

the **Banner** *of Truth*

February 2024
Volume 90, No. 2

The Official Periodical
of the Netherlands Reformed
Congregations of the
United States and Canada

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Cover: 2014 Eruption, Holuhrauan, Iceland | © Lurie Belegurschi
(Similar eruptions currently occurring in 2023 & 2024, Reykjanes peninsula, Iceland)

THE BANNER OF TRUTH

Publication Number: (USPS 041-540)

Monthly Official Publication of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations of the United States and Canada. Typeset (Architype Graphic Solutions) at Pompton Plains, NJ; printed and distributed (AlphaGraphics) at Midland Park, NJ.

Annual Subscription Rate: \$50.00 in the U.S., \$60.00 in Canada and foreign countries—payable in U.S. funds. U.S. subscribers: Make checks payable to *The Banner of Truth*. Canadian subscribers: If not drawn on a U.S. bank, make checks payable to *NRC of Canada*.

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Copy for *The Banner of Truth* is due the 1st of the month prior to month of publication. All copy (including announcements, obituaries, anniversary notices, and ads) should be sent to James Okken. All announcements submitted must be typed and are subject to editorial policy. Subscription communications should be addressed to the subscription manager. Change of address should be forwarded to the subscription manager one month in advance of moving date. Please provide both new and old address.

Archived copies of *The Banner of Truth* (1934 to present) are available at Digibron.nl.

PERIODICAL: Postage paid at Mahwah, NJ

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

The Banner of Truth

11 Split Rock Road, Boonton Township, NJ 07005

Additional Denominational Sources for Printed Matter

Other denominational periodicals include: *Paul* (mission periodical), 39 Mill St. E., Otterville, Ontario, Canada, N0J 1R0; *Insight Into* (for young people), Rev. P. Van Ruitenburgh, Secretary, 8920-3 Broadway Street, Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada V2P 5W1; NRCEA School Journal *Learning and Living*, Calvin Christian School, Box 26, Coalhurst, Alberta, Canada T0L 0V0.

For a list of denominationally printed Reformed literature write to: Netherlands Reformed Book and Publishing Committee, Mr. Tom Fluit, 0-121 Leonard St. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49534, or e-mail nrcbnp@gmail.com. For a list of Reformed material which embraces additional publishing companies, write to our discount book distributor: Bible Truth Books, P.O. Box 1290, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

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Meditation

Commencement of Passion

Rev. H. de Leeuw, Brant County, ON

“...And when I see the blood, I will pass over you...”
(Exodus 12:13b).

The time of Passion is commencing. The Passion is the suffering and death of Christ. Since Genesis 3 this world has become the place of suffering, but in the Passion the center place of suffering is directed to Christ—He suffered—the just for the unjust. He placed Himself under the inflexible justice of His Father. The place was taken willingly, and the place was fulfilled completely. Dear reader, you and I need part and lot in it.

The text words reveal someone looking, “And when I see.” The one who is looking is God Himself. He is the God of Israel. The eyes of the Lord are not to be understood literally but figuratively. The Lord is looking for satisfaction. He is looking for His honor. He is looking for the token of blood. This token was instituted by God Himself and was explained by Moses to Israel to be the only way of deliverance out of Egypt. He is looking for the blood of substantiation, the blood of the Passover Lamb.

This God is still looking. He is looking at our life. He is looking for His image. Dear reader, He has a right to it. He created you and me in His image. That image consists of knowledge, holiness, and righteousness. The image of God is not just a minor thing; it is something which reveals our relationship to the Lord. In our Fall this image was broken, and that clearly shows our relationship with Him is broken. We need deliverance; we need satisfaction for our guilt.

Israel is in bondage. Their fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have passed away already. Joseph’s bones are still with them but not his presence and favor. The new pharaoh has placed them under deadly rules and regulations. Truly, for them it is beyond anything they expected or hoped for, and with it all...God looking! How can they ever serve God in this land with these limitations to their liberty, let alone being led out of Egypt into the promised land. Everything is cut off and impossible for their deliverance and satisfaction.

The Lord is looking for blood. That blood had much meaning. The Lord instructed Moses to tell the people the only way of escape. The angel of death is coming, and it will make no distinction. All of Egypt and all of Israel lay under the condemnation of death, but the blood will be

the deliverance. It is not the blood of Israel or of Egypt; it is the blood of an innocent young lamb without blemish—the passover lamb. This lamb has been in the homes of the Jews for some days. Oh, the attachment they have received to him, but the knife had to be brought. Father had to slay the lamb. The blood had to flow for deliverance. “When I see the blood, I will pass over.”

Dear reader, image bearer of the most high God, you need this, too. God is looking. God is looking for the blood of His Son. Passion is a deeper leading in the life of grace. Many people begin by saying something of the cross, but clearly it begins somewhere else. It begins by God looking! Oh, that uncovering by the Holy Spirit that God requires perfect restoration to His image. Everything from man will fail the required satisfaction. He reveals to His people a way. They begin to love Him who is, for them, the Way. Christ is that Way, and He came to associate with His people. How precious it is to have received saving interactions with the

gift of the Father. How precious it is when faith may receive to see Him and to embrace Him, but God is looking for the perfect satisfaction. The text is clear; only when the blood is there will He pass over.

The Father’s inflexible justice is revealed as a sword in Zechariah 13. This sword is the instrument for opening the passageway for the source of liberty. The sword must strike.

The young children and young people in Israel have seen their father take the lamb and slay the lamb. Oh, no doubt some of those children have pulled on their dad’s arm and pleaded for the life of that lamb, but then the words were heard, “When I see the blood, then I will pass over.” Passion is a further leading for which God’s people need to receive a lesson of the inflexible justice of God. The justice of God will be adored by God’s people on Golgotha. Christ on the cross has no value if the justice of God is not known.

Dear reader, the satisfaction of God’s justice lies behind the sword of His justice that has to slay. His sword of justice has penetrated the perfect sin offering for satisfaction. In this history the knife was laid down and the blood was caught in a bowl. The blood was the life of the lamb. Oh, the blood! That blood applied is liberty. That blood is satisfaction. That blood is the foundation for God to pass over.

The Lord instructed Moses to tell the people the only way of escape. The angel of death is coming, and it will make no distinction. All of Egypt and all of Israel lay under the condemnation of death, but the blood will be the deliverance. It is not the blood of Israel or of Egypt; it is the blood of an innocent young lamb without blemish—the passover lamb.

Dear reader, that blood is from Christ. With that blood I read, “I will pass over.” Notice the passiveness in this great fact. It is a matter between the Father and the Son. Church of God, in those two Persons lies your solution. In the stillness of eternity, the Father was looking and the Son was willing. Between the Father and the Son lies “I will pass over.” The Holy Spirit will give the application of what was solved. It is the Spirit who will lead His people into the liberty because of the blood.

Dear reader, God is looking, but I also say this; God is speaking, “when I see the blood, I will pass over.” His image needs perfect restoration; only in God lies the solution. He hears His prisoners in Egypt. He hears their groaning under sin. Keep groaning, prisoner; the text has partakers because He was moved. Keep begging, beggar, for your deliverance. The text reveals that beggars are delivered for Christ’s sake. Not a hoof is left behind! □



Bible Study

The Names of the Mediator (2)

Rev. C. Neele (1962-2022) & Rev. A. Schot, Nunspeet, the Netherlands
(Translated from the 2010 issues of *De Saambinder*)

Angel

“*The Angel of His presence...*” (Isaiah 63:9b).

Isaiah, in the 63rd chapter, speaks of Christ’s victory over all enemies. He may speak richly of it because in the ninth verse we read, “*In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them.*” The marginal notes indicate that “He was distressed or grieved because of the miseries which they endured in Egypt.” Thus, Christ is persecuted in His holy members, but it also means in the deepest sense that in all their distress there was no distress; Christ was there, and then all is well. Have you been able to experience that, too?

Here Isaiah comes to the expression “*the Angel of His presence.*” By this he means the Son of God, the Saviour. The word *Angel* means *Messenger*. This Messenger stands in the presence of the Lord. Christ carries out God’s commands for the benefit of His children.

It is so clear from the name Angel that the Mediator is sent by God. It is a miracle if this may be experienced in this desert life. Then this Angel is so precious: “Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared” (Exodus 23:20). He is sent by God the Father to help miserable and guilty sinners in their distress. Those sinners can never bring themselves back to God. Now God sends His Messenger to them. Thus, He wants to take care of their salvation.

The Prophet Malachi calls Christ the “*Messenger of the covenant*” (Malachi 3:1b). This is the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace between God and His Church. It is He who brings all the goods of the covenant to His people as a Messenger. They cannot appropriate the benefits of the Covenant of Grace themselves. That is what these poor people find out. They have no hands to take. They have no

feet to go to the God of the Covenant of Grace, but what a miracle—the Mediator is the Angel; He grants them the grace they can never reach on their own. Thus, He is the *Angel of the LORD*. He Himself stands ready for their help. However, He is the Head of all the angels. They all serve the desert people. Surely, they will go to the Canaan of rest. This Messenger will not forsake the work begun by His own hand. Has this Angel become precious and necessary to you?

—March 25, 2010, Rev. C. Neele

Apostle

“*Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus*” (Hebrews 3:1b).

In this text the Mediator is called “Apostle.” This name also is a preaching about His Person. The word “Apostle” means: Messenger or Ambassador. The marginal writer writes: “That is, Ambassador of the Father, to reveal unto us the counsel of God concerning our salvation.”

An apostle has a Sender. Paul knew himself to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. He appealed to his Sender several times. Peter also calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ in his epistle. This Apostle of our profession was sent from the Father. The people, who rejected Him, therefore, also rejected the Father.

An apostle has a task to fulfill, a message to convey. Thus, this Apostle was aware of His task. In the high priestly prayer, He gives an account: “I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world.” Paul calls Him a faithful Apostle. A comparison is made with Moses, who was faithful in his house, but more than Moses is here! Moses, at times, grossly shamed his Sender. That can never be said of this Apostle. That is why Paul says, “Consider the Apostle.” He is worthy of being considered.

Is He also the Apostle of our profession? This word is addressed to the holy brethren who are partakers of the heavenly calling. A calling has come to them from heaven. Therefore, these brethren have begun to call upon heaven. They first considered themselves. This is a fruit of the heavenly calling. The understanding is enlightened. They have learned that there can be no more expectation from them. They are holy but not in themselves.

Why does it remain necessary for them to consider this Apostle? It is God's work to sanctify His own through suffering. They do not receive a heaven on earth. In that strife they may be pointed to Him. "For in that He Himself

hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."

Paul does not say, "Consider thyself." Oh, then it is lost. God's children cannot exist one moment. He does not say, "Consider Moses." That apostle of the Old Testament could not bring the people into Canaan, but consider Jesus Christ. All attention must be on Him. The incitement of the apostle is proof that God's children often fail to consider Him in spite of their profession. Have you once been given to see this High Priest by faith? Oh, consider yourself that you, as a lost one, may learn to cry for Him.

—January 21, 2010, Rev. A. Schot

(To be continued)



From Our Inheritance

Where Is Your Child?

Rev. G. van Reenen (1864-1935)

(Taken from the March 1956 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

"And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him" (Luke 2:45).

Beloved reader, in our minds we turn to the highway which ran from Galilee to Jerusalem. There our attention is caught by a broad multitude of people who were singing while traveling toward Jerusalem, the city of the great King. They were the pilgrims who went up in obedience to God's command (Deuteronomy 16:16) to appear before the Lord in the place the Lord had chosen, namely, His holy temple.

There was One among that great multitude who is particularly worthy of our attention. He was a boy from Nazareth, twelve years old. So, for the first time He went with the multitude that kept holyday.

By law, the children of twelve went along for the first time. What was special about that boy? He was the Christ of God, the Lord Himself, the Son of God, who walked in their midst as a boy.

That multitude of people sang songs of which He was the subject, and Jesus Himself sang along. They went up to eat the Paschal Lamb, and the Paschal Lamb walked in their midst. They sighed to meet the Lord, and He was with them; He walked with them. They played and talked with Him, and they did not know that He Himself was their Saviour, their Redeemer. We will not dwell on that now.

Finally, the destination came into view, and singing and cheering they passed through Jerusalem's gate. There they could sing:

*Jerusalem, where blessing waits,
Our feet are standing in thy gates.*

They climbed the temple mount, and there they entered that glorious house of God. Wonderful hours, unforgettable moments were experienced. After all, those feasts were, so to speak, family feasts.

Jerusalem was the city of God, and the temple was God's palace, where the Lord lived and enthroned under the wings of the cherubim. Now, at those set feasts the family came together from far and wide. Then, so to speak, Father was in the midst and all the children gathered around Father. Then they ate and drank and rejoiced as if in God's presence. That those were sweet days will be understood by everyone who learned to sing with Asaph, "But it is good for me to draw near to God."

Our forefathers spoke of golden hours of short duration. This was also experienced by this multitude who kept holyday. All too soon the service was over. Then the caravan headed home again, cheerful and strengthened inwardly, busily talking to one another about all the wonderful things they saw and enjoyed. Thus, they traveled on for a day's journey. Then Mary and Joseph discovered that they had lost their Child. "Where is our Child, our Son?" they asked the pilgrims. "Have you seen our Boy?" They wrung their hands in despair. They had not looked after Him. They think it was their own fault, and now He was gone. Everyone asked Mary, "Where is your Son?" Every time she had to answer, "I do not know." They had lost what was entrusted unto them by God.

May I ask you, parents, where is your child? Where is your son, your daughter, those who are entrusted unto you by the Lord? Terrible, so many parents whose children are

lost. Not having paid attention to them, now they are gone. Where are they?

One day you will stand before the judgment seat of Him who entrusted them to you. Then He will ask you, where is your child? The Lord will require this from your hand. How terrible if we have lost them through our own fault.

Yes, through their own fault, so many parents have lost their children. They pay attention to everything. They go to church, attend meetings, visit the company of the godly, go on family visits...and the children? Your children are gone before you realize it, parents.

Oh, how much more the children should be looked after. How much more should be asked after the children, also by the ministers and elders of the congregation. Do you pay attention to the children, whether they attend church and catechism class, and if they attend the worship services with fruit? Do the elders ask during house visitations: Where is your child? Where are your children? Do you commend the children in prayer?

May I ask you, parents, where is your child? Where is your son, your daughter; those who are entrusted unto you by the Lord? Terrible, so many parents whose children are lost. Not having paid attention to them, now they are gone. Where are they?

No, we do not want to cast stones at Joseph and Mary. Yet, we cannot help but express our amazement that they could go a day's journey without thinking of their dear boy.

Oh certainly, those who babble about "a holy mother of God" know how to make a beautiful pretense here, too. However, we in our simplicity would like to note that it is not because of Mary that we still rejoice in having

the Lord Jesus because she had lost Him, and if Jesus had not taken better care of Mary than she took care of Him, her end would have been very sad. Yes, if the Lord had not taken care of us, if our salvation had depended on Mary, our case would have been very sad.

But, Hosanna! We have a Jesus who in truth testifies about us, His sheep: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:28).

Blessed are those parents who grieve their loss in time and who may find their children where Mary found hers. □

The Purpose of Christ's Coming

Rev. J.C. Weststrate (1919-1998)

(Taken from the December 1977 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

These words were spoken by the Lord Jesus Himself to a ruler of the publicans, namely, Zaccheus, when Jesus heard those who were annoyed that He was willing to go into the house of such a sinful man. In those days, the Jews generally considered publicans and the heathen to be cut from the same cloth. They said that Jesus had come to abide in the home of one who was a sinner.

This sinful man, Zaccheus, had received such an inexpressible benefit, and that was salvation. The words he heard were not said by man who can see only what is before his eyes. Zaccheus heard it out of the mouth of Him who is the Truth. He who knows the heart and who trieth the reins, the Lord Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham."

Zaccheus was able to say, I have heard it from His own mouth. That is the desire of all those who have been made upright before God. Such people ask, being made averse to having men laying their hands upon them or considering them saved, "Lord speak Thou to my soul, 'I am Thy salvation.'"

Zaccheus was desirous to see Jesus, and he was seen by Jesus and drawn with cords of love out of the might of Satan. This Zaccheus was a man who had come under the influence of a desire and greed for money. There was only

one purpose which filled his thoughts and life and that was to gather riches while here upon earth. He was a ruler, one of the important publicans. What a publican was is so clearly described in God's Word. By abusing his power, he tried in unlawful ways to enrich himself. Zaccheus was rich; he had already gathered much together. Yet, he was so namelessly poor, for he was a servant of sin under the power of greed for earthly riches.

The Lord, however, seeks him and has mercy upon such a servant of sin. There was not a single reason in Zaccheus that he would be shown mercy and would receive the greatest riches. The cause lies outside of Zaccheus, who was the chief among the publicans, the chief of sinners. The cause of his salvation and the wonder of grace can be found only in God's eternal good pleasure.

That is also what the text relates to us, "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He is come in the flesh so that that God's good pleasure could happily go forth. All mankind is lost, without exception, because we have all disobeyed our Creator in Paradise. We have become so depraved, by nature, that we can only be servants of sin. That is not only true of those who lead a life like Zaccheus in longing and striving after the goods of this world in whatever way we have chosen. We all, no matter how blameless we may appear in the eyes of others,

have become objects of God's wrath against sin because of our sins.

It is an incomprehensible wonder that Christ is come to seek that which is lost even though there is no one who seeks or asks for Him. He comes to seek that which is lost in the hour of His good pleasure, and He draws them with love. Nothing stands Him in the way, whether we lie in the ravine of iniquity or in the shrubs of our self-righteousness, or whether we are a publican or a Pharisee. He seeks and knows where to find them, calling them with the enlivening voice of His Word and Spirit from death unto life. How does He find them? As sinful and lost ones in themselves. That is now a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to all those who with all of their doing and avoiding, show in whatever manner it may be, that they are not willing to go unto Him. People who are annoyed like those who said, "He has gone to be with a man who is a sinner," show themselves to be of the opinion that they are not sinful people—for them Jesus is a rock of offense, and they despise His teaching.

As the Servant of the Father, accomplishing His will and good pleasure, Christ comes to save those who have sinned it all away. That is why there is the possibility to be saved by Him, even for Zaccheus, the chief of sinners. What this has meant for Zaccheus can hardly be put into words. When he wished to hide himself, he was called by name.

The omniscient One, before whom nothing is hidden, declared unto him his sinful life just like He did with the Samaritan woman. When Jesus described her life, she said, "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

This is true even today when the Lord seeks such lost ones. Then such will see themselves as guilty of transgressing all of the commandments of the Law. They cannot exist before God. Their outward obeying of the law, their duties and virtues, yea, their best works seen in the light of God's justice, become as filthy rags. Such agree that they are worthy of the well-deserved punishment. Then they are lost. It is to such that Jesus wishes to reveal Himself; He is come to save that which is lost and to restore them into the atoned relationship of God's favor. This is what grace is—in and through Him those who are lost because of sin are restored. He still stretches out His hand to lost ones by means of the preaching of His Word.

What a God-glorifying and righteous purpose is the coming of the Son of Man, the only and complete Saviour—a Saviour of those of whom it is said not only by people that they are sinful but those who know themselves to be lost. It is for such that Christ has come to seek and to save. He came to save those who are not saved—those who are lost—to keep them from perishing eternally.



A Word in Season

To Jerusalem

Rev. G. Mouw (1942-2022)

(Translated from *De Saambinder*, March 15, 2012)

"Then He took unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem" (Luke 18:31a).

Beloved, in the words of this text we read that the Lord Jesus announced His suffering to His disciples. In several other places we read that the Lord spoke of His suffering and death and of His resurrection, but the disciples understood none of these things.

Hereafter they would understand. The disciples were given to follow Him. What a sweet time that was. "...Can the children of the bride chamber fast while the Bridegroom is with them?" They were drawn out of the world, where they once lay with all men in the open field, polluted in their blood. There we all lie, by nature, beloved.

What a wonder to be picked up, drawn with His cords of love. Those cords are from eternity to eternity. Thus, the disciples were given to follow Him, who is the fairest and the most precious One, into whose lips grace is poured.

The disciples were given to follow Him, but it would be

through such a way they had not imagined. What expectations there were among the disciples also that He would ascend the throne in Jerusalem. Still, they were such earthly expectations; His kingdom is not of this world. Here the Lord took His disciples only to teach them. What a blessing to be set apart once and receive instruction. Thus, it pleases the Lord, after having bestowed grace on his children—through the way of loss, sickness, or other afflictions, to once again take them apart for further instruction and more exercise.

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth..." There the disciples were prepared not to be offended with the way of the cross. There the Lord, as the great Prophet, was going to teach them. He knew what awaited Him, but He did not turn back.

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem." Only a few more days, and the Feast of Passover would be celebrated in Israel. Then the people would go up to Jerusalem, and the songs

of degrees would be sung. Offerings would be brought in Jerusalem. This shadow service pointed toward Him who would make His soul an offering for sin. God's justice demanded satisfaction to the very last penny. Thus, His hour had come. He would be glorified by His death and resurrection. "...when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand."

How willingly He gave Himself. The disciples did not understand it, but they were given to follow to Jerusalem. The choice was in their hearts; that love was bestowed, but how the sheep would be scattered. He has trodden the winepress alone. They understood hereafter.

How necessary, beloved, to be brought on the narrow way. This is a way where a dying life is being learned. Then we begin to hate and flee from what we used to love—yes, to be led into the depth of the Fall, the breach caused by sin—having had such a sweet time at the beginning, think-

ing to find salvation by breaking off the way of sin and living holily before God. Yes, at times, one may receive such encouragement from the Word. However, there will come a time when the soul turns in unto itself and learns that with everything it thought it possessed, it has no existence before the Lord. Then everything is insufficient; one comes to stand empty-handed—being led into the state of death in Adam, in order to learn by grace the secrets of salvation in Him who gave Himself. Oh, how precious, necessary, and suitable He then becomes for the soul.

Beloved, we are again in the Passion weeks. Oh, that the Lord might grant His blessing, that His kingdom might be extended among young and old, and that Zion might be built in the most holy faith. Oh, one crumb of grace for life has more value than all earthly treasures.

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." □

Striving

Rev. G.M. de Leeuw, Nobleford, AB

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24).

Dear reader, there is much strife upon this earth. Since the fall of Adam in Paradise, we have lost our peace with God and among each other. There is the strife for our daily existence and welfare in the significance of Genesis 3:17b, "...cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." Also consider verses 18 and 19, which speak about "thorns and thistles" and "the sweat of thy face," which means nothing else than all the toil and the hardship we must endure to earn our daily bread.

There is strife in families when bitterness arises between husband and wife, children and parents, or vice versa. In Genesis 26:35 we read that Esau's wives were a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah (see also chapter 27:46). What sorrow and trouble there was later in the family of Jacob, of David, and of others in the Scriptures. There is strife in war. The world is never at peace; there are always contentions here or there between different countries.

There is strife for honor, high positions, advantages, profits. There is even much strife in churches, but there is only one kind of strife which is recommended. That is the strife referred to in our text: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate..." This is the safe strife whereof we read in 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life..." and in 2 Timothy 4:7: "I have fought a good fight."

The Lord Jesus Christ is answering a person who came to Him with the question if many would be saved or not: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Was this person

concerned about himself? Was he a missing, seeking one who did not reveal this so plainly but was coming with a more common question about the number of the saved ones? We do not know this because Scripture does not say it. Yet, he and not only he but also all who were present there and all of us who read it, we all receive an answer: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate."

That strait gate is the entrance into the kingdom of heaven through the only Way, the Lord Jesus Christ, who calls Himself the Door in John 10:7&9. He does not predict an easy way to heaven but a difficult one for flesh and blood, and why is that, dear reader? Because as soon as the false rest is denounced in man's life, the whole army of Satan is alarmed! World and flesh will make every effort to kill that newborn life. It is as it is written in Revelation 12:4b, "...and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."

As soon as the Lord plants faith in a soul, this strife between flesh and blood will begin, and it shall not end until that soul is above all the strife in heaven. This strife is upon the estate of the true doctrine and of daily life. It is because of the principle of holiness planted in the hour of regeneration. It is also about becoming united with the Lord Jesus Christ in a lawful commitment and about becoming conformed to His image; not having our own righteousness but only His; not living in reliance upon our works, but upon His works, which we can never obtain other than by faith only, believing that He is that gift of the Father, given to be a ransom for many.

Oh, the more Christ may dwell in the heart of such a

striving one, the more hatred from the side of the world and his own flesh is experienced. The more the disciples were united with their Master, following Him in the likeness of His death and later on in the likeness of His resurrection, the more they were hated by the Pharisees and Scribes. Why? Because these religious leaders did not rely upon the foundation of His works but upon their own works. They were blind for the purpose of His coming in the flesh and were thinking that all was well with them. They are mentioned by Christ in the second part of the text: "... for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Read in the following verses what they all brought forward thinking to be accepted, but it would all be too short. Oh, when His stamp upon it is missed, we shall not be able to enter in.

Therefore, people in that strife, strive not with carnal weapons, not to become the greatest one, but to be the smallest one; strive to break through the army of enemies. In that strife you must use the strongest weapon that was

ever made—prayer. Use also the sharp sword of His Word. Believe that He goes before His flock in that strife, yea, that in Him all the enemies are already conquered. He will sometimes give rest when they need it, and in that rest, they receive a little foretaste of the final victory.

Reader, what is your strife? Boys, girls, do you have something of this strife? Realize that many will begin to strive, but not until it is too late, when the door is already closed (verse 25). This very strife has a beginning here, and that is during your lifetime, not thereafter. So, do not postpone it.

Striving ones, keep courage; the victory is sure in Him. No, you are not perfect in that strife; the admonition of Hebrews 12:12&13 is often suitable for you, yet God will stir His children up time and again. Christ was praying for Peter that his faith should not fail. Better a holy war than a false peace, and one day you will receive that true peace. Oh, what will that be for such a one who is so often discouraged! ☐

Curatorium Announcement

The Lord willing, the Curatorium hopes to convene on Wednesday, June 5, in Grand Rapids at the Beckwith NRC church. A prayer service is scheduled for the evening prior to this meeting on Tuesday, June 4, at 7:30 P.M., also at the Beckwith church. Rev. E. Hakvoort hopes to officiate at this service.

The purpose of this meeting is to hear men who may have received an attest from their consistory pertaining to a calling to the sacred ministry of Word and sacrament. We commend this meeting to the prayers of the congregations, supplicating the Lord that it might please Him to give clarity and the leading of the Lord's indispensable Spirit in these weighty matters. May the Lord give opening and freedom to admit what the Lord of the harvest Himself thrusts forth and refrain from admitting what is not ripe, remains unclear, or is of man himself. Without the clear leading, light, and guidance of the Spirit of the Lord, the task entrusted to the Curatorium remains impossible. However, what is impossible with men is possible with God.

At the moment our theological school is empty. May this great need, which is especially felt in the vacant congregations, be continually bound upon our heart. We do not deserve the least token of the Lord's attention and favor, but it is the Lord Himself who commanded to pray for laborers in the harvest. Therefore, because it is His cause, we —albeit with many shortcomings and much trembling—have liberty to proceed with another Curatorium meeting.

With respect to the procedure to be heard, we ask that the following be taken into account:

1. Any male member who feels himself called to the ministry must contact his local consistory to be heard for an attest to be given him from his consistory;
2. Vacant congregations must seek the advice of their moderator, and his opinion is to be included in the attest and sent directly to the clerk of the Curatorium. Please note that clerkship has changed.
3. Consistories who receive freedom to grant an attest must notify the clerk of the Curatorium who will, in turn, forward a form to be filled out as soon and as detailed as possible. The Curatorium requests that a separate vote tally of the elders' and deacons' vote is listed.
4. The clerk of the Curatorium will inform the applicant of the date and time he will be heard.
5. The deadline for an attest to be submitted is May 7, 2024, D.V.

May the Lord graciously provide and be in our midst.

On behalf of the Curatorium,

Rev. J. den Hoed, *Chairman*

Rev. H. Hofman, *Clerk*

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Commentary

The Man Born Blind (21)

Rev. H. de Leeuw, Brant County, ON

“He worshipped Him” (John 9:38b).

The encounter with Christ has taken place. Christ has revealed Himself. The fruit of such a revelation is recorded in Scripture. He worshipped Him. To worship is an activity. How? With Jesus only through faith worked by the Holy Ghost; true worshipping is a fruit of the working of the Holy Ghost. The true worshipping always has the object in view, Christ, the gift of the Father. So, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are at work to be worshipped by sinners.

Worshipping is a large theme in the Bible. Worshipping is an adoration of who God is. To worship the Lord, we must know the Lord. The true knowledge of God is given by grace. The blind man received this knowledge. Now, in the given activity of worshipping, it is about God who gave and what by faith he may embrace. God becomes the object of that worshipping. Outside of Christ, God is a consuming fire; therefore, for this healed man the object of faith becomes the wonder. The wonder flows into a worshipping of God who sent His only begotten Son that we might have life through Him. True worship has something of Christ in it. May you know of it? Have you adored it already? Outside of Him it will not work. It needs to be a matter that is taken up in Christ for God’s honor. That awakens a worshipping; truly, that is worshipping.

The blind man may worship what he possesses in Christ, his healing and restoration. The Bible is also clear that there are two types of people who may worship. Here the man has received the benefit, but I read very clearly that in Matthew 8:2 a leper came to Him and...worshipped! He is a leper, but in his coming there may already be a worshipping. The object is the same as the healed man of John 9, but the work of the Mediator is different. Here the blind man was healed; there the leper is unclean—but both may worship. Notice then, not everyone receives to worship because of the same effect, but the true worshipping is about the same Person. Therefore, dear reader, if we ever have worshipped, then we know whom we have worshipped. Not as a cliché but as truth—to have seen Him by the eye of faith!

Worshipping was a cultural expression. Someone would lie prostrate before the person he desired to honor. So, you can see the healed man in your thoughts, lying on his knees with his head in the dust before His Saviour. The worshipping reveals the desire to express the amazement and wonder that instead of being bypassed, God came. It expresses humility and submission. True worship is described here as silence. Notice then, that true life is a life which is to be made silent under the greatness of the miracle. No more words are heard from the healed man, but the last we read is his position before his Saviour—in the dust!

It is the last we read of the healed man. What will be the last recorded of our life? Dear reader, if we die in our blindness, then we cannot worship. The history started to describe this man in his blindness, and twenty-one meditations have been written about his healing. The wonder was held before us. You can still be healed; without this healing there can be no worshipping.

People of the Lord, these last recorded words were because God did something. Christ was the center point for this man. The Spirit led this man to be Christ-centered. That work of the Spirit led to worshipping. May the Lord also grant in the lives of His people the leadings to worship because of the object, Jesus Christ, the gift of the Father. He was sent to reveal Himself as qualified to save them that are cast out. The healed man was given to worship in silence. May the Lord favor His people with such silence. The true worshipping was submission. May the Lord give again, under the blessed worshipping of God through Christ Jesus, to take up the cross and to follow Him. Although they were the last recorded words, the healed man’s strife went on, but the true submission is: “Take up the cross, and follow Me.”

May the Lord have used these articles to the extension of His kingdom and for the instruction of His people. Amen. □

(This installment marks the end of this series.)

God’s promises are never nearer fulfilling than when to sense and reason they seem farthest from fulfilling. This was Abraham’s case when at God’s command he was about to sacrifice his son Isaac.

—Samuel Bolton



For Young and Old

Water

J.K. Popham (1847-1937)

(Adapted from the book *Spiritual Counsel to the Young*)

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

My dear young friends,

On June 13 [1925] the King opened London’s new reservoir at Littleton, near Laleham, Middlesex. It forms an important part of the Metropolitan Water Board’s scheme for improving the water supply of London. The basin is nearly eight hundred acres in area. When the basin is filled—an operation which is estimated to take about three months—it will contain 6,750,000,000 gallons of water [six billion seven hundred fifty million] to a depth of about forty feet. A cost of £2,145,364 (well over \$200 million USD/CAD today) has been involved in its construction, and to make room for the reservoir, part of the village of Littleton was demolished, while the River Ash at one point had to be diverted. In an address to the King, Mr. C.G. Musgrave, chairman of the Board, said that when filled the reservoir could provide anchorage for a fleet of battleships. It is larger than all the other Thames Valley reservoirs put together and will hold enough water to supply the capital’s seven million inhabitants for a month. The *Times* contains an exceedingly interesting article on London’s water supply, with which many rulers of England have been directly or indirectly associated. In 1236, Henry III granted liberty to the citizens of London to bring water from a stream named Tyburn to the city through leaden pipes.

Reflect on this—water brought into the city of London from Tyburn through leaden pipes! In 1236 the conducting—or conduit—of water in the above manner was possibly regarded as a triumph of engineering skill. Contrast that work with the building of vast reservoirs for storing, and the underground structures for distributing, the essential supply of water to the city proper and to London’s teeming millions. Think of the expert knowledge required to weigh and measure the volume of water to be contained in one place! The foundations must bear the weight of almost seven hundred billion gallons of water; the walls must resist the pressure of the vast body! All this human skill is required for the health of our Babylon, in the midst of which are some of the sons of Zion.

We are not to think that engineering is of recent birth. To go back no farther than King Hezekiah, who lived seven hundred years before Christ, we learn from the sacred, inspired record that there was considerable knowledge of that science in his day. The Bible reads, “And the rest of the

acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?” (2 Kings 20:20a). Also, “This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works” (2 Chronicles 32:30). In Bible commentary particular notice is taken of the aqueduct as amongst the greatest of Hezekiah’s works. “In exploring the subterranean channel conveying the water from Virgin’s Forest to Siloam, I discovered a similar channel entering from the north, a few yards from its commencement; and on tracing it up near the Mugrabin Gate... I there found it turned to the west, in the direction of the south end of the cleft, or saddle of Zion; and if this channel was not constructed for the purpose of conveying the waters of Hezekiah’s aqueduct, I am unable to suggest any purpose to which it could have been applied. Perhaps the reason why it was not brought down on the Zion side was that Zion was already well watered in its lower portion by the Great Pool, the lower pool of Gihon.” The construction of this aqueduct required not only masonry but engineering skill, for the passage was bored through a continuous mass of rock. Hezekiah’s pool or reservoir, made to receive the water within the northwest part of the city, still exists.

From the above we may make two obvious reflections: 1) The necessity of water for the health of cities; 2) The mercy of God not only in providing so plentifully that essential element but also in giving knowledge and skill to men to overcome natural difficulties to supply the need. We draw our water, we fill our baths morning by morning, and perhaps seldom thank the beneficent Giver; or think of the engineering skill which has brought it into our houses through mountains, hills, and valleys. The cities of Liverpool and Manchester are largely supplied with water from Welsh rivers and lakes, many miles distant. Even where there is plenty, we should not waste water.

A word in conclusion

Is water so necessary to our existence, to the well-being of our villages, towns, and cities—so necessary that millions are spent to provide us with it? Is God so good to us as to provide sufficient for all? Then, how necessary for the eternal good of men is the river of the water of life! How amazing is the provision—the very Son of God in our nature, full of grace and truth. What wisdom is manifested in bringing this rich provision to a sinner, even the Holy Ghost, who gives life, hunger, thirst to all in whom He is “a well of water

springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14b). A famine of water may come, has often come, to a land; see the famines told of in the Bible, but to souls thirsting for the river of water of life, no famine will come. There may not always be the plentiful supply the soul desires, but the river of God

is full of water. God give us thirst for it, and then quench our thirst by it.

Your affectionate friend,

J.K. Popham, Brighton, August, 1925 □



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

Rev. H. Hofman, Beckwith, Grand Rapids, MI

When we or our children associate with other “Christians,” our stricter lifestyle becomes apparent. Sometimes it is altogether strange to them. How do we properly answer them when they ask what we believe or don’t believe in? Obviously, many of the things they see are not the core of what we believe.

Before I answer this question more concretely, I would like to make two observations about the question itself, or the way it is worded—not to criticize the question but because it was thought provoking. In the first place, let us hope that what you stated in the first sentence is, indeed, the case because I am not so sure that in the days we live “stricter lifestyle” always does become so apparent. I will not mention examples, but let us hope that our lifestyle, in reality, radiates what we might expect from a people that has been set apart by the Lord in baptism. My second observation pertains to the last sentence, namely, that many of the things that a stricter lifestyle shows, sadly, might not actually belong to the core of what we personally believe.

Here, I would like to state I do believe that **all** we do or do not do *should belong* to the core of what we believe... In other words, should not everything we do or do not do belong or at least be related to the core of what we believe? I am afraid that many discussions about lifestyle issues are ignored or discarded because “they do not belong to essential matters.” I am afraid that the argument that something “is not essential” has often in a subtle way led to more worldly lifestyles and freedoms which are not scripturally warranted. Often the argument is used that the Lord looketh on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7)—as if that means that the Lord does not take the outward appearance into account at all. The text in question mentions that man looks at the outward appearance—*only*—but, of course, that does not mean that the Lord does not look at the outward appearance at all.

I would, therefore, defend the argument that I believe all core beliefs of our doctrine must have consequences for

every aspect of our lifestyle. Justification and sanctification (two core beliefs) in Scripture always belong together; they are **inseparable**. See Ephesians 5; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 1 John 1:7a; Philippians 3:16 and many other texts, especially in the New Testament. We can also say it this way: justification comes back and becomes visible in sanctification! Another example would be 2 Peter 3:11, where the entire doctrine of eschatology (the doctrine of the last things) caused Peter to write, “*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?*”

More practically, the first thing to keep in mind is that it is not always possible to give our every reason for what we do or do not do. I think it is more important, first of all, that we ourselves must know and be convinced why we do what we do or not. Practically speaking, I think that we do not always *owe* an explanation to our neighbor for exactly what we do or not. Let our example simply speak. If a stranger would ask me at an airport why I pray before my meal and give thanks afterward, I would probably answer him that this is what I am used to doing...The same counts for why I go to church two or three times on Sunday. The Bible is not written to be used as a search-engine where an answer pops up for every question we may ask. This counts not only for us but also for those around us who are wondering why we do what we do.

My practical advice would be that *if* relevant questions are asked, there has to be a suitable time and place for a conversation. Ample time, a suitable opportunity, and a sincere effort may then result in a well-formulated, positive answer, with an emphasis on the fact that “strict” in no means is meant to be “oppressive” or “restrictive,” but that the Laws of the Lord are a joy to walk in and observe. I think in this context of what many of our home-mission posts do in the Netherlands. Next to bringing the Word on Sunday, there are opportunities for strangers to come and visit during the week at which time explanations and answers can be given to questions asked.

Finally, if there is an opportunity for an in-depth conversation, always try to let the *Word of God* speak and give a good report of the land as the two spies did of the promised land. We do not do things based on opinions or mere customs or routine, founded on our imaginations or the institutions of men, (see Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 33, Question 91) no matter how outwardly correct these may be. In Matthew 15:9 the Lord Jesus warned, "*But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*" Our life must be according to God's Word. Our actions, walk, and talk must be according to the rule of Scripture and show something of the fact that the Lord is so worthy to be feared—that His service is a service of love and not of slavery—that our religion is not about touch not, taste not, and handle not but about a walk in the fear of the Lord's worthy name.



Reflections

Evening Twilight (2)

Rev. P. Blok (1920-2019)

(Translated from the book *Avondschemering* [*Evening Twilight*])

Perilous Times

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Timothy 3:1).

Paul, in the last letter to Timothy, wrote about the evening twilight of his life. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Satan is using his last strength. The waves of revolution and aversion wash over the remnant according to the election of God's grace. According to the Word of the glorified King, the place of God's church is in the wilderness. "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

How did Paul experience his place in the evening twilight of this world? "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." How did he see the development in the visible church? "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."

When the night lays its shadow on the perishing world, man who has fallen away from God will live out his state of death. Do not be alarmed when you read this. It is foretold. We see the truth of this coming to light. Yet, these prophecies are full of promises. They indicate that the coming of Zion's King is imminent. We expect that day with great joy. The life of grace will be all the more visible at that time.

I realize that this is a very wide field, where modesty, sobriety, humility, and sincerity all must have a place. To be in the world and not of the world is easier stated than biblically practiced. However, of Zacharias and Elizabeth we read, "*Walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*" (Luke 1:6b). No, it does not say sinless, but their walk gave no offense to anyone; most importantly, it was a walk with, and in, the fear of God. May such a walk and such testimonies be more evident and visible today so that by our godly conversation others may be gained to Christ (Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 32, Q. 86).

Send your questions to: Rev. H. Hofman, 2339 Deer Trail Dr. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505, or hofman@premieronline.net.

The distinction between those who serve the Lord and those who do not serve the Lord will become more and more apparent. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

It becomes clearly evident that man lives out the depth of the Fall. The evening twilight of the perishing world shows a terrifying picture. "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." What is particularly emphasized? People are lovers of their own selves. That is the source from which all sin springs. It points out the root of man's existence. "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

"Self-lovers, that is, loving themselves too much, esteeming themselves too much, and seeking in all things their own profit" (*Dutch annotation 6 on 2 Timothy 3:2*). It is a clear picture of fallen man. His life is separated from God. The distance is increasing. The life is centered around self, this means away from God. It shows—no God and no master. Dethroned man seeks a kingdom of his own. Notice his striving. Man is king.

What Paul pointed out is worth pondering. We will name two satanic spirits. The first one is disobedience to parents. The relationship of authority is innate. Parental authority is the primal authority. It is the seat of all authority on earth and flows from the observance of the second table of the law. The annotation in the Dutch Bible on this phrase notes, “Namely, which God has planted by nature in the hearts of parents toward their children, and of children toward their parents; which also is seen implanted by nature in the unreasonable beasts.”

The spirit of revolution has penetrated the families. Despite all efforts, this sin proliferates. Man is without natural love. In the evening twilight of the perishing world, this can be seen. Through the special revelation of God, the apostle saw the signs of the imminent coming of Christ on the clouds of heaven. It contains a striking promise. “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.”

Jesus’ address to His fearful disciples is full of instruction. “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

The spirit of time shows many characteristics. Among the many evil characteristics is one pointed to the life of the hypocrite, the second satanic spirit we want to mention. In the Heidelberg Catechism, when dealing with the sacrament of the Holy Supper, we also find this name. In the

evening twilight of a perishing world, the hypocrites have penetrated to the table of the Lord. “But hypocrites, and such as turn not to God with sincere hearts, eat and drink judgment to themselves.”

Paul said, “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” It is only an outward form or appearance. They lack the actual cutting off from the old stem Adam and the gracious implantation in the Tree of Life, Christ. “And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid” (*Canons of Dort, Head III/IV, Article 11*).

The living Church is exhorted to have an aversion to these. That is, not to hold communion with them but to flee from them. In the wonder of the quickening, the Lord cuts off from the former life. Therefore, the miracle of conversion will draw a separation. In doctrine and life, this cannot remain hidden. At the coming of Christ this will be seen. Then Micah’s life choice will have to be ours: “Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.”

*O what is man, in Thy regard
To hold so large a place,
And what the son of man, that Thou
Dost visit him in grace.*

—Psalter 14:4 ◻

(To be continued)

***De Saambinder* Delivered by Email**

For those who do not receive *De Saambinder* from their local church and would like information regarding receiving a copy electronically via email, please contact: Andrew Kieboom at 269-720-3533 or email to: saambinder.noordamerika@gmail.com

Searching on Digibron.nl

Dear reader, did you know “bron” means “source”? Digibron.nl is a digital collection of many periodicals (mostly Dutch), each their own source of articles. Searching on Digibron can take some getting used to. Use your web browser’s translate feature to see the Digibron pages in English. When searching, you will want to keep setting the Bron/Source filter to “*The Banner of Truth*.”

If desired, there are also advanced search features under *Uitgebreid zoeken* (Advanced Search). One advanced search method is to use the “headline” identifier to search only the **title** of the articles. For example, “headline: (Passion)” will find all articles where the title contains the word “Passion.” Go to the link below to see this example. It will bring you to more Passion Season articles to read in the coming weeks—<http://tinyurl.com/BOTSearchTitles>



Current Events

Nigeria Worse Than Many Know

A never-ending massacre of Christians being “killed for sport” is happening in Nigeria. Yet, the world appears to be largely deaf to the matter. On Christmas Day while much of the world was commemorating Christmas, in Nigeria they were mourning the deaths of more than 100 Christians. Armed bandits ran amok in some 20 communities across central Nigeria, killing more than 140. Some sources have put this massacre’s death toll closer to 200. Yet, much of the world looks the other way and is silent. The Christians were killed in a wide swath across an invisible line that separates the mostly Muslim north and the predominately Christian south in the country’s Plateau State. According to multiple sources, Christians represent 46% of Nigeria’s population. Since 2009 more than 52,000 Christians “have been butchered or hacked to death for being Christians” in Nigeria, according to Intersociety, a civil society group based in Onitsha. “The single worst place in the world to be a Christian is in western Africa, particularly in parts of Nigeria,” said the former commissioner for the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. He said, “When ISIS was at its height in Iraq and Syria in 2015, terrorists in one single state in Nigeria killed more Christians than all of those killed by the ISIS caliphate in Syria and in Iraq combined.”

—FoxNews.com

New Country Added to Persecution Watch List

In 2024, for the first time, the United States has recognized Azerbaijan as a violator of religious freedom. Calls have been made for the nation’s censure each year since 2013. Complicating any consequences though, Azerbaijan aligns with U.S. foreign policy in certain areas. It cooperates closely with Israel, is aligned against Iran and Russia. Azerbaijan’s laws place “onerous registration requirements” on religious groups to register nationally, restricting them further in their right to worship freely. The government physically abuses, arrests, and imprisons religious activists while restricting conscientious objectors. Azerbaijan joins Algeria, the Central African Republic, Comoros, and Vietnam on the second-tier Special Watch List, cited for “engaging in or tolerating severe violations of religious freedom.” Twelve nations—China, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, Myanmar, Nicaragua, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan—again received designations as first-tier Countries of Particular Concern (CPC). The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) “welcomed” the designation of Azerbaijan, but it stated there was “no justification” for failing to follow its advice to also label India and Nigeria as CPCs.

—ChristianityToday.com

Belarus’ Leader Tightens Control Over Religious Groups

Belarus’ authoritarian president has signed a law into effect that significantly tightens control over various religious denominations and organizations. The law mandates that all religious groups reapply for state registration, which authorities reserve the right to refuse. This, among several other restrictions set in the law are the latest step in the president’s crackdown on dissent, which intensified after a disputed presidential election in 2020 that gave him a sixth term. The government arrested more than 35,000 protesters in demonstrations that denounced the vote as rigged. Since 2022, involvement in unregistered organizations has become a criminal offense. Now the new law gives authorities broad powers to deny registration and to shut down any religious organization. A Protestant pastor expressed concern that “Protestant

churches in Belarus will become the main target of the new law,” especially given their popularity among younger people. “Many Protestant churches in Belarus will face a tough choice to either cease their activities or return to the dark Soviet times, when Protestant churches effectively worked underground and illegally,” he said. Analysts say Belarusian authorities are seeking to tighten control over the entire public sphere ahead of upcoming elections. One analyst said, “The Belarusian authorities view the clergy as leaders of public opinion, who influence large groups of people; therefore, they strive to take all denominations under tight, centralized control.”

—FoxNews.com

Should Religious Practices Adapt to Modern Culture?

In a concerning course of events, the pope of the Roman Catholic Church has criticized the “reactionary” U.S. Catholic church leaders and declared Catholics must evolve with modern culture. He highlighted the importance of evolving and adapting religious practices to modern-day culture. He declared that there is “an appropriate evolution in the understanding of matters of faith and morals” and that it is “useless” to dwell on outdated ideas. The pope’s concerning statements follows years of criticism from U.S. Catholics who disagree with decisions to make the church more accepting of LGBTQ+ individuals and grant women and lay Catholics more roles within the church.

—MSN.com

Japanese Christians Respond After Earthquake

Although Christians only make up about 1% of the Japanese population, church members have organized a national disaster response church network to work with survivors of the New Years Day earthquake, particularly in the most affected areas. This network is leading recovery efforts after a huge 7.5 magnitude earthquake. The network hopes to share the gospel and support thousands of people displaced or physically or mentally impacted by the disaster. The death toll from the earthquake is well over one-hundred people. Although Christianity is viewed quite favorably in Japan, there are still major hurdles for the expansion of Christianity in the nation.

—Persecution.org

Iran’s Intimidation During the Christmas Season

Four Christian converts, including an Afghan refugee, remain in detention over three weeks after their arrest in Tehran, Iran. The arrests followed a December 11 raid by thirty intelligence agents on a house-church gathering, where twenty-five had gathered to pray and worship together and to plan their Christmas celebration. Two individuals arrested on the spot, while the third was arrested three days later after answering a summons for further questioning. They were driven to their homes, which were searched, while all others present at the gathering were forced to fill out forms containing questions regarding their Christian faith and activities. They were told they would soon be summoned for further questioning. The Afghan refugee was arrested separately; his fate was only discovered when the families of the others arrested saw him in handcuffs alongside their loved ones. The Article 18 organization’s director said, “We are outraged that Christians in Iran have yet again been arrested during the Christmas season, when the Iranian government has continued its pattern of intimidation and crackdown on Christians during this holy season. We’re particularly concerned for the safety and well-being of those detained, and especially for the Afghan refugee, who is even more vulnerable.”

—ArticleEighteen.com



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (50) **Article XXXVII: Of the Last Judgment**

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

It is evident that this article was written in the days of persecution, for the Church testifies that it will not continue forever; the day of deliverance is coming! The return of Christ is of great comfort for the Church since it is in a continual warfare with the three-headed enemy.

In this article we hear the language of faith as spoken by the martyrs of the sixteenth century. We must keep in mind that this article does not speak of the dream of the Jews, who still expect the restoration of David's kingdom, nor about the expectation of the chiliasts or millennialists (mille meaning a thousand), who teach that Christ will reign for a thousand years in Jerusalem. It speaks about the coming of Christ on the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead.

Death is the end of this earthly life for every person. Only Enoch and Elijah entered heaven without dying, and Moses was raised from the dead when Satan, as the prince of death, tried to take his body for the unholy purpose of leading Israel into temptation by worshipping it (*see Gill's Exposition on the Entire Bible for Jude 1:9. —Ed.*). When a person dies, the body returns to the earth, but the soul is immortal and continues to live consciously after the separation from the body either in hell or in heaven. Thus, man continues to exist in the soul.

This was known among the believers of the Old Testament, whereof, also the Lord Jesus said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." The consciousness of the soul is taught by Christ in the parable of the rich man in hell, who spoke of his father's house and of his brothers, requesting that they be warned by Lazarus, who was in heaven. There is no doubt about the continuing existence of the soul, even though many deny it or are in error about it.

Rome teaches that the souls of the wicked and

unbelievers go to the place of damnation but that the souls of the believers go to heaven, although not immediately. First they must undergo a painful cleansing process in purgatory. According to their teachings, Christ paid only for original sin while man must pay for his actual sins himself. By masses, prayers, and other means, usually involving money, it is possible to shorten this time of pain; however, according to our fathers, this is nothing more than an accursed doctrine. Rome bases this doctrine of purgatory on Matthew 5:25-26, where it is written that the debtors shall remain in prison until they have paid the uttermost farthing, but God's Word speaks of only two places for man's eternal destination and not of three.

The time of Christ's coming is unknown; it will be as a thief in the night. Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus has foretold of the signs of that time. At times, Christ spoke about the destruction of Jerusalem, but, at the same time, about His coming, which would also be a dark time. The common signs of Christ's coming are as follows: false Christs, wars, pestilences, persecution of the believers, growing power of sin, and the preaching of God's Word over all the world. These common signs are found throughout all ages. The special signs of Christ's coming are these: the revelation of the anti-Christ, the conversion of Jews and heathens, revolution in church and society, and changes in sun, moon, and stars.

We do not know the exact order of succession. This article does not tell us so; it says only that Christ will come in glory and that the resurrection will follow. Many in our day (Jehovah Witnesses and other sects) make a difference between the first and second resurrection. They say God's people will arise first and reign for a thousand years with Christ. Afterwards, the second resurrection of all people will follow. The origin of this doctrine seems to have been with the Christians from among the Jews. It was

sharply condemned by Augustine, and then, for a period of time, not much mention was made of it, but in the days of the Reformation it revived. Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin also condemned this doctrine.

It is fitting that we make a few remarks about it:

(1) This doctrine is against God's Word (see Matthew 25:31-46).

(2) The defenders of the millenium expect two comings of Christ, whereas God's Word speaks of but one.

(3) The chiliasts speak of a separation of believers and unbelievers before the thousand years begin while in several parables the Lord Jesus made it clear that this separation will take place at the end of the world (see parables of harvest and of fishes).

(4) The chiliasts expect a thousand years without suffering and oppression for believers and then Christ will come again. The Lord Himself spoke of heavy persecutions and a very difficult time for God's people, a time when sin and unrighteousness will multiply, and then the Lord will suddenly appear.

(5) The chiliasts base their doctrine on Revelation 20, which tells us that Satan will be bound for a thousand years. We must view this chapter in the light of that which the Lord has said before and that the Book of Revelation is an encouragement for the Church that Christ will come again to take them into eternal glory. The Lord has never promised a

thousand years but, rather, an eternal salvation, to be always with the Lord.

What is the meaning of the thousand years in the Book of Revelation? We must remember that the numbers in Revelation are always symbolic, for example, the seven churches of Asia-Minor, even though there were more congregations. The same can be said of the 144,000 of Israel, which is also symbolic. When John wrote of a thousand years, it means a long time and not exactly this number of years. Satan has been bound since the ascension of Christ. The angel at that time promised in the name of the Lord that He would return once again. Before this will happen, Scripture must be fulfilled in every detail; also, all the elect must be called from spiritual death to life. Then Christ will return, corporally and visibly, with great glory and majesty, surrounded by a great multitude of angels.

What a day that will be—terrifying for the ungodly but a deliverance for the Church. Are we prepared for His coming? As the years pass by, our lives also pass by, but the world is also growing older, and its end is approaching. May the Lord prepare us for that appearance before Him, which is only possible when we may take part in the merits of Christ, whose birth we have commemorated at Christmas. May we not delay but seek the Lord while it is yet the time of grace. When we die, the world comes to an end also for us.



Bible Stories for Little Ones

David and Jonathan

(Based on 1 Samuel 20)

Two friends quietly stood together in the field. One man bent over, his head in his hands. Then he cried out, "Why, oh why, does he want to kill me? What have I ever done that he seeks my life?" Who were these men? The man bent over was David. He was talking with Jonathan, his best friend on earth. David had hurried away as Saul and his men had prophesied, and now his questions burst out: "Have I done some sin against your father? Have I hurt him somehow? I don't know of any reason why he is so angry at me!"

"Oh, no, he doesn't want to kill you," Jonathan said. "He's never told me about it, and he never does

anything unless he tells me about it first. He surely would have told me if he were going to kill you."

"No," David replied. "He knows you're my friend, so he's certainly not going to tell you and make you angry. I know for sure that he wants to kill me."

"How can I help you?" Jonathan asked. "Tell me anything you want, and I'll do it for you."

Wasn't Jonathan a wonderful friend? He offered to do whatever David asked. Jonathan was a type of Jesus Christ. Jesus encourages His people to look to Him for our help, saying, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find." Then David told Jonathan his plan. The following day there was to be

a big feast, which was held once a month when there was a new moon. David normally would sit by the king, but this time, David did not want to go to the feast.

“I will hide for three days in the fields,” he told Jonathan. “You go to the feast and see what happens. If Saul wonders where I am, tell him I asked permission to go to Bethlehem to celebrate a yearly feast with my own family. If he says that’s fine, I’ll know I am safe, but if he gets very angry, then I’ll know I have to run for my life.”

Jonathan liked this plan. Then David asked, “How are you going to tell me what happened at the feast and how Saul acted?”

The two men walked through the field, thinking this over. Jonathan said, “I will help you, but when you become king, will you promise not to destroy me and my family but be kind to us?”

Isn’t that a strange question? Why would Jonathan even think that David, his best friend, would want to kill him? Jonathan was worried about this because he knew what usually happened in those days. A new king always destroyed the family of the king before him, and Jonathan, of course, was of the family of King Saul. David promised Jonathan that he would never kill Jonathan’s family. He swore an oath before God to promise this.

Jonathan told David how he would let him know what happened at the feast. “This is what I will do,” he told him. “On the third day of the feast, I’ll go out with my servant boy as if I am hunting, and I’ll shoot my arrows. If I tell my boy that the arrows are nearby, to go get them, then that means that my father wasn’t angry and everything is okay. However, if I tell the boy that the arrows are farther out, to go on and get them, then that means that my father is angry, and you had better leave.”

David agreed to this plan. Saul noticed right away that David was not in his seat, but he thought that possibly David had done something that was not according to the Jewish law—such as eating the wrong

meat—for which he could not come to the feast yet.

The second day came, and David still was not there. Finally, Saul asked Jonathan, “Why isn’t David here? He wasn’t here yesterday, either.”

“He asked me if he could go to Bethlehem,” Jonathan answered. “He said his family had a sacrifice to offer there. He wanted to be with his brothers, so I let him go.”

Saul became very angry. “You—you...!” he cried out, calling Jonathan all kinds of horrible things. “Don’t you see what you did? As long as David is around, you’re never going to be king. I want you to go and get him right now, for he has to be killed.”

“But, Father!” cried Jonathan. “Why? Why, Father? What has he ever done that you should kill him?”

Saul was so furious that he picked up his spear and threw it at Jonathan, just as he had thrown it at David previously. Then Jonathan knew that, indeed, it was true. His father was definitely planning to kill David. Sadly, and angrily, he left the table.

The next day was the third day of the feast. David hid in the field. He waited, knowing that soon his friend, Jonathan, would be coming. Then he heard voices: there was Jonathan, coming with his servant boy. David listened and watched. Probably his heart thumped fearfully. Would the message be good—or bad?

David listened as Jonathan told his boy to gather the arrows after he shot them. “Oh, isn’t the arrow way past you?” cried Jonathan. “Hurry! Run and get them!” Off the boy ran.

How do you think David felt? The message from Jonathan was clear: my father was angry at the feast, and he IS planning to kill you. You will have to run for your life. David must have felt terrible.

Jonathan gave his servant the bow and arrows and sent him home. Then he ran to David. Both men cried and hugged. Finally, they knew they had to leave one another. Would they ever meet again? Where would David go now?



Artist’s portrayal of Jonathan shooting his arrows farther out before sending the lad to fetch them



Bible Quiz

Life

Dear Boys and Girls,

In a bright hospital room in the city, a small, angry cry is heard. “It’s a boy!” A nurse smiles, holding up the baby who has just been born. His little eyes are scrunched shut; his fists clenched against his chubby red cheeks. His wrinkled feet kick angrily until the nurse wraps him snugly in a blanket. Although he doesn’t know it himself, the brand-new infant has just begun life...

On another floor of the hospital, it is very quiet in a small, dim room. An oxygen machine murmurs behind the bed, and occasionally, the stillness is broken by someone sniffing away tears. In the bed lies an old mother. She is sick. Her eyes are closed. It cannot be long anymore. Then she will leave this life. Life will end for her...

In the same hospital building, we find the beginning and the end of life. God gave life to that baby, and for the old mother, it is God’s time that her end has come. What is life? It is the opposite of death. It is a time given to us by God, and, therefore, it is precious. It is also fragile. Now tell me—do people treat life as though it is something with which to be careful, something precious and fragile? People might love their own life and yet not care for the life of another. Think of abortion, murder, and selling drugs.

People might also not take care of their own life. Why? Well, they either think they are invincible, and nothing will harm them, or they just don’t realize or care. They don’t know that life has been given them by the Lord, nor do they know the purpose of life, to seek God and live to His honor. People don’t take care of their life when they are reckless; they drive much too fast, they constantly text while they are driving, or they don’t wear a helmet on a motorcycle or when skiing. Some might think it daring to go to the edge of a pier in a wild storm or the edge of a cliff on a tall mountain, but that is being reckless.

There are also smaller ways in which someone might not take care of life. He might eat very unhealthily, or he might neglect his health in other ways. Do we value the preciousness of life, or do we put it in danger unnecessarily? True, those in the military service, if they are called to battle,

sometimes have to kill a life, but that is different—that is protecting against the enemy.

Long ago, not so many years after Christ lived on earth, there was a preacher by the name of Polycarp. At that time, the Roman emperor wanted all Christians to either turn heathen or be put to death. It was a terrible time. One day, Polycarp’s friends told him, “Polycarp, the soldiers are coming for you! Someone told us! You must hide!” Polycarp immediately went into hiding. He tried to find a safe place. Was that cowardly of Polycarp? Why, no! He realized the preciousness of life and that he should do what he could to protect it. When Polycarp was found after all, he was so brave that he first prayed for his enemies and then calmly went with them, never denying that he was and would remain a Christian. He was not at all afraid of the lions and the fire that would kill him!

There was another man at that time whose name was Quintus. Quintus decided he would turn himself in and tell the Romans that he was a Christian. Was that brave? No, that was wrong. That was foolhardy. Instead of trying to protect life, he purposely put it in danger, and all for the wrong reasons. Perhaps he wanted to receive honor and fame by doing this. He knew that many people were talking in a respectful way about the Christians who had died bravely. Perhaps he thought he would be rewarded with a special place in heaven. However, see what happens...Quintus, who purposely put himself in danger and didn’t take care of his life, saw the lions who would kill him, and he became afraid. He became so afraid that he became a heathen again. He was no true Christian. What good did it do him to place himself in danger?

Life—do you spend it in a right way, seeking God? Ask the Lord often if He will give you a new heart so that you will wish to spend your life to God’s honor and do His will. The Lord Jesus came to earth to GIVE His life for others. That was right. It was His task to stand in the place of others. By this, He obtained those beautiful things we read of in the Bible: the water of life, the tree of life, and everlasting life, for those who are written in the book of life.

Unscramble the words.

1. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the _____ (hbaret) of life; and man became a living soul."

2. "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to _____ (evpserre) life."

3. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, _____ (sglebsin) and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:"

4. "And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his _____ (kense) before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight."

5. "The _____ (rpitsi) of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."

6. On the next page, use the secret code to complete the message.

For the Younger Children

Fill in the blanks. Choose from the words below.

house joy life afraid enemy feet

7. "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be _____?" (Psalm 27:1).

8. "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the _____ of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple" (Psalm 27:4).

9. "For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but _____ cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

10. "For with Thee is the fountain of _____: in Thy light shall we see light" (Psalm 36:9).

11. "Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the _____" (Psalm 64:1).

12. "Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our _____ to be moved" (Psalm 66:9).

For the Older Children

Match the correct meaning shown in column at right to the Bible texts below.

13. Luke 6:9 ____

14. Luke 12:15 ____

15. John 6:47 ____

16. James 4:14 ____

17. 1 Peter 3:10 ____

A. *It is in this life that we should seek after spiritual life*

B. *We should take care to preserve life, also on the sabbath day*

C. *Our life is not measured by how many possessions we have*

D. *Life is very fragile and short*

E. *One way to make life miserable is to use our words unwisely, falsely, or sinfully*

* * * * *

Answers to January's "Cattle" quiz:

- 1. Beast Psalm 50:10
- 2. Cattle Genesis 1:25
- 3. Fowl Genesis 2:20
- 4. Dust Genesis 3:14
- 5. Tents Genesis 4:20
- 6. Ground Genesis 7:23
- 7. Waters Genesis 8:1
- 8. Gold Genesis 13:2
- 9. Strife Genesis 13:7
- 10. Water Genesis 29:7
- 11. Verse 10
- 12. Decrease (verse 38)
- 13. Cattle, spare, field (Ezekiel 34:17, Jonah 4:11, Luke 17:7)
- 14. B, A, C, E, D
- 15. I will lead on softly
- 16. Isaiah 7:21
- 17. All, none
- 18. Hail
- 19. Grass
- 20. Pasture
- 21. Well

* * * * *

Answers to previous quizzes were received in December from:

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Brianna Aleman | Donovan Knibbe | Jeremy Spaans |
| Erin Aleman | Jarynne Knibbe | Jacob Spaans |
| Christina Blom | Sienna Knibbe | Levi Spaans |
| Britni Blom | Whitney Knibbe | Micah Spaans |
| GaryJon Blom | Christian Koepsell | Samuel Spaans |
| Jenina Blom | Molly Koepsell | Tessa Spaans |
| Joseph Blom | Elizabeth Kooyman | Hannah-Jo Ten Hove |
| Lawrence Blom | Jacob Kooyman | Emmalyn Van Garderen |
| Martena Blom | Krysten Kooyman | Kaiven Van Middendorp |
| Tiffany Blom | Abraham Mol | Konner Van Middendorp |
| Willem Blom | Madeline Mol | Alivia Vande Hoef |
| Aryanna Breeweg | Olivia Mol | Micah Vande Hoef |
| Carly Brouwer | Teddy Mol | Joelle Vande Waerdt |
| Derek Brouwer | John Murphy | Wyatt Vande Waerdt |
| Thomas Brouwer | Andrew Murphy | Aubrey Vanden Berg |
| Jackson Dendekker | Blake Pannekoek | Ava Vanden Berg |
| Cody Driesen | Lauren Pannekoek | Heidi Vanden Berg |
| Ethan Driesen | Andrew Remijn | Kristen Vanden Berg |
| Jordan Driesse | Daniel Remijn | Shara Verhoef |
| Kailyn Driesse | Lauren Remijn | Caleb Vogelaar |
| Lindsey Driesse | Nevaeh Rozeboom | Matthew Vogelaar |
| Allison Ekema | Kaela Rus | Jayden Weeda |
| Kaylynn Ekema | Lakia Rus | Nathan Wesdyk |
| Kate Hoogendoorn | Anna Spaans | Rebekah Wesdyk |
| Anthony Knibbe | Asher Spaans | Allyson Ymker |
| Ashley Knibbe | Brogan Spaans | Sya Ymker |

The secret code puzzle below is from #6 on previous page.

	O	R		V						C				G					

my

my

my

Answer:

Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors. For whoso findeth Me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.
 (Proverbs 8:34&35)

Please send your answers to the address shown below:
 Aunt LenaBeth
 180 Jacobs Road, Newfoundland, NJ 07435
 E-mail: auntlenabeth@gmail.com



News & Announcements

Ministerial Calls

Declined:

By Rev. P.D. den Haan of Rijssen-West, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

By Rev. S.W. Janse of Rijssen Zuiderkerk, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Chilliwack, British Columbia.

By Rev. G.W.S. Mulder of Ridderkerk, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

By Rev. A. Schot of Nunspeet, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Grand Rapids–Covell Avenue, Michigan.

By Rev. M.H. Schot of Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Markham, Ontario.

By Rev. H.A. van Zetten of Nieuw-Beijerland, the Netherlands, to the congregations of Sioux Center, Iowa, and Kalamazoo, Michigan.

By Rev. R.A.M. Visser of Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Obituaries

BOLUYT, Calvin John – Age 24, December 6, 2023; Corsica, South Dakota; Wife – Danielle (nee Blom); Daughters – Avriella, Sophia; Parents – Steve & Sarah Boluyt; Siblings – Craig, Crystal Mol, Kendra & Matthew Mol, Karleen & Ben Klaasen, Katrina & Mike Schierbeek, Kevin; Parents-in-law – Nolan & Janelle Blom; In-laws – Shawna & Anthony Spaans, Brianna & Jacob Koenen, Kendra Blom; Grandparents – Darold & Joanne Den Boer, Cornie J. & Bev Blom; predeceased by grandparents Herman & Clazina Spaans and William & Jane Boluyt. (Rev. J. Slingerland, 2 Corinthians 7:10.)

DEYOUNG, Alice Marie – Age 102, January 12, 2024; Wyckoff, New Jersey; Siblings – Pearl Densel and Marie Hooper; survived by several nieces and nephews; predeceased by 4 brothers. (Elder W. Mol, Psalm 90:12.)

HAUSMANN, Mitchel Ryan – Age 33, December 2, 2023; Conklin, Michigan; Wife – Katelyn (nee VanRoekel); Daughter – Payton; Parents – Ronald & Jill (nee Rottman); Sister – Samantha & Tony Komins; Grandparents – Eva Huyser, Cathy Spaans; Parents-in-law – John & Sheryl VanRoekel; In-laws – Melinda & Russ Emmert, Nicholas & Brittany VanRoekel, Derek VanRoekel, Luke VanRoekel; predeceased

In Memoriam

Mr. Gerrit Van Hierden

With grief the consistory of Fort Macleod announces the sudden passing of Mr. Gerrit Van Hierden on December 20, 2023, at the age of sixty-seven years. With much willingness of heart, Mr. Van Hierden faithfully served our congregation for thirty years, three as deacon and twenty-seven as elder. He will be sorely missed among us. May the Lord remember his mourning widow and family. *“My Beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away”* (Song of Solomon 2:10).

— Fort Macleod NRC Consistory

by grandparents Theodore & Ellen Rottman, Gunnar & Anneliese Hausmann, Bill Huyser, Jim Spaans, Cornie & Hermina VanRoekel. (Rev. H. Hofman, Luke 7:11-17.)

ROZEBOOM, Elizabeth (“Betty,” nee Zomer) – Age 93, December 13, 2023; Rock Valley, Iowa; Husband – Dick G. (deceased); Children – Gerrit & Evonne, Cora & Arlan Kooima, Rick & Karla, Daryl & Kath; 20 grandchildren; 47 great-grandchildren; Daughter-in-law – Arlys Rozeboom; Sisters-in-law – Jeane Zomer, Joane Zomer, Marlene Zomer; predeceased by son Anthony “Tony,” grandson Michael Kooima, 2 sisters and 3 brothers. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Luke 1:77-79.)

ROOZENBOOM, Marie Klasina (nee Thomassen) – Age 101, December 16, 2023; Rock Valley, Iowa; Husband – D. Gerrit (deceased); Son – Gary; predeceased by 3 sisters-in-law and 2 brothers-in-law. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Psalm 102:7.)

RYAN, Colleen – Age 64, January 7, 2024; Oakland, New Jersey; Mother – Leona; Sister – Linda & William Berkenbush; survived by several nieces and nephews; predeceased by father Alan. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Job 13:9a.)

VAN HIERDEN, Gerrit – Age 67, December 20, 2023; Fort Macleod, Alberta; Wife – Janet (nee de Kok); Daughters – Jolletta & John Kaat, Nelina, Calinda & Dave Slingerland, Andrelei & Bert Grisnich; 28 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren; Siblings – Ria & Ray Vanee, Nancy Vanden Broek, Jenny & Jake Boot, Henry & Shannon, Conrad & Rhonda, Harvey & Bernita; In-laws – Frans & Sienke

Feyter, Tracey Van Hierden, Nelleke & James Kreft, Andrea & Peter Feyter; predeceased by parents Henk & Jenny, parents-in-law Andy & Nellie de Kok, brother Rick, sister Steina Feyter, brothers-in-law Andrew de Kok and Walter Vanden Broek, and 2 grandsons. (Rev. H.D. den Hollander, Song of Solomon 2:10-13.)

VAN WINGERDEN, Arie Jan – Age 89, December 26, 2023; Pompton Plains, NJ; Wife – Kathleen (nee Vriezema, deceased); Sons – John & Janey, Alan & Anita, Ron & Joyce, Paul & Stacey, Glenn & Nicole; Siblings – Jenny Van Vugt, Christina De Groot, Kees & Rita, Willem & Joanne, Jan & Barbara, Abraham & Ruth; 23 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Genesis 25:9.)

Hope Bay Bible Camp

The Chilliwack NRC hopes to host the annual young adults’ retreat on Pender Island, British Columbia, on May 23-25, 2024, D.V. We welcome all post-secondary young adults to attend for a time of learning, fellowship, and exploration of the beauty of Pender Island. Mr. Arjan Arends and other speakers yet to be determined will present topics and Bible studies. Accommodations for the following weekend can be arranged for out-of-town guests. Cost and registration details will be provided closer to the date.

40th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, our dear parents, and grandparents,

Archie & Mari den Hoed

hope to commemorate their 40th wedding anniversary on February 17, 2024.

“Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Thy wings” (Psalm 17:8).

63801 N Griffin Rd.
Grandview, WA 98930

He may look on death with joy,
who can look on forgiveness
with faith.

—Thomas Watson

Dear reader, the need is great. If you have an education background, please take a moment to consider the many positions available across our congregations.

Administrators Needed

EBEN-EZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, is inviting applications to fill a full-time secondary teacher/administrator position for the 2024-25 school year, D.V. We would be gladdened by inquiries and applications of individuals who are qualified, versatile, and dedicated but who also love the doctrine according to godliness. For more information about this position, please contact the principal, Mr. A. Vrugteveen at 905-563-3077 or principal@ecs.school.ca. Please send applications to the secretary of the school board, Mr. G. Brouwer, 1372 Gregory Road N., St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 6P9 or call 647-271-8984, or email gerry@ecs.school.ca.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, POMPTON PLAINS, NEW JERSEY. 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.

Relocation expenses and financial incentives will be discussed upon inquiry. For more information or to apply, please contact Tom Van Vugt (education chairman) at 973-703-1511 or email tomv@plainviewgrowers.com, or John Van Der Brink (administrator) at 973-628-7400 or email nrce_office@nrce.nj.org.

To All Candidates for Education 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!**

Teachers Needed

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, invites applications from elementary or secondary teachers for the 2024-25 school year, D.V. Applicants must be members of the NRC or a closely-related denomination and eligible for Alberta certification. Any inquiries should be directed to 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 and resumé with references to office@ccschool.ca.

EBEN-EZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, is inviting applications to fill full-time elementary teacher positions for the 2024-25 school year, D.V. We would be gladdened by inquiries and applications of individuals who are qualified, versatile, and dedicated but who also love the doctrine according to godliness. For more information about these positions, please contact the principal, Mr. A. Vrugteveen, at 905-563-3077 or principal@ecs.school.ca. Please send applications to the secretary of the school board, Mr. G. Brouwer, 1372 Gregory Road N., St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 6P9. Call 647-271-8984 or email gerry@ecs.school.ca.

EBENEZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN, is in urgent need of a teacher for the 2024-25 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. For any questions regarding this position and all interested applicants, please contact Randal Teunissen at 920-828-0225 or e-mail rdtunissen@yahoo.com.

EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, LYNDEN, WASHINGTON, is in need of a teacher for the 2024-2025 school year. We welcome applications for teachers at the elementary, middle, or high school level. To apply or request more information, please contact the administrator, Ms. Beth Bleeker, at bbleeker@nrce.slynden.org or the school board president, Mr. Jerry DeBruin, at 360-224-0901 or jdebruin3797@gmail.com.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is seeking to fill openings in grades 7-12: math, elementary, physical education, and secondary teaching. Some of these positions are part-time or full-time and can be combined depending upon qualifications and experience. For further information, please contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at 712-476-2821 or dan.breuer@nrcea.org.

PLYMOUTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, welcomes teaching applications for positions in elementary and secondary for the 2024-2025 school year. We particularly have a need in the high school. For more information or to request an application, please contact the school principal, Mr. Nate Bleeker, at 616-454-9481 or email nbleeker@plymouthchristian.us.

PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN, welcomes applications for teachers at the elementary and middle school levels. We are anticipating openings for the coming school year. For more information or to request an application, please contact the school administrator, Mr. Tom Kwekel, at 616-644-2661 or email at tkwekel@pcskzoo.com.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, continues to welcome inquiries about elementary and secondary positions. For elementary positions, contact Mr. Andrew Korevaar, elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or 519-863-2403 ext. 241. For secondary positions, contact Mr. Gerrit TenHove, secondaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or 519-863-2403 ext. 303. We continue to invite inquiries about our locally developed teaching/training program. Cover letters and resúmes should be submitted to hr@rcsnorwich.com. Applications will be reviewed; those applicants selected for interviews will be contacted by the school board.

The Banner of Truth in Audio Format

Monthly copies of the articles appearing in *The Banner of Truth* are available on MP3s and CDs for those who have reading difficulties such as poor vision. These MP3s are produced by a committee in Norwich, with the support of the Norwich consistory, who make the MP3s available to your consistory. Distribution of the MP3s and CDs are provided at no cost by your consistory. You may contact Mrs. Tillie Lamain at 616-242-0291 or blamain@netscape.net to arrange for a free subscription or to discontinue receiving *The Banner of Truth* on CD.

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From **THE BANNER OF TRUTH**
Publication Number (USPS 041-540)
11 Split Rock Road
Boonton Township, NJ 07005

Praise to God from All Creatures

The glories of my Maker, God,
My joyful voice shall sing,
And call the nations to adore
Their Former and their King.

'Twas His right hand that shaped our clay,
And wrought this human frame;
But from His own immediate breath
Our nobler spirits came.

We bring our mortal pow'rs to God,
And worship with our tongues;
We claim some kindred with the skies,
And join th'angelic songs.

Let groveling beasts of every shape,
And fowls of every wing,
And rocks, and trees, and fires, and seas,
Their various tributes bring.

Ye planets, to His honor shine,
And wheels of nature roll,
Praise Him in your unwearied course
Around the steady pole.

The brightness of our Maker's name
The wide creation fills,
And His unbounded grandeur flies
Beyond the heavenly hills.

—Isaac Watts

the
Banner
of Truth

February 2024
Volume 90, No. 2

The Official Periodical of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations of the United States and Canada