into a secret place, weeping and sorrowing about his former sinful life. It is very touching to read how the Lord worked further in the heart of this child, especially when he was bedridden because of the black plague. Often, he wept and complained about his great sins and about his lost and miserable state. He continued to pray with many tears, “that Christ was willing to die for such a wicked person as he was; he found this one of the most difficult things in the world to believe.”

When it pleased the Lord to open his heart for the gospel with, among other words, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28), “then this poor boy was full of wonderment and praised God. He exalted greatly the free and

rich grace which had shown mercy unto him and forgave him his sins. He was so full of wonderment and praise about God that...the house was like a little heaven.”

A vision of angels

After this, the Lord made grace for the young boy so abundant that he prayed fervently that he might be washed in the blood of Jesus and that the King of kings would forgive him all of his sins and take up his soul into His kingdom. What he spoke was uttered with so much respect and fervor that those listening were filled with both dread and joy. He was very much encouraged also in all strife and fear. We will yet report the following, the Wednesday before he died, the child lay continuously for about a half hour as if he were unconscious, during which time he thought that he had seen a vision of angels. When he came out of this trance, he was somewhat upset and asked the woman who was with him why she did not let him go. “Go where?” she asked.

“Well,” he said, “with those excellent noblemen. They told me that they would come and get me, in spite of all of you, this coming Friday.” He often repeated the words. “This coming Friday those excellent noblemen will come to get me.”

The Thursday before he died all fear departed because of his great joy in Christ. He made a sort of jump in his bed because of the overflowing joy. From that time on he remained in the full joy and assurance of God’s love, expressly praising God with the desire to die and to be with Christ. On Friday morning he joyfully entered the rest with the appropriate words, “Into Thy rest, O Lord, I commend my spirit.” He died at the time of which he had spoken and where he awaited the angels who would come for him. He was just past the age of nine years when he died.

The young boy called the angels “excellent noblemen.” A striking, childlike, appropriate expression! Undoubtedly the angels which appeared to him when he was in a trance had come in heavenly majesty and luster. He does not only call them “noblemen” because of their clothing but also to point to their “excellence” as further evidence of their majesty. □

(To be continued)

The wounds of Christ were the greatest outlets of His glory that ever were. The divine glory shone more out of His wounds than out of all His life before.

—Robert Murray M’Cheyne



For Young and Old

No Other Gods (7)

C.M. Van Der Sluis

Not our child

Life again went its usual course in Zeedorp, and Elsie was a joy in the home of the Parlvliets, especially for Mrs. Parlvliet when her husband was away for many days with his lugger. One night when he was sitting home talking with his wife, suddenly, he said, "I never regretted that we adopted Elsie as our child, but I have been thinking; she is now twelve years old; shouldn't we tell her that she is not our own child?"

"Yes, really we should," said Mrs. Parlvliet, "but you must go about it very carefully."

The time came when Mr. Parlvliet said, "Tell me Elsie, how long do you think we've known you?"

Elsie began to laugh. "Naturally, from when I was born," she said.

"No, my good child, that is not so," said Mr. Parlvliet. "You are beginning to get older, and now you may know how and when you have come to live with us."

"Am I not your own child?" asked Elsie, deeply affected and disappointed.

"Elsie, we love you just as much as if you were our own child, but..." and then Mr. Parlvliet began to tell her what had happened.

Mrs. Parlvliet went to the old cabinet and returned with a package which she placed upon the table. She opened it and said, "These are the clothes which you were wearing when you came to us."

Elsie turned red from emotion and said, "Was there never anyone who inquired about me?"

Mr. Parlvliet said, "We have never heard anything."

"Then my parents surely were drowned in the sea, don't you think?" said Elsie.

"Undoubtedly, yes," said Mr. Parlvliet.

Elsie burst in tears and fell upon the necks of her foster parents. She kissed them and said, "Oh, you have always been so dear and good to me."

Thus, the bond of love became stronger. Because of family circumstances a change came into the lives of the Parlvliets. The parents of Mrs. Parlvliet had died, and their home was left to them as their possession. Seeing that Mr. Parlvliet was getting older, he decided to bid farewell to the sea and move to Graafstad. This was especially desirable to him because at this place there was a minister who still preached the Word of God in its purity.

Reunited

The family of Parlvliet soon felt at home in Graafstad. Some of the Lord's people lived there who visited each other and spoke about the Lord's dealings; thus, there was a unity with and among each other. They often came together at the home of Mr. Henstra, the baker, who was willing to do anything for God's people.

Farmer Beekman and his wife lived on the outskirts of Graafstad. They were people who had some religion but kept themselves far from the company of the true saints. Mrs. Beekman had a sister who visited her once a year, and she would usually remain with them over Sunday. Then together they went to church and returned homeward, but no one knew this sister who came to live with the Beekmans for a few days. Mrs. Beekman knew her well, and she always entertained her sister with much love and good will.

At a time when the sister of Mrs. Beekman again visited her and as they were walking home from church in the morning, her sister said to Mrs. Beekman, "Oh, I could listen with pleasure this morning."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Beekman, "we do have a good minister."

However, the conversation did not flow so smoothly because the one possessed what the other did not. "I would like so much to meet and speak to this minister," said her sister. "Could it be possible to go to him tonight after services?"

"You can do as you please, but I am not going," said Mrs. Beekman, "We never go there otherwise, so now I don't intend to go. Besides, I have heard that the pastor often goes to Mr. Henstra, the baker, after the services and more people go there. They call that a social gathering."

The heart of her sister began to have a desire to meet those people and a secret sigh ascended, "O Lord, might it be according to Thy good pleasure?"

Mrs. Beekman noticed that her sister's desire was to go, and she would not hinder her because during her life so many disappointments had come upon her already, so she said, "Well, do you know what we will do? Tonight, we will go to Baker Henstra." They knew not what would be revealed there. □

(To be continued)

Christ is not only the Saviour but the salvation itself. —*Matthew Henry*



Questions & Answers

Sons of God and Daughters of Men

Rev. B. Labee, Veenendaal, the Netherlands

(Translated from *De Saambinder*)

Who are meant by “The sons of God in Genesis 6 who saw the daughters of men”?

Earthly eyes

This question has been asked for as long as mankind has been reading the Bible. The answers to this question are quite divergent. We read in Genesis 6, “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose” (Genesis 6:1&2).

Modern commentaries speak of the sons of God as supernatural beings—not human beings. A person would then think of the fallen angels who would have married with human beings. It is frequently also connected with verse 4 where it says that “There were giants in the earth... and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”

Although there will always remain some questions, we would like to keep ourselves to the classic interpretation. In short, “the sons of God” are the descendants of Seth, and the “daughters of man” the descendants of Cain. The marginal notes (2a) say it as follows, “That is the descendants of the believing forefathers and those who confessed the true religion, and who with their families (as representing God’s Church) had separated themselves from the unbelieving and fleshly descendants of the Canaanites. In direct opposition it must be understood of the daughters of men that they were the descendants of Cain, who committed idolatry, and lived according to the flesh.” The Bible with commentary makes the same analogy and also strikingly comments that “the external beauty had become more desirable for the descendants of Seth than the internal beauty of the fear of the LORD.” Neither God’s plan nor His required separation from the world was determinative for their life’s choices; instead, it was their lusts and desires. The “sons of God” began to live according to what their earthly eyes saw. It is the introduction to the terrible history of the flood. At the same time, it is also the complete breakthrough and triumph of the sin of Paradise, namely, choosing our own way and self-determination of what is good in our own eyes.

Calvin (1509-1564) in his Bible Commentary is very clear about this. He posits that it was a shameful unthankfulness that the descendants of Seth joined themselves to the Canaanites and other sinful people, by which they

robbed themselves of the priceless grace of God. It was also an unbearable sacrilege that they changed and destroyed the boundaries which God had established. When first looking at this, it seems childish to judge so severely that the sons of God chose to themselves wives of the fair daughters of men. One must realize, however, that this was no small matter to disobey the prescribed boundaries that God had set. In addition, the separation of those who served God from the sinful world has been a holy command which had to be obeyed so that there would exist a Church of God upon the earth.

Spiritual eyes

We have given a far-reaching answer to this question because the key elements of this concern are also so valid in our days. In Matthew Henry’s Commentary of the Bible, we read the following about this history. “Those who confess their religion should, for their marriage as well as those of their children, make it a matter of conscience to remain within the bounds of their confession. The wicked will much sooner take along with them the believers than that the believers will reform the wicked. Those who confess to be the children of God must not enter into marriage without His approval, an approval which they do not have if they unite themselves with His enemies.”

May the Lord give “spiritual eyes” that we would not go in the paths of sin of which we read in Genesis 6. It is only when a life’s partner bows unconditionally under God’s Word that the way to a marriage is opened. We also read of that in the Holy Scriptures, for example, Rahab and Ruth who received a place among the people of Israel. Let us listen to Calvin one more time. “It is therefore an inherent desirability to allow ourselves to be so attracted to the beauty, that we bypass the most important aspect.” Also in 2022, which is like “the days of Noah,” may the Lord, by means of making alive by grace, give “spiritual eyes” so that we will not fall into this evil. □

(Note: Due to a heavy work schedule with the holidays, Rev. Hofman was unable to provide an article this month. He hopes to resume next month, D.V.)

Please send your questions to Rev. H. Hofman, 112 Pratt Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49001, or hofman@premieronline.net.



Current Events

Feminist Leader Warns Her Party on Abolishing Biological Sex

Lifelong Democrat, president of the Women's Human Rights Campaign's U.S. chapter, warns her party to stop trying to abolish biological sex or lose votes. She says Democrats are hurting themselves by pushing the "gender identity agenda." She said, "My party has been pushing this gender identity agenda in law and throughout the society, and it's terrible for women and girls. Every single person is either female or male, there's nothing wrong with saying that... How many women and girls have to be hurt before our society... and our lawmakers and laws acknowledge that? The movement to promote the idea that men can be women is fundamentally anti-feminist, it is anti-woman, and it is very politically regressive." She also said she often gets contacted by rank-and-file Democrats who are furious with their party for promoting issues involving gender identity and sexual orientation. "Some of them say they'll never vote Democrat again; some of them say they have unregistered with the Democratic Party and registered as independents."

—FoxNews.com

Build Back Better Funds Not Available for Religious Childcare

The Build Back Better Act has passed in the U.S. House of Representatives and is being considered in the U.S. Senate. This bill won't just fundamentally alter the scope and size of American government. It will also further the progressive campaign against religion. Buried in the fine print of a bill, largely framed as support for families, is a discriminatory provision that sidelines religiously affiliated childcare providers that millions of families strongly prefer—undermining religious liberty. A big chunk of funds is reserved for states to distribute grants that "improve the quality and supply of childcare services" through remodeling, repairs and renovations. But childcare providers that are religious in nature are explicitly prohibited from spending a cent on facilities that "are used primarily for sectarian instruction or religious worship." At first glance, why shouldn't the federal government refrain from supporting churches that also happen to offer childcare? Yet that misses the whole point of why parents choose to send their kids to these providers. The promise of faith formation in a strong moral environment isn't a secondary consideration—it's the primary motivation for millions of parents. The Supreme Court has long protected religious liberty in situations like this, yet Biden and Congress don't seem to care.

—NewsWeek.com

New Stricter Conversion Therapy Law

A new beefed-up bill banning conversion therapy outright has been introduced in Canada. The previous bill only banned conversion therapy for children and non-consenting adults. The bill to ban conversion therapy compares the practice to "torture." The legislation, if passed, would make practices designed to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity illegal, and make it illegal to take children outside Canada to undergo such interventions. After studying new evidence of the effect of conversion therapy and hearing from people who have experienced it, ministers decided to strengthen the bill. The justice minister offered to critics that the bill would not ban conversations about gender expression or gender identity. It has been said that the bill would not lead to bans on conversations about sexual orientation or preaching in church. Yet, the government said police would be able to gather private communications, such as emails, to help prove that conversion therapy had happened.

—CoastMountainNews.com

Pakistan Holds Blasphemy Trials Without Evidence

A young Christian man in Pakistan has been imprisoned and is facing trial regarding a false allegation of blasphemy. He was a minor at the time of his arrest but could still face a potential death sentence for something that, even according to the prosecution's own version of the facts, is not a crime. A European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) legal team has been working to defend him in court. In July 2017, this young man worked at a local hospital as a janitor, where a Muslim co-worker started a religious conversation asking him questions about the Christian Prophets. The young man responded that he did not know much about religion but would ask his father, and that his father has a friend named Ali who has made derogatory remarks against the Prophet Muhammad. Instead of looking for this man Ali, this young man was handed over to the police. Even though the police investigation did not find any blasphemy, the prosecution still brought charges. The case went to trial but the prosecution could not present much evidence. Still, after over four years in prison, this young man lost all hope. He thinks he will be convicted. There is deep concern regarding the blasphemy laws in Pakistan and the injustice being done. Trial courts are known for leaving final decisions to the High Court and the Supreme Court. This practice leads to innocent individuals being imprisoned for many years.

—ACLU.org

Investigation in Southern India Found No Forced Conversions

According to a news source in India, an investigation into claims of forced conversions in India's Karnataka state have found no instances thereof. Members of the government have claimed that forced conversions to Christianity are rampant in the state and an anti-conversion law must be enacted. But after 40 families had been investigated it was said, "The families told us that nobody forced them, and they are happy and have a peace of mind since they converted to Christianity." Hindu nationalists often used false claims of mass illegal conversions to minority faiths to justify the passage of laws that limit religious freedom. Most of these false narratives target India's Christian and Muslim communities, instigating street level violence against churches and mosques. Karnataka is an India state that has not yet enacted an anti-conversion law, but many radical Hindu nationalists on the ground are acting as if the law already exists, with a documented increase in attacks on Christians. In states where anti-conversion laws have been enacted radical nationalists abuse the laws and falsely accuse Christians of forcefully converting individuals to Christianity to justify harassment and assault. Local police often overlook violence perpetrated against Christians due to the false accusations of forced conversion.

—Persecution.org

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

—William Cowper



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (25) **Article XXVII: Of the Catholic Christian Church**

Rev. A.M. den Boer (1929-2004)

Our confession now explains the doctrine of the church. Article 27 speaks about the essence of the church; article 28 stresses that everyone is bound to join the church; article 29 gives the marks of the true Church; and articles 30 through 32 deal with the government of the church. Following these are articles about the sacraments and the latter events.

The doctrine of the church is the last part of the confession. The more purely the former articles are explained, the better we will understand the doctrine of the church. We should keep in mind that it is not the church which decides about the Truth and about religion, but it is the Truth which decides about the church. That which is to be understood regarding the church is at once explained in our article, for it gives the definition of the essence of the church as follows: "We believe and profess, one catholic or universal Church, which is a holy congregation of true Christian believers."

There are many who claim that they are the church of Christ, but I am afraid that it is totally different from what is here defined. If we see the condition of the church in our days, then Jeremiah's frame befits us when he cried out, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" We frequently hear and can read in the newspapers about born-again Christians. They live in worldly activities and dishonor God's name; they are on radio and television, take part in sports on Sunday, etc. This is not of the Lord, but is a deceit of the devil to try to convince us that also in this way one can be saved.

Many call themselves Christians, but they even miss the knowledge of the Truth. The name of Christ is used more than ever before in our countries, but I fear that more and more we are becoming heathen countries where there is no room for the Lord and His service. Sin is lived out more brutally than

before. Is it then lost, completely lost, for the church? No, against the destroying work of sin and Satan there stands the work of grace which builds up and binds together. By grace, we are not only restored in communion with God but also become members of the body of Christ, which is the true Church as our present article informs us.

We find the word *church* in the Bible in many places. In Greek it is *ecclesia* which means that which is called. When we use the word church, we so often think of the building, but that is not the meaning. It is the people which are chosen from eternity, bought by the blood of Christ, and called at God's time by Word and Spirit. In Isaiah 48:12 is written, "Hearken unto Me, O Jacob and Israel, My called." Thus the "Church" is called with a holy calling, after God's own pleasure and grace, and is also designated the body and the bride of Christ.

The Church has many other names in the Bible, but there is none so significant as "The Body of Christ." If we are not incorporated in Christ, then we do not belong to the Church. It all means, however, that if we are incorporated in Christ and the Lord has begun the good work, then, regardless how small and insignificant we are in our own eyes and how often it is contested whether it is of the Lord, we are also partakers of His grace and merits. By the name Body of Christ, we learn that all the members are organically bound to Christ who is the Head of the Church. No matter how far God's children are separated in time and place, together they form the body of Christ as 1 Corinthians 12:13 teaches, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

The Church is also called the Bride of Christ. In former days a bride was bought for a price, and it may also be truly said of the Church that she is bought for a price; they are the ransomed of the Lord. It would make this article too extensive if all the names were explained in detail, but it is a great

comfort for the Church when something of this may be explained to us for our own heart in the opening of the Word.

In this article we read, “We believe and profess, one catholic or universal Church, which is an holy congregation of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by His blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Ghost.” It is not written here that we believe in one catholic church. That would be the doctrine of Rome, who say that they only can give salvation and that outside of the church of Rome there is no salvation. They believe that faith in the church is of the same importance as is faith in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. God’s children believe in God, but not in a church which claims that salvation is only within their walls.

This is, of course, not written to give us freedom to go to any church. No, we are responsible to join a church where the Truth is brought before us. It is often said that the Lord will not ask us from what church we have come when we die, but this is done to cover up the fact that one belongs to a church where the truth is not taught. Herein we are fully responsible before the Lord! God’s children profess and believe one catholic or universal Church built of lively stones, which means that reprobates do not belong to this Church, and before their conversion the elect were also outsiders. Is it not a terrible thought to be all the days of our life in the church, but not of the Church? May it drive us out to the

Lord, asking of Him that which we need in this respect, and crying for mercy.

Sometimes we hear of the *visible* and *invisible* Church. These expressions we find first in the writings of Luther in the year 1521; Zwingli used the same words in 1523, and they are also found in Calvin’s *Institutes*. It has become a familiar expression in the church, but is often misinterpreted. It does not mean that there are two churches because we know that there is but one Church. “My dove, My undefiled is but one.” The Church is invisible in their hidden spiritual life with God, but they are visible in their meetings, confession, and administration of the sacraments. By baptism and confession their children come into an external relationship to the church, but without regeneration they are not living members.

When the Church is spoken about, it is very well possible that you will say that it is a difficult subject. Yes, I know it is not the easiest topic to write about; although, if we have some knowledge of the truth, it will then not be too hard. If I should ask, “Are you converted?” it is probably a clear language for you; by our upbringing we know what it means. But, when we know this, then we also know whether we are a member of the Church whereof this article speaks or whether we are strangers of it. When we miss grace, we miss everything. I hope there may come a time in your life that you will realize, under the administration of the Holy Ghost, what it means to not belong to the Body of Christ. Going to church, but not of the Church, will then become unbearable!



Bible Stories for Little Ones

The Gibeonites’ Trick

(Based on Joshua 9)

Canaanites from many, many cities heard about the strangers, the children of Israel, who were coming through the land. They heard how the Israelites had destroyed all the people in their way. They heard how the Israelites’ God had helped them, and all the people in those cities were afraid.

Some of them decided to get together into one big army and go to fight the Israelites that way. “Maybe we will win the battle if we all help each other,” they decided, but one group of people called the Gibeonites did not want to join the others. They knew the Israelites’ God was very powerful. They were

sure the Israelites would destroy them no matter what they tried. What should they do? Then they had an idea.

One day the people of Israel saw some strangers coming into their camp. Such dirty, dusty, poor people they were. Their hair was scraggly, dirty sweat lay on them, and their shoes were falling apart. “Who were these people?” the Israelites wondered.

“We are from far, far away,” the men told Joshua. “We would like to make a covenant with you.”

The Israelites thought about this for a minute. “How do we know you really are from far away?”

they asked. “You might live right around here. If you are, we can’t make any covenants with you.”

“We would like to be your servants,” the strangers replied.

Joshua said, “Who are ye? and from whence come ye?”

“Oh, we are from a far, far country,” said the strangers. “We heard about your God, and how He is so powerful and how He did so much for you in Egypt.” The strangers continued speaking to Joshua and the men of Israel.

Then they opened up their sacks. “Look, see this bread? When we put it in this bag, it was freshly baked, warm and soft. Now look how hard, old, and moldy it is, and look at these bottles of wine. When we left home, they were brand new, but now they are ripping. Also, see how worn our shoes are now. You can tell we have walked a long, long way.”

The men of Israel looked, and everything was just as the strangers had said. The bread was indeed moldy, the bottles were broken, and the shoes were falling apart. These strangers certainly must have come a long way. The Israelites knew that God had told them to destroy the people of Canaan, but if these people were from far away, then, certainly, they could keep peace with them and hire them as servants.

Wasn’t that a wise thing to do? Perhaps we would have done the same thing. However, the Israelites forgot one thing, and we should never forget to do this either. The Bible tells us that the men “asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.”

Do you know what this means? This means that they made their own decision; they made the promise

not to kill these strangers without praying to God or asking His blessing. We must always ask for God’s approval before we do anything. When there are difficult decisions to be made, should we not ask His blessing before making them?

Then what happened? Three days later the Israelites found out that these people were not really strangers, and they were not from far away after all. They had just made their belongings look old and dirty. These people were really people of Canaan, people who were supposed to be destroyed. These people were the Gibeonites.

Now, of course, the Israelites could not kill them because they had promised they wouldn’t. Joshua was very angry to hear of the lies the Gibeonites had told them. “Why did you trick us?” he asked them. “Because you did that, you are now cursed. From now on, you are going to be our slaves. You will have to cut wood and draw water for the house of God, and you will have to do that for the rest of your lives.”

The Gibeonites were very humble and bowed under their punishment. “We were afraid of you because we heard of your God,” they said. “Do with us whatever you want. We will be your slaves forever.”

From that time on the Gibeonites were indeed slaves of the Israelites. The Israelites always remembered their promise not to destroy them. In our next story, we will hear how the Gibeonites cried to the Israelites for help against some enemies and how God used a special miracle to save the Gibeonites and gave Israel more of Canaan.



Bible Quiz

Compassion

Dear Boys and Girls,

“Look how high I am!” Annie called, waving at her little brother from her perch in the tree. Crack! Without warning, the limb on which Annie sat came tumbling down, taking Annie with it. Ouch!

Jeffrey came running. Bending over his sister, he asked worriedly, “Are you okay?” His brow furrowed in concern, and his small chubby hand began to rub

Annie’s back. “Annie, you okay? Are you hurt?” He saw a tear begin to slide down Annie’s cheek, and instantly, he wrapped his arms around her shoulders. “Here, I’ll help you. Want me to get Mommy? Does it hurt?”

A little wobbly smile began to emerge through Annie’s tears. Her little brother was talking to her in the same crooning voice he used when he was

holding the new, blind, helpless kittens or saw a daddy-long-legs with a missing leg or two. “Poor Mr. Daddy,” he would murmur, “can you still walk?” Jeffrey had a very tender little heart. When someone else cried, tears filled his own big blue eyes, and his lip would tremble as though his heart would burst with compassion.

Compassion. The dictionary describes compassion as sympathy, pity, and concern for the suffering of others. We should not only be concerned with our own problems and cares. Others can also be suffering. They can suffer from many problems—feeling lonely or misunderstood, being sick or having loved ones who are sick, struggling with thoughts and feelings, being poor, hungry, or losing a loved one, and so much more.

The Lord Jesus, when on earth, taught the people about compassion. He told the parable of the Samaritan who stopped to help the hurt man who had been robbed. He told the parable of the man who had compassion and forgave the debt of his servant. After He healed Legion by sending the devils into the swine, He told him to go home to his friends and share with them the compassion that had just been shown to him.

However, Jesus did not only *speak* about compassion. No, He Himself showed this compassion most perfectly. Our compassion is still always polluted by sin, but His compassion was pure. When lepers came to Him or when the crowds sought for Him, He had compassion and did not think of Himself but of them. When other people tried to hush Bartimaeus, He stopped for him, instead, and asked him what he needed. How kind the Lord Jesus was!

There was a very distressed father who came to Him one day. His son had been sick for a long time, and he did not know what to do anymore. Sometimes his son would fall down and roll himself into the fire and be hurt. The poor boy was tormented by a dumb spirit which caused him to gnash his teeth, foam at the mouth, and fall down in a faint. The father came to Jesus with a hope in his heart. He had nothing to offer to the Lord and there was nothing he could do to help his boy himself, but could not the Lord Jesus perhaps help him, because He was so compassionate? The father pleaded upon this. “And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if Thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.”

There is nothing in sinners which they can bring to the Lord. It would be just if the Lord showed only His wrath and justice to sinners. Yet, the Bible tells us that God the Son is touched with our trials and troubles. He understands the afflictions of people because He once lived on this earth and was subject

to them Himself. He knows what it is to be sad, lonely, not understood, mocked, and all other consequences of sin, except sin itself. He felt sad Himself when He saw the sadness of Mary and Martha, so sad that He wept. He knew what sickness and death was, and when He saw how sad the widow walking behind the bier was, He raised her son to life. He was hungry, tired, and troubled just like others. Meanwhile, He showed His true pity and concern for others.

The Lord Jesus is spoken of as a High Priest who is touched by the infirmities of people on this earth. He is no longer on this earth. We can read how great this High Priest is when we read of where, who, and what He is. Where is He? He has passed on into the heavens. Who is He? His name is Saviour. What is He? Eternal and perfect. This High Priest is so *great*, yet, although He is so high and far above us, He is kind and tenderly concerned with the troubles of people on earth. He sees each creature: “The life of each creature the Lord makes His care.” Do you ever think about those words when you sing them?

We cannot explain or fathom this compassion—we cannot say there is anything in anyone that deserves or brings about this compassion. No, it is quite the opposite. By our lives, we so often show that we do not need Him. We do not realize how often the Lord spares, guides, and protects us, and we often do not ask for it either. Perhaps we shrug off that compassionate hand and want to go our own way. We certainly do not deserve His care.

We often read how the Lord had compassion on the people after His anger was turned away, or after He had brought the people to repentance. Often the Bible says that He was slow to anger and had compassion. However, it does NOT say that He never becomes angry. He is *not only* love and compassion. No, the Lord is just. He cannot step over sin. He hates sin, yet such sinners full of sin may bring their troubles to Him. They may bring all their needs, but, above all, they may bring their spiritual cares to Him. When they no longer understand what the troubles are in their soul, He knows.

By nature, our hearts do not have any cares. We think only about the cares of this life. Our hearts are not bothered or troubled. This you may also bring to Him. Ask the Lord often to break your hard and stony heart. Ask Him to open your eyes to see that your soul is lost and needs to be saved, shall it be well.

“It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not... But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.”

(Lamentations 3)

Fill in the blank. Take the first letter of each answer to form a word.

1. "And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou _____" (Mark 1).

2. "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of _____ infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4).

3. "I have compassion on the _____, because they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat" (Mark 8).

4. "And Jesus, when He came out, saw much _____, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things" (Mark 6).

5. "And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if Thou canst do _____, have compassion on us, and help us" (Mark 9).

6. "But a certain _____, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him" (Luke 10).

7. "The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; _____ to anger, and of great mercy" (Psalm 145).

8. "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our _____; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7).

9. "And when she had _____ it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children" (Exodus 2).

10. "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have _____, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3).

11. What do the first letters of your answers spell?

Take the words from the box to fill in the blanks.

anger	weep	eyes	infirmity
gracious	captivity	fellowservant	
mercy	light	goods	destroy
friends	pitiful	works	

12. "Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy _____, even as I had pity on thee?" (Matthew 18)

13. "So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their _____: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him." (Matthew 20)

14. "Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy _____, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." (Mark 5)

15. "And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, _____ not." (Luke 7)

16. "For He saith to Moses, I will have _____ on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." (Romans 9)

17. "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with _____." (Hebrews 5)

18. "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your _____, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." (Hebrews 10)

19. "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be _____, be courteous. (1 Peter 3)

20. "That then the LORD thy God will turn thy _____, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee." (Deuteronomy 30)

21. "And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not _____ them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet." (2 Kings 13)

22. "But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned He His _____ away, and did not stir up all His wrath." (Psalm 78)

23. "But Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and _____, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." (Psalm 86)

24. "He hath made His wonderful _____ to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion." (Psalm 111)

25. "Unto the upright there ariseth _____ in the darkness: He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous." (Psalm 112)

For the Older Children

26. How did the father react to the prodigal son (Luke 15) when he came home? Copy down the text which speaks of compassion in this parable. _____

27. In Matthew 9:36, Jesus was moved with compassion, comparing the multitudes to _____. When He saw the multitudes (see Matthew 14:14), He also _____ their sick.

For the Younger Children

28. What did the Lord Jesus say when He saw the hungry multitude? (Matthew 15:32) _____

Go to the next page. Follow the instructions for each drawing.

* * * * *

Answers to December's "Famines" quiz:

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| 1. Judges | Ruth 1:1 |
| 2A. Dung | 2 Kings 6:25 |
| 2D. David | 2 Samuel 21:1 |
| 3. Bread | 2 Kings 25:3 |
| 4. Seven | 2 Kings 8:1 |
| 5. Samaria | 1 Kings 18:2 |
| 6. Mighty | Luke 15:14 |
| 7. Abraham | Genesis 26:1 |
| 8. Egypt | Genesis 41:56 |
9. The Lord controls famines and death and will only let it go as far as He wants it to—He will provide for His people even while they are in a time of famine.
10. Joseph measured out a portion for the Egyptians to keep them alive during famine, and so, the Lord provides enough for His people even in times when they feel a missing, thirsting, dryness, and mourning in their souls.
11. The Lord is able to and does spare them from temporal death, but if not, He will spare them from eternal death.

- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| 12. Sword | Romans 8:35 |
| 13. Strong | Revelations 18:8 |
| 14. Bread | Psalms 105:16 |
| 15. Signs | Luke 21:11 |

Answers to previous quizzes were received in October from:

Britni Blom 26
Marissa Blom 25
Kyle Bouman (4) 11
Stephanie Bouman (6) 15
Jaxon DeKorne 2
Juliette DeKorne 2
Weston Ekema (2) 17
Jack Kamp 3
Jada Kelderman 2
Jacob Kooyman 3
Cody Maassen 8
Kari Mans 11
Lydia Mol 21
Madeline Mol 14
Olivia Mol 18
Teddy Mol 21
John Murphy 21
Blake Pannekoek 9
Lauren Pannekoek 20
Andrew Remijn 20
Lauren Remijn 16
Mindy Rozeboom 24
Trina Rozeboom 5
Alex Rus (7) 21
Jessa Rus (6) 23
Kaela Rus (6) 9
Lakia Rus (4) 11
Aaliyah Timmer 19
Drake Timmer 21
Hunter Timmer 21
Kadin Timmer 21
Laurencia Timmer 14

Sierra Timmer 19
Wyatt Timmer 20
Andrew Van Brugge 5
Anna Van Brugge 9
Melinda Van Ginkel 1
Samantha Van Grouw 1
Lydia Van Manen 28
Rosalee Van Manen 25
Blake Van Veldhuizen 8
Kason Van Velthuisen 8
Trent Van Velthuisen 7
Alivia Vande Hoef 29
Micah Vande Hoef 24
Aubrey Vanden Berg 7
Heidi Vandenberg 22
Kristen Vandenberg 9
Helen Verhoef 13
Shara Verhoef 14
AaneKors Versteeg (2) 6
Tena Versteeg (2) 6
Heidi Ymker 24
Paxton Ymker 16
Quentin Ymker 14
Whitney Ymker 2
No Name 2

9 Bibles were sent to Bolivia this month. The total is now 474—thank you, boys and girls!

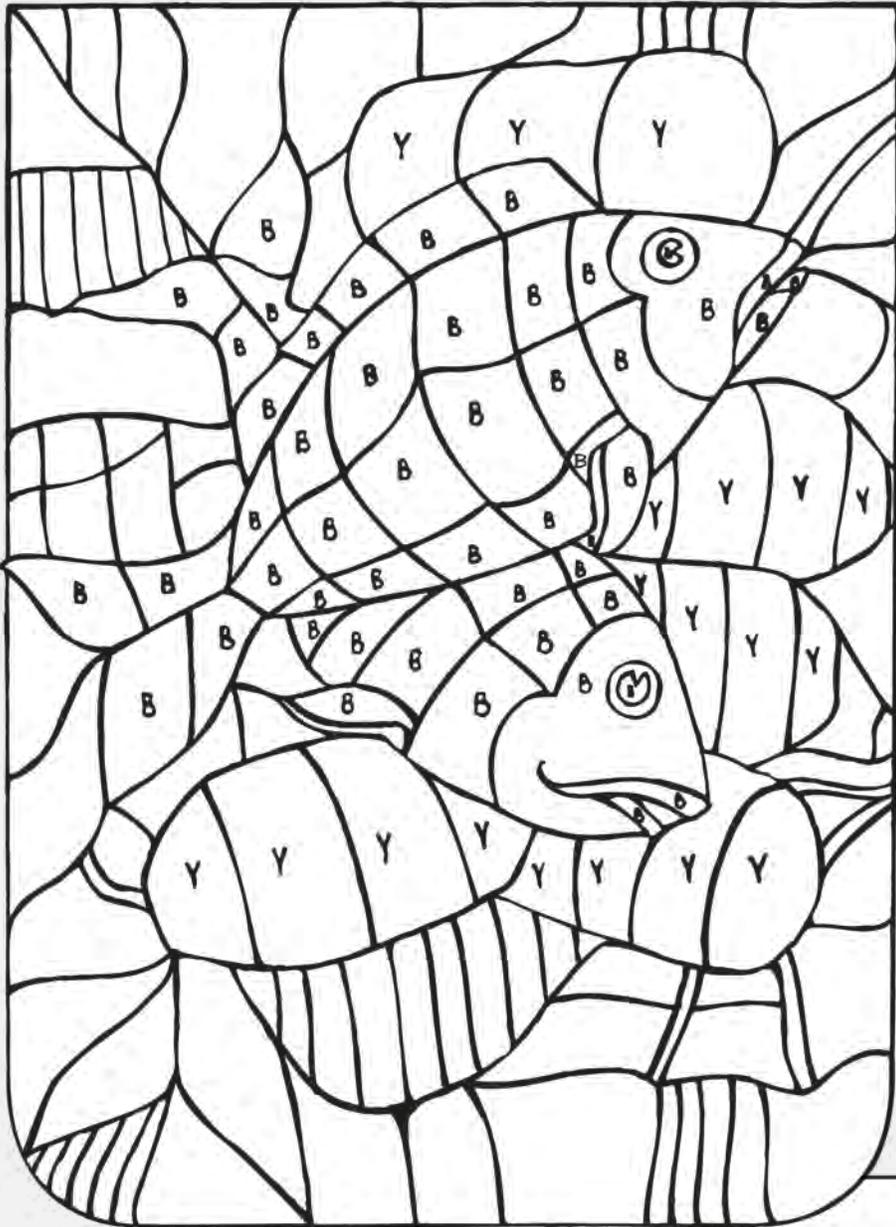
Please send your answers to the address shown below:

Aunt LenaBeth
180 Jacobs Road, Newfoundland, NJ 07435
E-mail: auntlenabeth@gmail.com



Letters to My Young Readers





In John 6:1-15, read the story of the miracle Jesus performed in feeding the five thousand. Then color the illustration at the left with the Y spaces in yellow and the B spaces in brown. You may color the unmarked areas with your favorite colors.

Connect the numbers to complete the picture below. When finished, you may color this illustration.



News & Announcements

Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. C. Sonneveld of Alblaserdam, the Netherlands, by the congregations of Covell Ave., Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Sioux Center, Iowa.

To Rev. J.J. Witvoet of Rock Valley, Iowa, by the congregations of Corsica, South Dakota, and Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

Declined:

By Rev. J.J. Witvoet of Rock Valley, Iowa, to the congregation of Corsica, South Dakota.

Obituaries

DEN HOED, Marie – Age 88, November 20, 2021; Grandview, Washington; Husband – Andrew (deceased); Children – Archie & Mari, Bill & Jill, Jane & John Van Wingerden, Barbara & Tim Kwekel, Andy & Robin, Andrea & Christopher Westerbeek; 25 grandchildren, 26 great-grandchildren; Brother – Janus Kranendonk; In-laws – Rev. John & Johanna, Jane Bestebreur, Art & Alma, Mae & Wilbur Timmermans, Joe & Ann, Helen, Lydia & Arie De Vos, Wilma; predeceased by 10 siblings, 3 brothers-in-law, 1 sister-in-law, and granddaughter Andee Jo. (Rev. J. den Hoed, 2 Corinthians 5:1-2.)

VAN HEEK, Hendrikus, Age 89, October 5, 2021; Chilliwack, British Columbia; Wife – Henriette (nee Luehof); Children – Irene, Ed, Len, Yvonne, John, Gary, Mark; 8 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren; 2 brothers, 4 sisters, 3 sisters-in-law in the Netherlands; predeceased by son Ron. (Rev. P. Van Ruiten-burg, Revelation 20:11.)

Manager of Eventide Home

Eventide Home of the Netherlands Reformed Congregation of Lethbridge, Alberta, hopes to open its doors in the fall of 2022, D.V. We are looking to hire a manager to help with the setup and day-to-day operations of Eventide Home.

The manager will report to the Board of Eventide Home to ensure the provision of high-quality and safe resident care. Duties of the manager include but are not limited to the following: coordinating the overall program for the home, scheduling staff, identifying and attempting to resolve resident, family, and staff concerns. The manager is also responsible for efficient use of fiscal, human, and material resources and providing leadership to staff. The manager will have a positive attitude, demonstrating skills in leadership, working independently, interpersonal relationships,

and team building while reflecting on God's Word and the shared traditions and doctrinal beliefs of the NRC.

Education/Training:

- RN (preferred)—current RN Registration
- LPN—current LPN Registration

Certifications:

- CPR-HCP
- First Aid
- Criminal Record Check

Desirable Experience:

- Working with the elderly, preferably in a LTC or assisted living facility for a minimum of one year
- Working independently and in an organized manner
- Working as part of a multidisciplinary team

For more information or to submit a resumé, contact Chris Heikoop, Chair of Operations Committee, at chrish@eventidehome.ca or 403-332-3097.

Employment Opportunities at Sunset Manor, Chilliwack, BC ADMINISTRATOR

The Sunset Manor Board is seeking applicants (male or female) for the position of **Care Home Administrator**. The administrator is responsible for the day-to-day operations of Sunset Manor including staff, residents, and operations. This candidate must exercise the ability to lead a multi-disciplinary team to ensure consistent quality and care. Health care experience is an asset (but not a requirement). This position is full-time, but we are flexible depending on the applicant.

If you are interested in more information and would like to join the Sunset Manor team, we welcome you to contact either Neil Stam at 604-316-4182, email castam71@outlook.com or Jake Klaassen at 604-819-3949, email jklaassen@jakesconstruction.ca

RN / LPN / CARE AIDE

Being part of a team that cares for our family of seniors can be very rewarding. The Sunset Manor Board is seeking applications from keen, warm-hearted individuals to join our excellent team for the following positions:

Nursing: All LPNs and RNs who hold a valid practicing licence/registration are encouraged to apply. Your professional expertise, knowledge, and insight will be a welcome addition.

Care Aides: If you always wanted to be a nurse but the doors were not opened, this may be the perfect opportunity for you.

We encourage you not to be intimidated by the training; it is doable, and we will support you in your learning. Younger persons interested in making this their career are also welcome. Training and education can be provided, or applicants may wish to consider a college-level Health Care Aide training course. We need your help to fill our regular full-time and part-time positions to support consistency and quality of care as well as to provide a predictable schedule for our employees. Your applications are most welcome.

For more information and to apply, please contact either Dr. Neil Hilliard at 604-703-9371, email neilh@sunsetmanor.ca or Jake Klaassen at 604-819-3949, email jklaassen@jakesconstruction.ca.

65th Wedding Anniversary

On January 3, 2022,

Rev. & Mrs. John den Hoed

commemorated their
65th wedding anniversary.

It is the desire of their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to commend them to God's throne of grace with the prayer of David, *"Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men."*

May the Lord uphold them in the evening of their lives, and may they be given to testify, *"The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."*

972 Hemlock Loop, Lynden, WA 98264

The Banner of Truth in Audio Format

Monthly copies of the articles which appear in *The Banner of Truth* are available on MP3s and CDs for those who have reading difficulties such as poor vision. These MP3 files are produced by a committee in Norwich, Ontario, with the support of the Norwich consistory, and they make the MP3 files available to the consistories of the end user. Consistories then distribute the MP3s and CDs which are provided at no cost to the end user.

You may contact Mrs. Tillie Lamain at 616-242-0291 or blamain@netscape.net to arrange for a free subscription or discontinue receiving *The Banner of Truth* on CD.

Education

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, continues to invite applications from teachers of any grade or subject specialty to fill anticipated vacancies beginning January 2022, DV. We would be thankful to hear from versatile and dedicated applicants to enable continued provision of Christian education to our children and young people. All applicants must be members of the NRC or a closely-related denomination, and must be eligible for Alberta certification. For more information about any position at CCS, please contact the principal, Mr. Marc Slingerland at 403-381-3030 or marc.slingerland@ccschool.ca. Should the Lord incline your heart to apply, please submit a cover letter, resumé or c.v., and references to office@ccschool.ca.

EBENEZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN, is in urgent need of a teacher for the 2021-2022 school year. We have a very small, multigrade classroom school. Certification is not required for this position although it would be helpful. Currently, the school board acts as principal with further oversight by the consistory. May this position and our need be bound upon someone's heart to come over and help us. Any questions regarding this position and all interested applicants, please contact Randal Teunissen at 920-828-0225 or e-mail, rdeunissen@yahoo.com.

LYNDEN NRC, WASHINGTON—The Lynden congregation is seeking a teacher to come and help us with our small, multi-grade school. Applicants must be a member of the NRC. The ability to become a Washington State certified elementary teacher is preferred. For more information on this position as well as our newly formed school, please contact the committee president, Jeremy Neels, at 360-988-1884 / jeremyneels@gmail.com or the clerk, Jerry DeBruin, at 360-224-0901.

MOUNT CHEAM CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, anticipates an URGENT NEED for the next school year with multiple openings for teachers both in elementary and secondary. Applicants must hold or be eligible for BC certification, and subscribe to the faith identity of the MCCS Society and the Reformed Congregations in North America, which is based on the KJV and the Three Forms of Unity. Wages vary depending upon experience and post-secondary education. Inquiries should be addressed to the principal, Mr. Jan Neels, at jneels@mccs.ca. Please send your application, along with supporting documentation, to Mr. Jan Neels and to the board secretary, Mr. Eric Van Maren, at ericv@vanmarengroup.com, or mail it to 48988 Yale Road East, Chilliwack, British Columbia V4Z 0B2.

PLYMOUTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, a K-12 NRC school, is accepting applications for teaching positions, including Pre-K, for the 2022-2023 school year. Interested applicants should contact the principal, Mr. Nathan Bleeker, by emailing nbleeker@plymouthchristian.us or by calling 616-454-9481 to request an application or to ask questions about the potential positions.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, POMPTON PLAINS, NEW JERSEY.

TEACHERS NEEDED

We have openings in both elementary and junior high grades for the 2021-22 school year. Qualified applicants require a teaching degree and an earnest interest in teaching in a Christian school and are a member in good standing of one of Netherlands Reformed congregations or a denomination with similar teachings.

ADMINISTRATOR NEEDED

The school administrator will strive to direct the school according to the Word of God, the Three Forms of Unity, the Constitution of the Netherlands Reformed Christian School, the policies of the NRC School Board, and the regulations of the New Jersey Department of Education. The primary duty of the administrator is to maintain productive relations with the school board, students, faculty and staff, parents and community.

For more information or to apply, please contact Tim Mol (education chairman) at 973-204-5677 or email timjmol@yahoo.com, or John Van Der Brink (administrator) at 973-628-7400 email nrns_office@nrnsnj.org.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is looking to fill openings for the 2022-2023 school year. We anticipate needs in special education and other ages/subjects. Full or part time inquiries are encouraged. We are also seeking a music teacher to begin at any time. The focus of this position would be instrumental (grades 5-12 band/orchestra) along with other opportunities in K-12 music. Please contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at 712-476-2821 or danbreuer@nrnsia.org for further information. Visit www.nrnsia.org to learn more about our school. Log in to the main site by registering as a new user and wait for approval.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, is welcoming applications for both elementary and secondary teaching positions for the 2022-23 school year. One particular area of need is a French teacher at the elementary, and potentially high-school, grade levels. We continue to invite inquiries about our locally developed teaching training program for those who hold a bachelor's degree. Please visit our website at www.rcsnorwich.com for more detailed

information about available positions, or contact the interim director, Mr. Andy Stubbe, at director@rcsnorwich.com or 519-863-2403, ext. 223. Submit cover letters and resumes to hr@rcsnorwich.com.

TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, is looking for teachers who are excited about teaching and have a particular love for the hearts of young people. We have an urgent need for primary teachers but would also consider/encourage secondary and intermediate grade-level applicants. If you are such a teacher, please apply to join our team. Applicants need to be certifiable to teach in British Columbia. For certification requirements and more information regarding the above positions and/or an application form, please do not hesitate to contact either the principal, Mr. Doug Stam, at 604-794-7114 or dstam@timothychristian.ca, or the school board president, Mr. Wim Neels, at 604-858-8834 or wimneels@timothychristian.ca.

TRINITY REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SUNNYSIDE, WASHINGTON, welcomes applications for a teacher/administrator for our small school. We are an approved school for grades K-8 but currently have students in the lower grades. We have a four-day school week to allow for adequate preparation and administrative time for our multi-grade classroom. To apply or request more information, please contact the school board president, Mr. Arthur den Hoed, at 509-786-2354 or email artdenhoed@gmail.com, or Maaïke Van Wingerden at 509-840-0437 or email trinityrcs@embarqmail.com.

To All Candidates for Teacher Positions

Please visit advertising.nrcea.education for an up-to-date listing of job openings in NRCEA schools as well as links to the school websites for more information about the positions and the schools. When accessing the job bank on the NRCEA SharePoint, please use the following:

User Name:

advertising@nrcea.education

Password: **Schooljobs!**

Anniversary and other announcements will be placed upon request. A donation for their placement would be appreciated. For consistency, size is limited. Please send your request to the managing editor, James Okken, whose address is shown inside the front cover. Requests for placement should be made **by the first of the month prior to the month of publication.**

A Puritan's Prayer at Year's End

O Love beyond compare,
Thou art good when Thou givest,
 when Thou takest away,
 when the sun shines upon me,
 when night gathers over me.
Thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world,
 and in love didst redeem my soul;
Thou dost love me still,
 in spite of my hard heart, ingratitude, distrust.
Thy goodness has been with me during another year,
 leading me through a twisting wilderness,
 in retreat helping me to advance,
 when beaten back making sure headway.
Thy goodness will be with me in the year ahead;
I hoist sail and draw up anchor,
 with Thee as the blessed pilot of my future as of my past.
I bless Thee that Thou hast veiled my eyes to the waters ahead.
If Thou hast appointed storms of tribulation,
 Thou wilt be with me in them;
If I have to pass through tempests of persecution and temptation,
 I shall not drown;
If I am to die,
 I shall see Thy face the sooner;
If a painful end is to be my lot,
 grant me grace that my faith fail not;
If I am to be cast aside from the service I love,
 I can make no stipulation;
Only glorify Thyself in me whether in comfort or trial,
 as a chosen vessel meet always for Thy use. Amen.

—Taken from *The Valley of Vision*