

# *the* **Banner** *of Truth*

**June 2026**  
Volume 92, No. 6

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

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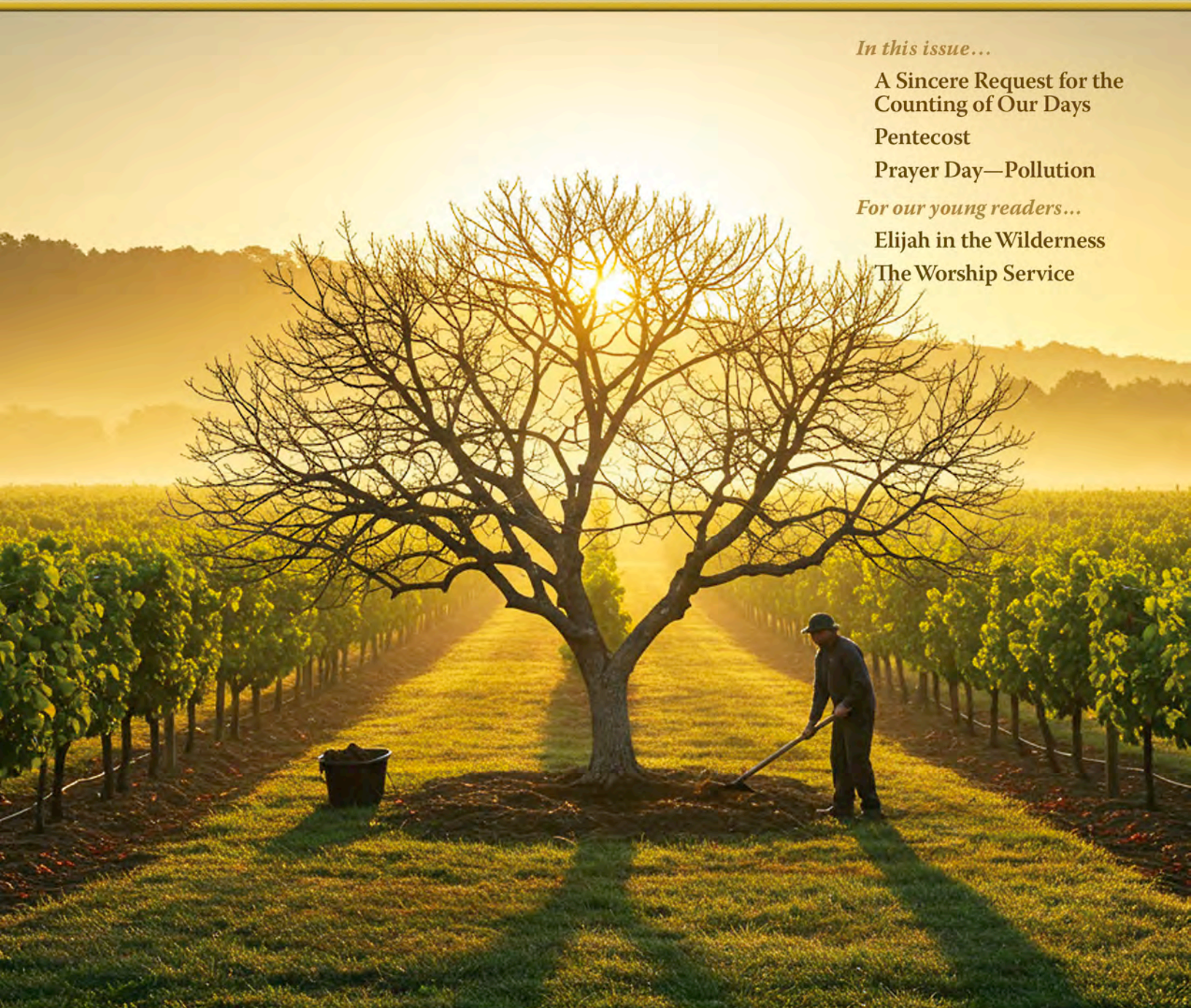
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*"Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt:  
for the tree is known by his fruit."* MATTHEW 12:33



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Cover: Barren fig tree | © biblestorieshub.com

### THE BANNER OF TRUTH

Publication Number: (USPS 041-540)

Monthly Official Publication of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations of the United States and Canada. Typeset (Archetype 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*  
2 Krasco Road, Oak Ridge, NJ 07438

#### 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 Ruitenburg, 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. Mike Klaassen, P.O. Box 54, Fort Macleod, AB T0L 0Z0, or e-mail nrdbnp@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.

For free sermons write to: Treasured Meditations, P.O. Box 2753, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

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## Meditation

### A Sincere Request for the Counting of Our Days

Rev. G.M. de Leeuw (Emeritus), Nobleford, AB

*“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Psalm 90:12).*

My dear reader and fellow traveler to eternity, we all have a place here upon earth in the time, and when we will come to the end of our life, a place in eternity. The place here upon earth is temporal; the place in eternity will be everlasting—yea, it will be endless and unchangeable. Having a place here upon earth is for one a short time, for the other a longer time. Yet, although it may be longer for some of us than for many others, for each one of us, individually, it will come to an end as well.

We all know the statement: “To die is to meet God.” Has this already had a place in our consideration? Do we carry the burden with us that very soon we all will have to meet our Maker? Do we realize this when again and again someone is taken out of this life—maybe one of our family, one of our colleagues, or one in our congregations? Oh, that is so serious a departure of first one and then another one until it will be our turn as well.

With the Lord’s help, we will give you some instruction regarding the words of the text placed at the beginning of this meditation. This psalm is “A Prayer of Moses the man of God.” The little word “so” refers to what is written in this 90th psalm regarding the shortness of man’s life.

How precious is our lifetime. How fast is it going by, as the tenth verse says regarding our life, that we fly away. In regard to this flying, there was in Moses’ time only a flying of birds. How different that was compared to our days, but our greatest need now is still the same as the greatest need then—our soul’s need. The meaning of the text is to teach us that during that time, and today, life is going very fast. In the Dutch language there is a statement: “Eer wij wat weten, zijn wij versleten.” Translated, this means: “Before you know anything, you are worn out.”

The numbering of our days, which is requested in the text, is that we have to count every day as a gift of the Lord—days given unto us to use as time, very precious time, to prepare for our meeting with our Maker. Our Maker is God.

*O teach Thou us to count our days  
And set our hearts on wisdom’s ways;  
Turn, Lord, to us in our distress,  
In pity now Thy servants bless;  
Let mercy’s dawn dispel our night,  
And all our day with joy be bright.*

—Psalter 246:1

Dear young people, baptized seed of the congregation, where do you spend your precious time? Are there those among you who like to search the Scriptures and all that is based upon them? Oh, I know the answer already; the attractiveness of this world is extremely strong and we are, in general, extremely weak. Dear youth, pray to the Lord to convert you, to help you in whatever circumstances you may have brought yourself. Do not ever forget your baptism. Wherever you go, you bear that sign upon you.

To all my dear readers, a question: do you know your Maker? Oh, when you have to answer this in the negative, then seek Him while He still is to be found in the time of grace—to be found for and by unworthy and guilty ones. When you, only by His mercy, may answer in the affirmative, what makes you to differ? Pray that your daily walk may be used for the benefit of your fellow travelers, for their transfer from the broad way to the narrow one. There IS still room on that narrow way. May it please the Lord to instruct us and our dear young people regarding this indispensable subject.

Dear people of God, a few steps more and you will arrive there, where no inhabitant will say I am sick. Oh, what will that be, when here most of the time we have been unworthy, unthankful, stubborn, and blind? Is there not a praying and thanking High Priest in heaven? If not, your case would be hopeless, but He is there, until the last one is gathered in.

Oh, what will that be? Everlasting joy will be upon them for ever and ever. “And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isaiah 35:10).

*Under the shadow of Thy throne  
Thy saints have dwelt secure;  
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,  
And our defense is sure.*

*Before the hills in order stood,  
Or earth received her frame,  
From everlasting Thou art God,  
To endless years the same.*

*O God, our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come,  
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,  
And our eternal home.*

—Psalter 247:2,3,6 ◻



## *Bible Study*

### **The Prophet Zephaniah (5)**

Rev. C. Van Dam (1893-1976)

(Translated from the February 4 through November 4, 1965 issues of *De Saambinder*)

Zephaniah also spoke of those who dressed in strange apparel, and we have quoted Isaiah 3 to illustrate this. If we do not close our eyes completely, what do we see in our day other than strange clothing, following the fashion of Paris? Simplicity and modesty are considered old-fashioned; people bow down to the fashion god, even at the expense of their health. Clothing, footwear, and hairstyles must be modern, right? Isaiah wrote in God's name that God would blow on them in a terrible way. He would humble that pride. If the Lord indeed visited Abraham's seed with a devastating judgment, what awaits the Netherlands, sometimes called the Israel of the West? (Or the countries of North America? —*Ed.*)

Zephaniah also spoke of people who leaped on the threshold and that the Lord would punish them. These were people who filled their masters' houses with violence and deceit. These words refer to merchants and their helpers. They imposed themselves brutally. It was almost impossible to get rid of them; they wanted to appropriate the property of their neighbors by force, if necessary, with lies and deceit. They leaped, as it were, on the threshold of their conscience, to silence it until it finally fell silent, and the hardening of the heart set in.

Is this not also a sign of the times, that there is so little reliability in commerce, and that many believe they can do whatever they want, as long as it remains hidden and they do not fall into the hands of the worldly judge? Hidden sins, however, provoke God's wrath just as much as public crimes. God will also punish hidden sins in His own time. He is merciful, but He is also just.

Just as He did with Abraham's seed, God has done very much for our people. He delivered us from Spain, just as He delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians. He gave our people excellent means of grace. He gathered a congregation of true Christian believers in our country. He gave us His servants, endowed with precious gifts of the Spirit, but what do we see now? The Dutch church lies torn and scattered, like bones at the mouth of the grave, as if someone on earth had cut and split something. Love has waxed cold, and unrighteousness has multiplied. People who used to love each other because of what God had done in their souls no longer look at each other, preferring to avoid each

other despite Christ's prayer: Father, I want them to be one, as We are one. All in all, is there really much difference between Judah and the Netherlands? Is there still reason to believe that Zephaniah's proclamation of judgment does not affect us?

We may well examine ourselves individually to see how we are doing and what the relationship between God and our soul is like. Everyone who reads this should also ask himself whether the sins of Judah and Jerusalem might not be his own personal sins. If this were the case (which God forbid), would God's threats not be a spur for us to break away from sin and call upon the name of the Lord to direct our lives according to His precious and eternal Word? Otherwise, it must be that we knowingly and willingly dare to load the heavy wrath of God upon ourselves.

Ultimately, each one will be held accountable for himself. Even if the entire people of Judah were to be involved in

the judgment, it would not result in the same intense distress for everyone. There were degrees of sin and also degrees in the execution of judgment; and so it will be with the future woes of the world, which, according to the Word of the Lord, are still to be expected. Above all, it is necessary to be earnestly active at God's throne of grace,

*There were degrees of sin, and also degrees in the execution of judgment; and so it will be with the future woes of the world, which, according to the Word of the Lord, are still to be expected. Above all, it is necessary to be earnestly active at God's throne of grace, seeking forgiveness of sins in the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

seeking forgiveness of sins in the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whatever may happen in the future, if peace with God may be enjoyed, man can endure much. Then it will also be confirmed: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Unrepentant and stubborn sinners will undoubtedly face God's vengeance, as Zephaniah prophesied for the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. All that he prophesied has been literally fulfilled, as it is clearly described how the Chaldeans entered the city and what happened to King Zedekiah and his sons. Oh, may it be taken to heart that the Lord is not an idle observer.

What do we read farther in the prophecies of Zephaniah concerning Judah and Jerusalem (verse 10)? "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that there shall be the noise of a cry from the fish gate, and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills." In that day,

that is, when the Chaldeans come and take the city. There would be a terrible roar of enemies, who would attack and kill anyone they would encounter. The wailing and lamentation of the mortally frightened inhabitants of Jerusalem would mingle with the clamor of the cruel, bloodthirsty Chaldeans. The high ramparts and the fortified city with its walls and gates would not shelter them from the wrath of

God, which would pursue them. They would die in despair, surrounded by enemies, and even if they escaped with their lives, they would have to go into slavery and exile.

If rumors of impending wars are already terrifying, what must that large-scale slaughter of people have caused in terms of extreme distress! The prophecy has literally been fulfilled. □

*(To be continued)*



## *A Word in Season*

### **Pentecost**

*Rev. W.C. Lamain (1904-1984)*

***“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).***

The feast of Pentecost is the feast of fulfillment. The day of Pentecost is a most glorious day, and it is hallowed by the God of Israel. The outpouring of the Holy Ghost was already foretold to the church in the promises we read in Isaiah 44 and Joel 2. Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, longed for the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Numbers 11:29).

Christ had promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples and His Church, also after His resurrection. With joy the disciples had returned from the Mount of Olives. Things then were so different from what they were at the time of His death. At the time of His death, they were sorrowful and dejected, and all their hopes were gone, but now they rejoiced. He had given them such precious and comforting promises.

The disciples, as Christ had charged them, were assembled in the upper room together with a group that numbered about one hundred twenty people. The group in the upper room was the revelation of the true Church. It was not just a number of individuals. Oh, no! They were united in heart and in mind, in and through Christ, by reason of the good pleasure of the Father. There was no strife among them as to who should be accounted the greatest, but in every heart was the prayer, “Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence” (Isaiah 64:1).

They were given faith to plead upon that which God Himself had promised. They all had the same desires, namely, the fulfillment of the divine promises, the complete glorification of Christ, and the filling of their heart. By grace, they had enjoyed and experienced much. However, what they now lacked was greater than what they had received and

enjoyed. God Himself had discovered that lack unto them, and that discovery impelled them to seek for that which could supply their need.

There are very few of such assemblies in our day. Generally speaking, we do not need each other because we have so little need of God. The wanderings away from God are very evident, and there is such a complete satisfaction with what has been received on the part of the true Church of God. There are more converted than unconverted people. I hope you understand what I mean by that. If we are honest, we need not search very far to find that condition. If only we were more unconverted, then God could bestow something upon us, and we would live more to the honor of God. Oh, that God would yet pour out His Spirit!

Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. Suddenly God hastened to fulfill His promise. He is a surprising God unto them that long for Him in faith. He will deliver them speedily. Christ shall suddenly come to His temple (Malachi 3:1). In the Song of Solomon, the bride says, “The voice of my Beloved! behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.”

To such longing people the psalmist says,

*Fear not, though succor be delayed,  
Still wait for God, and He will hear;  
Be strong, nor be thy heart dismayed,  
Wait, and the Lord shall bring thee aid,  
Yea, trust and never fear.*

— Psalter 73

It was a sound from heaven. Heaven had received the Mediator, who with His own blood entered into the holy place, and now, upon the basis of that atonement, the Holy Ghost was sent from heaven. All that is essential to the honor of God and the salvation of our souls comes from heaven. When God comes, He fills our hearts with the joy of salvation. With nothing less than that which comes from

heaven can we be saved and delivered. Only the work of God is important and has value for eternity. All those who seek to help themselves and to save themselves shall perish forever. God's people are drawn to heaven. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help" (Psalm 121:1).

It was a sound as of a rushing mighty wind. That sign is in full accord with the great work of God. It points to the absolute sovereignty and undeniable work of God. Not once, but again and again the Spirit of God is likened unto the wind. God is free in His ministrations and in the imparting of grace. According to His eternal good pleasure, He redeems whom He pleases to redeem, and whom He wills He leaves in the fall and ruin wherein they have involved themselves by their own free and wanton act of separation from God.

Those who are included in that eternal purpose of God are, in the time of His good pleasure, called with a holy calling. By nature, no one seeks for God. We have all become enemies of God and desire not the knowledge of His ways. The one is drawn out of the slavery of sin and the other out of his state of self-righteousness. No matter how deeply rooted they are in sin or in a self-willed religion, when that wind of the Spirit begins to blow, they are stopped in their way, and God conquers them. They are humbled, and as a lost sinner they bow before the Most High God and plead with their Judge for mercy.

By the operation of that blessed Spirit, proceeding from the Father and from the Son, they are stripped of all that is of self to find their salvation only in Christ. No one has the ability, nor the power, to release his hold on any one thing of which he must be rid. Neither can anyone, including God's servants and children, rid us of anything harmful or unprofitable. That is the work of that Spirit of judgment and of burning, who causes us to look away from self and casts down within us all the high places which exalt themselves against the knowledge of Christ. It is He who exalts within us the riches of God's grace in Christ so that we glory in naught else but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is God's own work to fill the heart with the Holy Ghost. So it was on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem, and so it is today.

The Spirit filled all the house where they were sitting but also the hearts of those present. Christ is glorified in them as the Ordained of the Father and as the Surety of the covenant. He is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. On the one hand the Spirit empties the hearts, and on the other hand He fills the hearts. The elect people of God are emptied of all that is of self, that they may be filled with the fullness of God. They are ministered unto out of the wellspring of Israel, and with joy they draw water out of the wells of salvation. Oh, it is an ocean of grace which flows out of Christ.

Oh, that we might have a Pentecost in our hearts! Then the fear of God would flourish, the righteousness of Christ would shine forth, and holiness would spread its luster abroad. May the Spirit of God fill our hearts. It is God's own work to fill the heart with the Holy Ghost.

Cloven tongues like as of fire were seen, and it sat upon each of them. By the Spirit of God, the elect people are not only cleansed and sanctified but also warmed and enlightened. Christ was given of the Father not only unto wisdom but also unto righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, not one of them excluded. They all received a share in Christ, and all are partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. The Spirit of God entered their hearts to remain forever. He will never forsake His Church.

Oh, that God's church, our homes, and our hearts would be filled with that precious Spirit. By nature, we do not possess that Spirit, and of ourselves we cannot lay hold on Him. May the Spirit of life be poured out in many hearts unto quickening from death unto life so that the dead might hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear it shall live. Then the honor and the virtues of God would be important above all else, and exalting them would become the highest purpose in our life.

Oh, that we might have a Pentecost in our hearts! Then the fear of God would flourish, the righteousness of Christ would shine forth, and holiness would spread its luster abroad. May the Spirit of God fill our hearts. It is God's

own work to fill the heart with the Holy Ghost. So, it was on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem, and so it is today. Times may change, but God remains the same. The way of salvation and the way to salvation shall never change.

Oh, beloved, value highly the privilege of living under the pure means of grace. The things necessary for you to know that you may live and die happily are often and clearly set before you. The state of death by reason of Adam's fall is made known unto you, but you are taught also that there is salvation for a poor, lost, and guilty sinner in Christ and in His righteousness. You are taught that the Holy Spirit must make His abode in your heart, to the end that He apply to you personally the things merited by Christ. We cannot simply accept them and apply them unto ourselves. A supernatural work of grace must be glorified in our souls. We must be severed from Adam and implanted into Christ. We must be born again and be united with Christ by the Holy Spirit.

My unconverted fellow traveler to eternity, whereas you are now without the Spirit of God, may Pentecost take place in your heart. It is not hopeless for either old or young. The day of grace is not yet past. You are living in the accepted time, in the precious day of salvation. God still sends out His servants and causes His Word to be proclaimed. Harden not your hearts against the summons sent to you from heaven. Oh, that also in your heart might be heard that sound from heaven, and that as a lost sinner you might find a place at the feet of the Lord Jesus. Help is laid upon

One who is mighty to save. Christ is able to save those to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.

May the Spirit of God bring about conviction and discovery, that the riches of God's grace may yet shine forth in many hearts. The world is so poor and empty, but in God, through Christ, there is an eternal fullness. That Spirit glorifies Christ in the hearts of the elect. Oh, could it be

that we might yet see something of it! God Triune would be glorified, the church would be gladdened, and your souls would rejoice. Your tongue, now silent, would proclaim the praise of the Lord who favored you with His grace to the end that one day you shall eternally glorify that God of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things. □



## *Instructive Gleanings*

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### **Righteousness** (4)

*Rev. P. Kleijer, Lethbridge, AB*

***“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness”***  
(Ephesians 6:14).

### **Breastplate of Righteousness**

Loud was the cry in Ephesus, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” It filled the city with confusion. Many people who cried did not even know what was taking place. In the deepest sense, what was the reason? Satan was trying to destroy the works of God. It does not matter to him what means he uses for that. There are times that he uses persecution, while at other times he acts very subtly—one time as a roaring lion, another time as an angel of light. Sometimes the question is asked: When is Satan the most dangerous—when he comes with a smile, or when he comes with an angry face? Paul knew the answer. We like to have peace, but so often it is nothing more than a false peace, and we calmly travel to our eternal destruction. We need to be on our watch, Paul said to the Ephesians and, also, to the Church of today. This will give continual strife. What is necessary in this strife? We read the answer in the verses 11 and 12, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

Here Paul had a heavily armed Roman soldier in mind and used the metaphors we read of in the Old Testament, for example, in Isaiah 11:5, “And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins.” Other references in the Old Testament are Isaiah 49:2 and 59:17. Twice we read that we must put on the whole armour of God (verses 11 and 13). The whole armour is the entire armour wherewith God arms us against all the assaults of Satan. The weapons here mentioned are all *defensive* weapons, except for the sword of the Word, which is an *offensive* weapon.

Beloved reader, before explaining our text, I need to ask you a question. On what side do you stand? There are only two possibilities: you either fight under the banner of the Prince of Darkness, or under the banner of Prince Immanuel. By nature, we are under the banner of the Prince of Darkness, and it is only by grace if this may be different. Young and old, is it your longing to fight under the banner of Prince Immanuel? We need to exchange kings. This is something that happens in the hour of regeneration. In God's Word we see some for whom it seemed that they fought the spiritual battle, but halfway or even later in life, they turned back. We read, “Demas hath forsaken me.” We need to be quickened in order to be able to fight this good fight, otherwise we can have much activism, but it is not from God.

Our text begins with “Stand therefore.” This means, stand firm! This is only possible in the strength of God. When God's people go in their own strength, they will fall, like Peter did in the hall of Caiaphas. Therefore, they must be girded with the truth. The annotations of the Dutch Bible read as follows, “Some hereby understand uprightness, in contrast to hypocrisy; others, the truth of doctrine in contrast to all errors and heresies.” Both explanations are applicable. In the Orient, the clothes hung loosely around the people's bodies. You needed a girdle to pull them up in order to be able to fight. The girdle gave strength and freedom of action. We may hold general truths in our minds, but we need more than that; we must have the truth in our hearts. How else can we fight the good fight? Dead orthodoxy is nothing more than a spider's web, says an old writer. Have we received divine knowledge from the Lord? This alone can give strength and confidence in the spiritual strife.

Paul points out that we need the “breastplate of righteousness.” We read in Isaiah 59:17, “For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head; and He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.” In this text is written that

Christ does this. He will bruise the head of the serpent. In our text, however, Paul speaks of God's child doing so. How many enemies are coming up against God's people. Every day they have to be on their watch. A breastplate is a piece of armour that covers the body from neck to thigh. It consists of two parts, one covering the front, the other the back. What is the spiritual meaning of the "breastplate of righteousness"? Commentators speak of godliness of life and a good conscience. What fiery darts, and how many accusations, can come to a child of God. God's people can be accused of matters of which they know they are not guilty, but if these accusations are true, God's child is like one who has no breastplate. They will be mortally wounded. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, places much stress on the necessity of walking worthy of the vocation wherewith the Lord had called them.

The question comes to you and me, what does the world see in us as a church? Sometimes the church is very negatively spoken of. Sometimes it is without any ground, but

often people have a point because how is our walk before God? Is it not often contrary to what we confess? In doing this, we dishonor the name of the Lord. People of God, can you help yourself with your own breastplate of righteousness? You say, "Ah, that will give me no protection. I cannot stand against the accusations of conscience, the whispers of despondency, the power of temptation. When Satan blows upon me, I will fall." What do you need, child of God? The righteousness of Christ—this is the breastplate that we need. This gives a sure defense to all that comes from within and from without. How true it is what Christ Himself said, "Without Me, ye can do nothing."

*Lord, hear the right, regard my cry,  
My prayer from lips sincere;  
Send Thy approval from on high,  
My righteousness make clear.  
Thou in the night my heart hast tried,  
Nor found it turned from Thee aside.*

—Psalter 32:1 ◻

(To be continued)



## *For Young and Old*

### **Prayer Day—Pollution**

*Rev. J.W. Verweij, Zwijndrecht, the Netherlands*

(Translated from the March 12, 1992 issue of *De Saambinder*)

***“And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken Thy commandments, which Thou hast commanded by Thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness”*** (Ezra 9:10&11).

**E**nvironmental pollution is an issue that is much talked about in social life. Certainly, it is not all the same how we treat God's Creation. Here, too, we and every other person bear our personal responsibility. The command to till and preserve God's Creation remains in full force and effect, but in the call to keep this sinking world livable, we hear of the responsibility for *one another*, but not for *Him who created and formed us*.

In the days of Ezra, there was serious environmental pollution. In what land did this occur? It was in the land of promise, where the LORD brought back the returning exiles from Babylon because of His unchanging covenant faithfulness. Ezra, as a priest, received from King Artaxerxes the authority to reform everything in Jerusalem according to God's Law. An announcement was made to him by the

princes of the land that touched him very deeply. The cause of the environmental pollution was revealed to him. It had a deep root. It did not stem from the violation of the country's environmental laws but of the violation of the commandment of the Most High.

By the grace of the Most High and only High Priest from the heavenly sanctuary, it brought this priest into true humility before God's countenance. It is grace—through the saving ministry of the Holy Spirit—to bow under this pollution as a guilty one before God.

What was the cause of this pollution? “The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites” (verse 1b). They had hardly been delivered from the exile in which they had to spend seventy years because of these sins, and they returned again to transgressing the commandment of the Most High. The sinner is incorrigible in doing evil against that good-doing Being. “For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea,

the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass” (verse 2). The spiritual leaders of the people, the priests and Levites, led the way. The worldly leaders set the wrong example. What was the cause? Pure materialism, to be assured of protection from others, and expansion of earthly possessions. From what does this matter of those days—and of today—proceed? “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:14&15).

That root to environmental pollution is common. We have broken with God and no longer want to walk the way of His commandments. This revealed itself among the sanctified seed then, and also today—in Christ separated from the world, yet so worldly, always shifting the boundaries that God’s commandment has set around our lives. We are not so particular when it comes to sin because it is our life. We take an unholy delight in offending God through our sins. The depraved principle of the unclean and corrupt existence of us all is the forsaking of God’s commandments, but the new principle, which God works in us without our aid, finds delight in God’s Law after the inward man. Do we know this struggle against the depraved lusts of our wicked existence? Or do we allow ourselves to be carried away by it like the remnant of the old covenant people, who were allowed to return from the land of misery after the unflinching faithfulness of the God of the covenant?

The commandment that Israel should dwell alone is ancient. The LORD knows the evil lusts of the hearts of us all by which we are so deeply polluted. That is why His commandment was so insistent to Israel, that in the land of promise, which was so filthy with the immorality of the first inhabitants, they should not defile themselves with all their idolatry from one end to the other. This gave and still gives full scope to the pollution of the sensual lusts of our flesh which is sold by sin. Therefore, Israel shall dwell alone and not mingle with the heathen nations, but the whole existence of those people to whom the LORD showed His kindness and faithfulness was a preaching of forsaking His wholesome commandments. Again, Ezra had to learn of these heinous sins, for which they experienced God’s righteous punishments. This brought this ambassador of God into true repentance before the spotless countenance of that pure Being. “And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished” (verse 3). Not only Ezra mourned but also all who feared the God of Israel. “Then

were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice” (verse 4).

This violation of the holy commandment is still present today. How many of our young people seek a partner for life outside the holy seed, thereby trampling God’s commandment without any shame through the lusts of our depraved flesh. Also, how are parents partly to blame when the boundary that the LORD indicates in His holy commandment is crossed, and our home is open to worldly people who defile our religion with their gods. Where are the Ezras today who, with a priestly-moved heart in true repentance, humble themselves before God’s countenance over this sin? Where are they who tremble before the words of the God of Israel?

There is much complaining but no complaining about our sins which violate His majesty. Come, and let us return unto the LORD, for in keeping His commandments there is a great reward. “In evil we have gone astray, and sinful is our race; rebelliously our fathers walked, forgetful of Thy grace.” What an excellent place to humble ourselves before Him with our personal sins and those of our family and society but, also, to know a pure desire to live before Him in sincerity. That is the fruit of Him who, as the praying High Priest, always lives to pray for His people; who by Himself brings to Himself all that tremble at the words of God.

Come, let us teach our children diligently not only to fear Him who is to be feared but also to forsake the world and worldly lusts. Hear the commandment which speaks to us as the holy seed, that by the guidance of the Holy Spirit we may practice the spiritual sense of that commandment. “Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever” (verse 12). Then there is a place that suits us all. What a blessed place it is when God brings us there. “O LORD God of Israel, Thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before Thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before Thee because of this” (verse 15).

*Yea, they are kept from paths of sin  
Who walk in God’s appointed way;  
Thy precepts Thou hast given us  
That we should faithfully obey.*

—Psalter 321:2 □

## Luke 13:6-9

He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.



## *Among All Nations*

### **What Did Theodore Vander Groe Say About Israel?**

*Rev. J.M.D. de Heer, Rotterdam-IJsselmonde, the Netherlands*

(Taken from the book *What Our Fathers Said About Israel*, Chapter 15)

Rev. Theodore Vander Groe (1705-1784) had little expectation for the time in which he lived. He was deeply saddened by the spiritual and moral declension of the people and the church of the Netherlands. Human wisdom had made its way into church and society. Increasingly, preachers had positive thoughts about man's abilities.

Would a divine wonder really need to happen in man's life? If only man believes and leads a virtuous life, would not the Lord reward such believing and well-meaning people?

Against this background, Rev. Vander Groe portrayed with stark colors the difference between true grace and false grace. In doing so, he addressed a topic that is still a timely one. The minister of Kralingen, near Rotterdam, the Netherlands, also raised his voice against the decline of his days. Especially in the cutting sermons preached on prayer days about the sins of society at large, and the church in particular, he spared no flesh. Time and again he emphasized that there was not the least reason for complacency. If God should come with His righteous judgments, who would not fear?

Often the choice of his text for these prayer days was a message by itself. Once he gave Jeremiah 6:8 as his text: "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest My soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited." At another occasion he gave a strict warning: "Woe also to them when I depart from them!" (Hosea 9:12b). Or he issued a call: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways" (Ezekiel 33:11b).

The congregation must have been puzzled when another prayer day arrived and the pastor chose Romans 11:26 for his text. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Was this an appropriate text for a prayer day sermon? Yes, it was, and a wonderful one at that! The shepherd of Kralingen undertook to speak about the Jewish people, "the first and ancient people of the Lord." He called on his hearers to "perceive God's awe-inspiring and holy ways with this nation." When the Jews had filled the measure of their sins, God expelled them from the

Promised Land, made them come back again, but dismissed them once more approximately forty years after they had rejected the Lord Jesus. They had to leave His house "just as a faithless and adulterous wife is sent away."

Rev. Vander Groe continued by saying that the Lord then turned to the Gentiles to adopt them as His people: "Since that time this faithful God has established His covenant also with the nations and placed His sanctuary among them forever and ever." The pressing question that remains, however, is how things will go with the Jews. In a compassionate manner the old divine of the Further Reformation calls them wretched and miserable, in light of the fact that they "have found themselves under that extremely heavy judgment of the holy God for more than seventeen centuries." Nevertheless, God still bears them as they continue to be His people and will forever remain so. The minister of Kralingen was convinced that their sad condition of dismissal and rejection would one day cease to exist: "With great and wondrous power" God will exert Himself "to bring His Jewish wife home, that ancient and adulterous nation which is now entirely estranged and separated from Him for so long."

What is the greatest benefit that the Jewish people cannot do without? Romans 11:26 gives a clear answer to this question. "The great Lord, the Messiah, the faithful Lord and Bridegroom and the almighty Redeemer of His Church will then in mercy return to His old and abandoned people." It must have been with adoration that Rev. Vander Groe cried out from his pulpit, "What an abyss of Christ's unchangeableness and faithfulness opens itself up before our eyes in this glorious prophecy!"

As a faithful servant of God, the minister did not fail to apply this message to his hearers in a most personal way: "Oh my friends, it is now high time for all of us to rightly and believingly know our blessed Redeemer, the Saviour of Zion, and to stop spurning and despising Him and His divine help and grace." It was an application for the people of Kralingen, but also one that we should take to heart! □

*(To be continued)*

The fear of God must be an abiding fear. It should not only be at that instant when you are worshiping God, or speaking of any of God's titles and names, but must abide on your hearts after the duty is over.

—Jeremiah Burroughs (1599-1646)



## Commentary

### The Twelve Apostles (8)

Rev. H. de Leeuw, Brant County, ON

#### A Given Answer to an Incomprehensible Event in God's Church

In the last article, we wrote about the dealings that the Lord Jesus had with Peter. Those dealings were important to the reinstatement of Peter into his office of apostleship. Now with this benefit applied, work was waiting for Peter. The Scriptures so clearly reveal an urgency which calls Peter to this task. You may read it in Acts 1:15a: "In those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples." Those words reveal the urgency. Peter does not stand up on his own account but on the account of His Master. With liberty he may reveal his place among the brethren. Among those brethren there is a questioning regarding Judas—a questioning regarding the possibility of such a display of despair within Christ's circle of called disciples. What did Judas do, or why did he do it? Peter acknowledges this in verse 17, "For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry."

How often there can be questions regarding the counsel of the Lord which He fulfills in His Church. How many times does this counsel not reveal itself to us with surprises? Judas was the treasurer of the group; he had a trusted position. Peter receives light and direction and may take leadership among the brethren. He may reveal how God's Word was fulfilled in this! Peter may direct the brethren to Psalm 41:9: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." The Scriptures give direction that also this was in the counsel of the Lord. What does this answer? In the great questions of God's counsel, His Word gives direction.

The Word of God reveals not only what took place but also what has to follow. The Church must continue to be served. Here they are waiting for the fulfillment of Pentecost; there is expectation among the brethren. Notice that the Church may never lose sight of this in all the troubles that may reveal themselves. One thing always remains sure: as long as the sun and moon continue, His Church shall be gathered. No matter the deep ways that may roll over His inheritance, there remains expecta-

tion! That is also an encouragement for our readers today.

Judas' place became empty but also needs to be filled. Another must be chosen to be an apostle. The requirements are held before them; the replacement has to be an eyewitness of the ministry of Christ. They select two men: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. These names are testimonies that in the deep ways which may roll over the Church, the Lord desires to raise up new ones to serve in their places. From this duo Matthias is chosen; Matthias *receives* a place among the eleven apostles.

In this history we may see how Peter stood up among his brethren with a message and with leadership skills. That must have been a wonder to him regarding the situation. No doubt he had to think back to his denial. The wonder for Peter in this was the sovereign good pleasure of the Lord. The only difference was from God's side. Kept by the power of faith—where Judas committed suicide, Peter was kept. Where Judas fulfilled the Scriptures regarding the betrayal of Jesus, Peter was the fulfillment of grace to an unworthy one in self who had denied his Master.

Judas had a place in the church. How this must lead us to self-examination. In this self-examination the only answer can be that we are kept by the power of faith because of an interceding High Priest. Carefulness must beset us to see that, among the twelve whom Christ chose, Judas had a place. However, we may also notice that no matter what happens in Christ's Church, He stands above it. Never will the Lord lose control over His Church despite the attacks of Satan against it. In the difficult ways, you may see that the answer lays in submission to His counsel. Submission to His counsel gives rest. Then even when difficult, hard to process events, and heart-wrenching catastrophes take place, which may lead to so many questions, they were answered by Peter, standing up to reveal from the Scriptures that it was all in the Lord's counsel as fulfillment of the Scriptures. Especially notice from this history that the Church may continue after this horrible event. The Lord raised up a new instrument to gather His elect from the four corners of the world. □

*(To be continued)*

The Spirit never loosens where the Word binds; the Spirit never justifies where the Word condemns; the Spirit never approves where the Word disapproves; the Spirit never blesses where the Word curses.

—Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)



## Questions from Our Readers

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### The After Preacher

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

*Often it is heard in prayer at the end of a sermon "wilt Thou be the after Preacher." What is meant by this statement?*

Time and again we are reminded how many expressions the congregation hears which are so common we never even think about their meaning. The above-mentioned example, I believe, is one of them, and hopefully a short explanation will be beneficial for our readers.

No searching of resources helped me find a definition, so it will have to suffice to give you a description. While attending church, we hear the Word preached or—in a reading service—the sermon read. In both cases it concerns the ministry of the Word. It is a solemn matter to be under the proclamation of law and gospel, death in Adam and life in Christ, along with warning, instruction, guidance, the sincere and well-meant offer of grace in Christ, and every facet related to the preaching of the Word. The field of the congregation is being sown by the good seed of the Word. Matthew 13 shows us clearly that not all seed also bears fruit. Alas! Actually, much of the good seed is lost. Some falls by the wayside upon stony places, other is devoured by the birds of the air and again other is lost when it springs up quickly but has no depth of earth, no root, and soon withers away. This occurs every time the Word is cast out as a seed!

Afterwards, the congregation leaves the house of God and returns home. The sower has gone forth to sow. The field was plowed, the ground prepared, the good seed of the Word was cast out. The questions now remain: "What shall be the fruit?" "Will there be fruit?" Before the hearers go home, a prayer is prayed from the pulpit. "Lord, wilt Thou be the after Preacher." I believe this means: may what was heard in church not be lost. Wilt Thou come back upon it when we come home or may not what we have heard be so quickly forgotten. May there be a preaching of the Holy Spirit that follows upon what we heard! That is, may the Holy Spirit work it out further and deeper into the heart. May it be blessed. May a word or phrase come back that we cannot forget or let go. May one kernel of seed be used. May we do what we read of the clean animals in Leviticus 11

and Deuteronomy 14. A sure mark of a clean animal was that it would chew the cud. Applied to the matter here, allegorically, this means to ruminate, to let the word penetrate deeply, meditate, let the power of the Word infiltrate our hearts by repeating it again in the mind.

I am convinced that this petition is much needed and very beneficial when it pleases the Lord to fulfill it. Often, we hear the complaint during house visitation that impressions are lost, that there is so little fruit—that so many impressions are fleeting, temporary. How many older hearers do we hear say: I hear it and it is forgotten by the time I come home.

Ministers also need the after Preacher because there is the evil one who is so often present after the service. In the same chapter of Matthew 13, we read of him: "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way..." And the Lord Jesus said in verse 28b, "An enemy hath done this." The damage this evil one can do is so devastating. Then it is a blessing if the Lord gives to hear also the voice of the other after Preacher!

I read a statement by Dr. J.H. Bavinck related to ministers: "We write meditations but we don't meditate." How true this often is. Meditation is a holy art. It is to ponder, to think about it, to let it sink in. In my Bible I found a striking marginal note by Psalm 1:2b: "And in His law doth he meditate day and night." It read, "Ponder by talking to oneself." Apparently, the Old Testament Jews would do this often, half aloud, almost whispering, speaking it to oneself so, as it were, to re-chew what they had heard or read.

Yes, therefore, may what we sing in Psalter 40:6 be often the case:

*I pray that my words and my thoughts  
May all with Thy precepts accord,  
And ever be pleasing to Thee,  
My Rock, my Redeemer, my Lord.*

Then you will need and come to know what and who the after Preacher is! □

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

The Scriptures are the golden mines in which alone the abiding treasures of eternity are to be found, and therefore worthy of all the digging and pains we can bestow on them.

—Robert Leighton (1611-1684)



## Current Events

### Iranian Christian Protester Denied Gravestone

The family of an Iranian Christian convert killed during the January massacre by the Islamic Republic's security forces continues to be prevented from installing a gravestone over his resting place. The forty-two-year-old was one of at least twenty-two Christians who were among the tens of thousands killed in the deadly crackdown on the nationwide protests that preceded the war. The husband and father to three girls, was shot from behind while attempting to recover the body of a close friend killed during a demonstration and died after being prevented from entering the local hospital. His sister-in-law reported that his family was ordered to sign a form falsely stating that he had been a member of a IRGC paramilitary group and had been killed by the protesters. When they refused, they had to pay around eight thousand dollars to be given back his body. The family were then prevented from holding a funeral or mourning ceremony for him and blocked from installing a gravestone. It is also reported that a number of other gravestones of those killed in the massacre were recently defaced or covered over with cement, and that pressure has been placed on the families of those killed to change the phrases inscribed on their gravestones, such as "Son of Iran" or "Javidnam," which translates as "eternal name" and has become a popular way of referring to those who were slain.

—ArticleEighteen.com

### Attempt to Whitewash Genocide by Nigeria

A new report from International Christian Concern (ICC) highlights how Nigeria's government is weaponizing misinformation to hide a decades-long campaign of violence against Christians. This report reveals how power, politics, and propaganda are fueling a human catastrophe. Since 2009, at least 190,150 Nigerians—128,750 of whom were Christians—have been killed in ethno-religious killings, with the slaughter escalating in 2026. Yet, instead of addressing the crisis, officials are spinning a dangerous narrative. During meetings with other heads of state, the Nigerian President claimed the terrorism plaguing his nation stems solely from climate change and regional instability. Researchers have repeatedly debunked this reasoning, pointing to the targeting of Christian communities. The murder of clerics is no accident. It is part of a deliberate strategy to erase religious freedom. The deception does not end there; the president's administration has launched a ten-million-dollar lobbying front to silence human rights accountability in the U.S. and whitewash the genocide of Nigerian Christians. This is not just spin—it is a calculated effort to rewrite history while innocent lives are increasingly at risk (*the full report can be read on the following website —Ed.*)

—Persecution.org

### In Canada Bill C-9 is Debated

During continued debates over Bill C-9, many senators in Canada commented about how it could affect fundamental constitutionally protected rights. This shows that collective advocacy is having an impact as Senators relayed concerns expressed to them and emphasized the need "to reassure Canadians that their freedom of religious expression remains protected." A key focus of the debate surrounded the removal of the good-faith religious defense as Bill C-9 creates a "structural change to Canada's hate propaganda framework." This impacts the balance between protecting Canadians from hatred and

safeguarding freedom of religion and expression. The good-faith religious defense was intended to provide clarity in both protecting fundamental freedoms and applying the law. Removing it creates a chilling effect that may infringe constitutionally protected freedoms. By removing the good-faith religious expression defense, Bill C-9 introduces a greater degree of legal ambiguity. It leaves more to interpretation—by police officers deciding whether to investigate, by prosecutors determining whether to lay criminal charges and, ultimately, by judges tasked with interpreting the law—about where the line is drawn between lawful expression and criminal conduct. Senators were also critical of the "clarifying" provisions that were added to Bill C-9; they are overly broad and do not provide "the same level of certainty, clarity, or confidence" as the good-faith religious defense.

—CCCC.org

### Erosion in Democrat Support for Israel

The U.S. Senate rejected proposals to block U.S. arms sales to Israel, but the vote exposed an unprecedented divide within the Democratic Party over American military aid to the Jewish state. A record number of Democratic senators supported halting the sale of equipment to Israel. The number of Democrats supporting these measures has doubled compared to previous attempts over the past two years. The growing Democratic support for canceling these deals stems from dissatisfaction within the party with the policies of Israel's government, as well as the wars in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran. Supporters of the measures argued that the Senate should halt the transfer of new weapons to Israel, claiming they are intended to support the war against Tehran. Israeli diplomatic officials warned that the vote reflects a historic erosion in support for unconditional U.S. aid to Israel, with opposition that was once confined to the fringes of the Democratic Party now moving into the mainstream.

—YNetNews.com

### Russia's Losses in Ukraine Shocking

Russia's confirmed military losses in Ukraine have exceeded 350,000 dead since the start of the full-scale invasion, according to a joint investigation by three news outlets. The investigation estimates that at least 352,000 Russian servicemen were killed between February 2022 and the end of 2025. The figure is based on named casualty lists, Russia's inheritance registry, and court records reviewed by the three outlets. The investigation states that casualty levels increased significantly during 2024 and 2025, as combat intensity along the front line escalated. The outlets said their estimate represents a minimum documented figure and does not include foreign nationals fighting for Russia or soldiers still officially listed as missing without completed court procedures. (*Although there is much conflicted reporting, much reporting indicates Ukraine has significantly less losses —Ed.*) According to the investigation, losses may also be affecting Russia's ability to replenish manpower. The report referenced Ukrainian military estimates claiming that since 2025, Russian forces lost approximately 156,700 personnel killed or wounded, while recruiting around 148,400 volunteers. Ukraine reported on May 9 that Russian forces had lost an additional 1,080 troops in just the previous twenty-four hours. Moscow's estimated total personnel losses (*confirmed deaths, and wounded, captured, and missing —Ed.*) since February 2022 is more than 1.34 million.

—United24Media.com

As the wicked are hurt by the best things—so the godly are bettered by the worst. —William Jenkyn (1613-1685)



# Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

## A Boy from Stavenisse (13)

C. Visser-Sluiser

(Reprinted with permission from the book, *Leen Potappel, A Boy from Stavenisse*)

### To the Captain

*(Leen could not keep quiet. His King commanded him to speak. It concerns His honor. "We will make up a report about this," decides the corporal. "Private Potappel will hear more about this.")*

"How did you dare?" a soldier asked Leen later. "Now you are going to be in for it. Didn't you know that you may not reprimand a corporal just like that?"

Leen nods. "Certainly Jan, I know that, but he also did something he is not allowed to do. I had to say something about that."

Jan inspects Leen from head to foot. "Never before did I see a strange fellow like you. You are not a bad guy, but I do not understand you either."

Leen tries to explain why cursing is so terrible, but Jan just laughs about it and lets him talk. Leen isn't kept in suspense long. Soon he is summoned to come to the captain.

"Lord, be with me," pleads Leen while he follows the soldier who has to bring him to the captain.

He is actually somewhat afraid of the stern captain. When the soldiers are on the square in front of the barracks for roll call, the captain often roars like a lion. Most of the soldiers do not care for him. Still, Leen feels wonderfully peaceful. When he is standing in front of the captain, he doesn't even feel his heart pounding anymore.

The captain is sitting behind a large desk. At first, he acts as if he doesn't notice Leen standing in the room. He calmly continues writing with scratching swirls of his pen. Suddenly he looks up. He briefly lets his stern glance glide over the soldier from Stavenisse. Did that man dare to reprimand his superior? How did he dare? "So, you are the person who is refusing to do his duty?" he begins.

Leen shakes his head. "I did not refuse to do my duty, captain."

"So, you didn't refuse to do your duty. What did

you do then?" He folds his large hands under his chin and looks at the impudent soldier. He has a frown line above his eyebrows.

"I told the corporal that he shouldn't curse so terribly." Leen calmly looks at the stern man behind the desk.

The captain lowers his hands. The veins on his forehead swell, and his face turns red with anger. "Who do you actually think you are? How do you dare to speak to a corporal about his behavior? A common soldier is strictly forbidden to speak to his superior." He growls with anger when he sees the boy standing in front of him so calmly. "Just wait, man; we will get you to pipe down. I have very good methods for that..." He had risen during his fit of anger. His eyes take on a venomous expression. "In your piousness, you will probably say that I cannot do this. Just like Jesus told Pilate: 'Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.' But I will punish you, whether your God wants it or not." He laughs mockingly. Then he follows his words with a coarse curse and points to the door: "You can leave."

Leen stands deathly still for a few moments. A stab of pain flashes through his body upon hearing the curse. Oh, the name of the Lord is so dear to him. Tears spring into his eyes as he leaves.

At the door he turns to the captain. "At some time, the captain will discover that he has misused the name of God. His name is holy," he says with calm courage. He softly closes the door.

Outside he leans against a wall and closes his eyes. The sunlight warms his face and dries his tears. "Oh, Lord," he prays, "heed to Thy honor, Thou who canst incline people's hearts as water brooks."

He doesn't feel like going back to the other soldiers who are sitting together on the grass. They are polishing their gear in the sunshine. In the distance, he hears them laughing about their coarse jokes.

Without being seen, he slips into his room and falls on his knees. There the love of the Lord pours into his heart and sets it aflame. With His God he can move mountains. Great is the faith that the Holy Ghost gives in Leen's heart. The Lord comforts His child.

"Private Potappel!" The shouts come from outside. He is startled. They are looking for him and he is not busy polishing. He quickly grabs his polishing box and runs outside. The same soldier who brought him to the captain this morning is waiting for him. He points to him.

"You there, Private Potappel, the captain wants you to come to him immediately."

The other soldiers look on curiously. They lower their guns and polishing rags and stare at Leen. "Well, what are you getting into now?" Jan asks mockingly.

"Now you will be hung on the gallows, my boy. That is the best punishment for you," another says laughingly. The entire group laughs about the lame joke.

Leen follows the soldier silently, full of the love of Christ. Who can separate him from that? No soldier, no captain, not even if there were a hundred of them. He quietly enters the room again. The captain is sitting behind his desk. Leen can barely believe his eyes. What has happened to the man? His stern face is now friendly. He invites Leen to take a chair. "Sit down, Private, I want to talk to you."

This is not the same roaring lion as half an hour ago. The lion has become a lamb. "Potappel, I want you to explain in detail why you get so upset when people curse. I want to hear this from you. There must be a reason for it." He nods at Leen.

Leen takes a moment to get over his amazement, then joy vibrates through him. God has cared for His own honor. What happiness! "Lord, give me words

to speak," he begs silently. "Does the captain have a father?" he asks carefully.

"No," replies the captain. "He died years ago."

"If you loved your father very much, what would you think if people mocked or reviled his good name?"

The captain did not have to think long about that. "I would get very angry; I would not be able to stand that."

Leen nods. "That is the same as with cursing. Through Christ, God in heaven has become my heavenly Father. It hurts me very deeply and sorely when I hear His name reviled. When I hear that, I must say something about it."

The captain looks at him silently for a long time. The simple boy with his honest words impresses him deeply. "Private Potappel, I understand you. You may go."

Leen returns to the soldiers with a light heart. They have put away the polishing supplies and have begun cleaning the horse stables. Leen patiently lets their tormenting flow over him. He actually doesn't even hear what they are saying. His heart is filled with thankfulness.

A little later he startles when he sees the captain approaching. He diligently loads the manure from the stall into his wheelbarrow. The captain must see that he is a hard worker. He must not find a reason to criticize his behavior.

The captain marches inside and has all the non-commissioned officers called in. He commands them that they may no longer torment Potappel by cursing. "I have questioned him. The cursing has something to do with his religion. That is an honourable cause. No more cursing from now on." He sternly looks around the circle. He will not tolerate being contradicted.

*(To be continued)*

God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of Him is our proper, and is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here—better than fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of any, or all earthly friends. These are but shadows, but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but streams, but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean.

*—Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)*



# Bible Stories for Little Ones

## Elijah in the Wilderness

(Based on 1 Kings 19)

Elijah spoke to Ahab and told him that soon God would send rain upon the land. Ahab was glad to hear this. He went away to eat and drink, but Elijah went to the top of Carmel. There he bowed in prayer, putting his face between his knees. To his servant he said, "Go up and look toward the sea."

The servant went, but he soon came back and said to his master, "I see nothing." Seven times Elijah sent him back to look again toward the sea. Why was the servant told to do this? It was because the rain clouds would have to appear for the rain to come. Elijah wanted to know whether the black clouds were coming, bringing the wind and the rain. He knew that soon the rain would fall because God had promised it, but he continued in prayer until there were signs that the promise was being fulfilled.

God does not always answer prayers immediately. Sometimes He waits a long time before He answers them. Does God hear our prayers? Yes, but He knows what is right for us better than we can know, and He often sees it best that we should wait for what we ask of Him. We must not become tired of praying. We must do as Elijah did; he prayed and waited a long time. At last God answered his prayer and gave him what he asked.

After going the seventh time, the servant came back and said, "I see a little cloud, like a man's hand, coming out of the sea." Then Elijah knew that the rain was coming, and he sent his servant to tell Ahab. The little cloud grew larger and larger. The sky became very black, the wind blew, and then the rain began to fall very heavily. The poor people and the thirsty animals were very glad for the rain. It would soon make the grass and the corn spring up, and then there would be food for them again. Here we may see that it is God who controls the weather and who in His kindness to us gives rain and sunshine to make the corn, herbs, and grass grow out of the ground.

Where did Elijah go? He ran before Ahab to Jezreel. However, when Ahab had told Jezebel all that Elijah had done to Baal's prophets, she was very angry. She loved Baal and the wicked prophets, but she hated God and His holy prophets. Jezebel said, "I will kill Elijah! Tomorrow he shall be dead, just as my prophets of Baal are." She even sent a messenger to Elijah to tell him so.

When Elijah heard of Jezebel's words, he arose and escaped to Beersheba. Leaving his servant there, he himself traveled alone into the wilderness. After walking all day, he sat down under a juniper tree. Elijah was very unhappy. He had many enemies seeking to kill him. Many of his friends were dead; cruel Jezebel had slain them. The people were very wicked; they served Baal and not God. All this made Elijah feel sad. He thought of heaven, that happy place where there are no cruel enemies and no wicked people, and he wished to be there. He cried unto the Lord, "O LORD, take away my life."

Was this right? No! Elijah had forgotten that God had all things under His control and that God could comfort him and provide for him as He had done in the past. God had more work for Elijah to do. It was not the will of God that he should die yet; therefore, he was to wait patiently.

God loved and pitied His servant, and He sent an angel to comfort him. Elijah soon fell asleep under the tree, for he was very tired and sorrowful. As he slept, an angel came to him, touched him, and said, "Arise, and eat." Elijah looked up, and what did he see? There was a cake baked on the coals, ready for him to eat, and a cruse of water at his head. Who had brought them? God had sent them, the God who before had sent the ravens to feed Elijah by the brook Cherith. How kind God was to His prophet!

Elijah ate and drank, and then he lay down and slept again. Soon the angel touched him the second time and said, "Arise, and eat." Elijah obeyed, and in this way, he was strengthened and able to do all that God would give him to do. He went to Mount Horeb and was there forty days and forty nights. He ate nothing all that time, but he did not need food, for God kept him without it. When Moses was in the mountain, he lived forty days without food, too. God can preserve His people very wonderfully, if He pleases.

As Elijah was at Mount Horeb, God taught him many things. One happy thing he told Elijah was this: "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

How pleasant it was for Elijah to have God's holy angels so near him when he slept! God takes care of

all His people, just as He took care of Elijah. When they are asleep and cannot take care of themselves, He is with them. His eye never sleeps. He can see in the dark night when they are alone and have no friend near them, and He sends His holy angels to

guard them then. God's people may feel very safe in the long, dark night. Under God's care, they will sleep in peace and safety and awaken alive and well. If not, they will awaken in a happier world—the holy angels will carry their souls safely to their home in heaven.



## Bible Quiz

### The Worship Service

Dear Boys and Girls,

The sky was bright blue, and the snow shimmered in the sun. Mason and Ellie were quieter than usual as the beautiful scenery flashed past the car windows. Here and there, the bright snow plopped down from the trees, scattering over the road. Ellie was mesmerized. She imagined painting a picture of what she saw, but every time she decided on a scene, she saw a snow blanketed old barn or tree or field that was even prettier than the one before.

Mason noticed the cars around him. Some of them had skis on their roof racks. A truck passed them which had wooden boards protruding from its bed, and in another car, he saw groceries piled high in the back. Ahead was a car in which the driver was wearing a suit, and the passenger was wearing a pretty hat. They seemed to be the only ones headed to church like they were. It was Sunday, but all the other vehicles were filled with people who were going about their everyday business as usual—shopping, working on home projects, skiing, and more...

They passed a lake, and Mason saw a few boys clearing the ice for skating. For a moment, jealousy pinched in his stomach. He quickly pushed the hot flaring feeling away and swallowed hard. Those boys were going to skate, and he was going to church. He was used to that; he had grown up that way—but why DID they go to church on Sundays, when so many others didn't?

Perhaps it is a custom you have never given much thought too, boys and girls. Of course, it would be wrong not to go to church on Sunday...but, why? When we enter church, we may see a beautiful organ and long rows of gleaming benches, but the most central object is right on the pulpit. On it lies a beautiful, big Bible, large enough that all the people

can see it. It is the most important object of the worship service—God's Word. The minister will soon explain a portion from this Book. God's Word will "speak" to us.

When the service begins, we are first reminded of God's greatness and our inability and dependence—"Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth"—He who made that glistening, beautiful snow, the bright sun, wide lakes, and wooded hills...Then follows, "Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you..." It is as it were a greeting. This great God, who has cared for you the whole weeklong, speaks of mercy and forgiveness. How was your week? Did you ever think of Him, or did you take everything for granted?

After a full week in which you were busy with so many things, you may now sit reverently, and sing about the Lord, and listen to God's Word. The Lord is willing to use that Word by His Spirit to convert sinners. We close our eyes and fold our hands, and together, we may pray to the Lord for a blessing on that Word. Closing our eyes keeps us from distraction, and folding our hands is a sign of reverent asking, as a beggar would do.

Isn't it a wonder that the Lord gives us all this? For others, Sunday is just an ordinary day, like any other day, but we may go to church. We may rest from our busyness and be where the Lord is willing to speak to us. When the minister is preaching, he is telling us what God wants to say to us. When we pray, we are asking the Holy Spirit to press that Word into our hearts. We may also tell the Lord all our cares. When we sing, we are praying too—the words of the Psalters are full of praise and worship but also of needing and beseeching the Lord for His grace and mercy. Before we leave, a blessing is

spoken as the minister holds out his hands over the congregation—a blessing from the Lord.

How happy we should be, then, that we may go to church, while so many have never spent a Sunday in this way! In the verses in the questions below, you will see that it is God's goodness, and God's command, that we have these worship services each Sunday.

\* \* \* \* \*

1. What is our custom every Sunday, which is spoken of in Hebrews 10:25? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What verse in Psalm 121 is spoken every worship service? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is done before the prayer during the worship service, 1 Timothy 4:13? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is done every Sunday which we can read of in James 5:14? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which verses in Hebrews 13 and Acts 10 speak of giving collections? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is an important part of the worship service, spoken of in 2 Timothy 4:2? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What else is done during each worship service, which we can read of in Colossians 3:16? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What does the Lord ask women to wear on their heads, as we read of in 1 Corinthians 11:10? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Which verse in Revelation 1 is spoken every worship service? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Who are the men who rule and administer to the congregation, mentioned in 1 Peter 5:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8 and 2 Corinthians 6:4? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Which day do we commemorate in the springtime or sometimes also at other times of need? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Which day do we commemorate after the harvest is in which also has a historical background? \_\_\_\_\_

Which feast day is spoken of in:

13. Luke 2:7? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Mark 15:25? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Matthew 28:6? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Acts 1:9? \_\_\_\_\_
17. John 15:26/John 16:7? \_\_\_\_\_

### For the Older Children

18. Acts 8:3 and 12:5 speak of the persecution of the church. What happened in Acts 8:3 to disturb the worship services, and how was the assembling together as a church used for the benefit of Peter in Acts 12:5? \_\_\_\_\_

### For the Younger Children

Find the words in the wordsearch.

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

SUNDAY	PREACH	CHURCH	LISTEN	PRAY
WORSHIP	MINISTER	BIBLE	SERMON	SING

\* \* \* \* \*

Answers to May's "Caves" quiz:

1. David and his followers, Adullam, Saul
2. 100 prophets, Obadiah, Jezebel
3. Five kings, Makkedah
4. Children of Israel, Midianites
5. The men of Israel, the Philistines were encamped against them
6. Brethren, his father's house, distressed, discontented, in debt
7. David and his men, Saul
8. Harvest time, Rephaim
9. Proud and lofty, shake terribly the earth
10. Deserts, mountains, dens, and caves of the earth
11. Grave                      John 11:38
12. Field                      Genesis 23:9
13. Sons                      Genesis 25:9
14. People                    Genesis 49:29
15. Lot, mountain, daughters, Zoar, cave
16. Cave, word, doest, Elijah

*I was glad when they said unto me,  
Let us go into the house of the LORD.  
(Psalm 122:1)*

Answers to previous quizzes were received in April from:

Bailee Bakker (2)	Corina Jansen	Sierra Spaans
Blaire Bakker (2)	Micah Kievit (2)	Tessa Spaans
Clay Bakker	Jayda Klop	Brandon Ten Hove (2)
Paige Bakker	Evanny Knibbe	Hannah-Jo Ten Hove (2)
Martena Blom (2)	Rylan Knibbe (2)	Grace Timmermans (5)
Tiffany Blom	Sienna Knibbe (2)	Brendan Van De Kamp
Aryanna Breeweg (3)	Vera Knibbe	Luke Van Grouw
Julian Breeweg (2)	Mea Korevaar	Ava Van Manen (3)
Carly Brouwer (4)	Carissa Mans (3)	Alana van Manen (3)
Ben Burrington	Travis Mans (4)	Evan Van Manen (2)
Leanna de Jong	Abe Mol	Janessa Van Wingerden (2)
Elsie de Leeuw (4)	Teddy Mol	Taylina Van Wingerden
Melanie DeKorne (2)	Madeline Mol	Zane Van Wingerden (2)
Eva den Bok	Zachary Mol	Hanna Van Wyk (2)
Hudson den Bok	Andrew Murphy	Eli Vande Waerd (2)
Zoey den Bok	John Murphy	Joelle Vande Waerd (2)
Zachary Den Dekker	Carter Neels (2)	Sophia Vande Waerd
Emilee DeVries	Larissa Oostenbrink	Wyatt Vande Waerd (2)
Alyssa Driesse (3)	Blake Pannekoek (3)	Levi Vander Waal (2)
Jordan Driesse (3)	Cassadee Pannekoek (3)	Sara Vander Waal (2)
Kailyn Driesse (4)	Lauren Pannekoek (3)	Joanna Verhoef (2)
Lindsey Driesse (3)	Daniel Remijn (3)	Shara Verhoef (2)
Allison Ekema (3)	Lauren Remijn (3)	Caleb Vogelaar
Kaylynn Ekema (3)	Rebekah Remijn (3)	Matthew Vogelaar
Samuel Fluit	Lewis Rivers	Keegan Weeda (2)
Sawyer Fluit	Lilyana Rivers	Jayden Weeda (2)
Samantha Grisnich	Lynne Ruissen (3)	Nathan Wesdyk (3)
Kaylia Groen (2)	Lydia Ruissen (4)	Samuel Weststrate (3)
Kendra Groen (2)	Collin Rus	Josie Ymker (2)
Willard Groenendyk (4)	Kaela Rus	Lane Ymker
Cheyenne Groeneweg (2)	Lakia Rus	Maddyn Ymker
Kate Hoogendoorn	Brogan Spaans (2)	Quentin Ymker
Lane Hoogendoorn (2)	Jake Spaans	Whitney Ymker



Please send your answers to the address shown below:

Aunt LenaBeth  
180 Jacobs Road  
Newfoundland, NJ 07435  
E-mail: [auntlenabeth@gmail.com](mailto:auntlenabeth@gmail.com)

## News & Announcements

### Ministerial Calls

#### Extended:

To Rev. H. de Leeuw of Brant County, Ontario, by the congregations of Grand Rapids–Covell Avenue, Michigan, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

To Rev. J.J. Witvoet by the congregation of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

#### Declined:

By Rev. M.T. Al-Chalabi of Hilversum, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Clifton, New Jersey.

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

By Rev. H. de Leeuw of Brant County, Ontario, to the congregations of Chilliwack, British Columbia, Grand Rapids–Covell Avenue, Sioux Falls, Iowa, and Sunnyside, Washington.

### Obituaries

BYL, Nellie (nee Klein) – Age 93, April 20, 2026; Norwich, Ontario; Husband – Jan Arie (deceased); Children – John & Deb, Ada & Case Van Blyderveen, Ken & Marga, Corrie & Bill Stubbe, Henrietta & Peter Hiemstra, Leona & Bill Den Dekker, Leo & Marieke, Clarence & Kathleen, Nico & Janneke; many grandchildren and great-grandchildren; predeceased by 4 brothers, 1 sister, a son-in-law, and a daughter-in-law. (Rev. E. Hakvoort, Psalm 90:12.)

KLOK, Danielle Maria (“Dani”) – Age 30, April 26, 2026; Lethbridge, Alberta; Parents – Peter & Marianne; Siblings – Jamie & Sylvia, Jacqueline & Ben Vandenberg, Jodi & Jonny Bertram, Willianne & Steven Fisher, Nicole & Steven Veurink, Shawn & Hendrika, Shelly & Jared Goosen. (Rev. E.C. Adams, Luke 13:24.)

NIEUWENHUIS, Alaina Johanna – Age 2, April 14, 2026; Norwich, Ontario; Parents – Ron and Lisa; Siblings – Arden, Arianne, Aalt; Grandparents – Henk & Joke, Jerry & Joyce Van Leeuwen; Great-grand-parents – Hendrika Nieuwenhuis, Margje Van Leeuwen, Trudy Leen. (Rev. E. Hakvoort, Psalm 46:1.)

ROZEBOOM, Diane Mae (nee Driesen) – Age 75, April 29, 2026; Rock Valley, Iowa; Husband – Harry; Children – Darla Parks, David, Rachel Spaans, Rebecca & Ryan Fluit, Melissa & Greg Helle; 12 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren; Siblings – Harold & June Driesen, Nella Driesen, Margaret Driesen, Donna Driesen, Helen Remmerde, Carol Sandbulte, Marion Driesen; In-laws – Herm & Cheryl, Leonard & Evonne, Larry & Tammy, Richard & Lynette, Harlan & Carol; predeceased by son-in-law Leslie Spaans, 4 siblings, and 2 brothers-in-law. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Luke 8:47.)

WISSE, Rachel Johanna (nee Rozendaal) – Age 46, April 13, 2026; Taber, Alberta; Husband – Markus; Children – Emma, Rosalie, Hailey, Jeffrey; Parents – Peter & Toni Rozendaal; Parents-in-law – Chris & Martha; Sisters – Cora-Lee & Ralph Boot, Lauren & Lee Bouma; Brothers – Jeffrey & Marjon, Peter Jr., Steven & Janita; Sisters-in-law – Lydia & Michael Moeleker, Rebecca & Niels Eckhardt, Anna & Joran Looij, Eva Wisse; Brother-in-law – Abraham & Miriam. (Rev. E.C. Adams, Genesis 35:19-21.)

## ■ ■ ■ Classis East Youth Conference

June 27, 2026

The Classis East Youth Conference date has been set for June 27, 2026, in Norwich, Ontario, D.V. Rev. E. Hakvoort and Student G. Rozeboom hope to present topics. All young people age sixteen and over, as well as young adults, are invited to attend. Registration and itinerary will be found at [www.ontarioyouthday.ca](http://www.ontarioyouthday.ca). Please register by June 8.

## ■ ■ ■ Young Adult Grand Rapids Youth Conference

August 13-15, 2026

The Joshua Youth Group invites all post-high school young adults for our annual summer youth conference, under the oversight of the Grand Rapids Beckwith consistory. There will be meaningful topics, day trips, and outdoor activities. For more information or to sign up, please email [fnrcjoshuagroup@gmail.com](mailto:fnrcjoshuagroup@gmail.com) or text 616-729-9655.

## ■ ■ ■ Installation/Inaugural for Rev. G.P. van Nieuw Amerongen

*“The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad”* (Psalm 126:3).

The Lord has inclined the heart of Rev. G.P. van Nieuw Amerongen to accept the call of

the Nobleford congregation to come over and help us. The installation service is scheduled for Wednesday, August 5, at 2:30 P.M., D.V. The inaugural service will follow at 7:00 P.M. that evening. Both services will be in the Nobleford NRC church. May the Lord be in our midst and grant His blessing and remember Rev. van Nieuw Amerongen and his family in these ways.

Any guests needing accommodation should contact the clerk at [mmslingerland@nrcnobleford.ca](mailto:mmslingerland@nrcnobleford.ca).

## ■ ■ ■ New Titles at Bible Truth Books

*Gottschalk, Servant of God* by C. Meyer—The years between 500 A.D. and 1500 A.D. are commonly referred to as the “Dark” or “Middle Ages.” In general terms, these are the years between the time when Augustine and Martin Luther lived, and in which the Roman Catholic Church reached the peak of its power and influence. Did the Holy Spirit still work from time to time in the hearts of people during those years? Yes; think only of the Waldenses, who were terribly oppressed and persecuted during this time. Another example is that of Gottschalk, a monk who lived from the years 808 to 868. Gottschalk’s story has largely been forgotten. However, like Martin Luther and John Huss, Gottschalk was truly taught by the Lord, was greatly persecuted, and yet stood firm and was upheld in his teachings regarding the truth. This work is written at a level best suited for teen and adult readers. Hardcover, 160 pages, with illustrations and maps, \$12.75.

*The History of the Reformation in Scotland* by John Knox—Among the books on our shelves, some of the most remarkable are those written by the well-known reformers themselves. In the writings of Calvin and Luther, we can hear the voices of those whom the Lord used to bring about a Reformation in various parts

of Europe, and which later spread throughout the whole world. Here we have a book written by another reformer, John Knox. In it he tells the story of his times and the progress of (and opposition to) the Reformation in Scotland. “We write that the posterity to come may understand how patiently God wrought in preserving and delivering those that had but a small knowledge of the truth, and for the love of the same hazarded all.” Paperback, 396 pages, \$15.00.

## Recent Reprints by the NRC Book & Publishing Committee

*A Comforting Knowledge*—the autobiography of Rev. C. van Dam. Now in hardcover. \$9.00  
*Some Thoughts About House Visitation* by Rev. van Aalst—Paperback, \$5.00.

The prices shown do not include postage.

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[www.BibleTruthBooks.org](http://www.BibleTruthBooks.org)

## 50th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, on June 16, 2026, our dear parents and grandparents,

**Aane Kors & Gerry Versteeg**  
(*nee Visser*)

hope to commemorate their  
50th wedding anniversary.

*“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms”*  
(Deuteronomy 33:27a).

87 Lossing Drive  
Norwich, Ontario, N0J 1P0

## Minutes of Classis Midwest 2026 Meeting (Summary)

### Office Bearers’ Conference and Prayer Service

The Office Bearers’ Conference was held March 24 at 3:30 P.M. Classis prayer service was held on March 24 at 7:00 P.M. led by Rev J.J. Witvoet. The service was opened with singing Psalter 120:1,3&4, reading Psalm 118, and prayer. The text was Psalm 118:27, “God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.” Theme: The Sacrifice Bound to the Horns of the Altar. Two points: 1) The Ordinance; 2) The Significance.

### Article 1—Opening

*Meditation:* The spring Classis meeting was opened Wednesday, March 25, at 8:30 A.M. in the Sioux Falls, SD church. On behalf of the calling church, Rev. J. Slingerland opened the meeting with reading Isaiah 53 and prayer, followed by the singing Psalter 336:1&2. A brief explanation of Isaiah 53:11 was given. Upon the labors of Christ, many shall be justified. It is a question that is visible each Sunday, “How many souls that gather with us belong to that many?” In Christ’s travail He had His eye upon that Church which would be given to Him. In each of our respective offices we must care for this Church. The primary

purpose of a Classis meeting is for the care of the Church militant. He shall gather His Church until they are all brought in. What do we know of this travail personally?

*Significant Events and Special Memories:* A warm welcome was given and special memories were shared. Elder & Mrs. Cornie Blom—50 years; Rev. & Mrs. Witvoet—30 years; Elder & Mrs. Mark Wynia—35 years; Elder & Mrs. Grant Post—25 years; Deacon & Mrs. Joel Van Den Top—25 years; Deacon & Mrs. Brian Van Veldhuizen—10 years; Elder & Mrs. Derek Kattenberg—20 years.

### Article 2—Credentials

Credentials from ten congregations: nineteen delegates were approved (one absent); voting rights were approved for two deacons.

### Article 3—Moderamen

*President* – Rev. J. Slingerland (by rotation)  
*Vice President* – Rev. H. Hofman (by rotation)  
*Clerk* – Elder Derek Kattenberg (by election)  
*Treasurer* – Elder Curt Maassen (by election)

#### Article 4—Minutes

The minutes of the 2024 fall meeting held on October 9, 2024, in Sioux Center, IA, and the minutes of the 2025 spring meeting held on March 26, 2025, in Lansing, IL, were approved and signed.

#### Article 5 & 6—Correspondence & Delegates for Synod 2026

The letter which was received from the Lethbridge, Alberta congregation as the calling church for the 2026 Synod was read. Seven delegates and three alternates were approved by majority vote for the 2026 Synod Meeting.

#### Article 7—Committee Reports

A verbal report was given for the Classis Midwest Youth Committee. The upcoming dates were shared: 2026 to be held in Sioux Center, IA or Corsica, SD; 2027 to be held in Grand Rapids, MI; 2028 to be held in Rock Valley, IA or Sioux Center, IA.

#### Article 9—Classis Points

##### *Sheboygan Point #1*

Our congregation has begun reading from the Heidelberg Catechism of Rev. J. Van Haaren which we purchased through Bible Truth Books. At this point we are finished with Volume 1. The Consistory of Sheboygan wants to express some concerns regarding the translation.

##### *Classis Response:*

- As a reminder, Bible Truth Books is not a denominationally operated distributor.
- Each local consistory is autonomous and needs to make a decision to read or not to read material.
- The understanding of the Classis is that as a Classis we do not have authority to make these changes. However, each church has the responsibility to read and understand the materials they promote to their congregations and read in the churches.
- Though Classis understands that there could be translation issues, the Classis decided they have no jurisdiction over the printing and distributing of this explanation of the Heidelberg Catechism. This point was not submitted to Synod. Sheboygan consistory was advised to contact the translator and publishers directly.

##### *Sheboygan Point #2*

The Sheboygan consistory is requesting help from the congregations in our Classis that have larger schools, to try to support congregations such as ours, that struggle to maintain their own Christian school. As a small school we have been unable to hire a teacher. Fortunately, the majority of our parents have chosen to home school their children rather than the alternative of a public school. We have tried to have

“school” on a weekly basis to have chapel and other “projects” that involve all home-schooled students. Our request is: Can our larger schools make available a remote course or courses to help either a small school or parents trying to home-school their children?

##### *Classis Response:*

- There is a concern that sharing curriculum for the express purpose of using it for home schooling may cause division and confusion.
- It was shared that the NRCEA has a large amount of classroom materials available.
- Classis recommends Sheboygan forwards this concern directly to the SEC.

#### Article 10—Church Visitation

Church visitation has been conducted for all of the congregations prior to our meeting today. Due to the delay in a couple of congregations, it was agreed upon to postpone the 2026 visits for all congregations until 2027, with reports due at the 2028 Classis Meeting.

#### Article 13—Next Classis Meeting

The following dates were set: fall Classis (if needed) October, 21, 2026; spring Classis March 17, 2027. The calling church for the next Classis Midwest meeting is the congregation of Waupun, WI.

Ministers who will conduct the labors at the next Classis Midwest meeting:

*President of Classis* – Rev. H. Hofman

*Vice President of Classis* – Rev. J.J. Witvoet

*Classis Prayer Service* – Rev. J. Slingerland

*Open next Classis Meeting* – Rev. J. Slingerland

*Office Bearers' Conference* (spring only) – Rev. H. Hofman

#### Article 15—Closing

President Rev. Slingerland's remarks: May the Lord bless these labors and His Word; prayer for strength in our labors; a reminder that He who labored for His Church will also gather His Church. Vice President Rev. Hofman's remarks: Thanks to the chairman and delegates for a peaceful and productive meeting; thanks to the calling church. He closed with Psalter 442:1&2 and prayer.

All the Lord willing,

Rev. J. Slingerland, *President*

Elder D. Kattenberg, *Clerk*

\*For brevity in *The Banner of Truth*, some articles in the full meeting minutes have been omitted.

## Word and Spirit

Those that care not for the Word are strangers to the Spirit, and they that care not for the Spirit never make a right use of the Word. The Word is nothing without the Spirit, and only animated and quickened by Him. The Spirit and the Word are like the veins and arteries in the body that give life to the whole. Therefore, where the Word is most revealed, there is most of the Spirit.

—Richard Sibbes (1577-1635)

Anniversary and other announcements will be placed upon request. A donation for their placement would be appreciated. Please follow directions for check payment, shown in gray area at bottom of inside front cover. For consistency, copy size is limited. Send requests to James Okken, managing editor (see contact information at bottom of inside front cover.) Requests should be made **by the first of the month prior to the month of publication.**

### ■ ■ ■ *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. Consistories distribute the MP3s and CDs which are provided at no cost. 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.

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

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, POMPTON PLAINS, NEW JERSEY. (*Although this position has been filled on an interim basis, we are still in need of a permanent candidate.*) 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](mailto:tomv@plainviewgrowers.com), or John Van Der Brink (administrator) at 973-628-7400 or email [nrcs\\_office@nrcsnj.org](mailto:nrcs_office@nrcsnj.org)

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, is seeking a dedicated and people-focused elementary vice principal to join our leadership team next school year. This is a unique opportunity to make a daily difference in the lives of children in a positive environment, prayerfully seeking guidance from God's Word. We are looking for an NRC, RCNA, or ORC member in good standing who shares this vision and who will serve as a dedicated presence in our school community. If you have a heart for children, a gift for leadership, and a desire to serve, we would be overjoyed to hear from you. Training and mentoring will be provided for the right candidate. Questions can be directed to Andrew Korevaar at [elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com](mailto:elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com) or 519-495-6629. Interested applicants are invited to submit a resumé and brief letter of interest to [hr@rcsnorwich.com](mailto:hr@rcsnorwich.com)

TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, is seeking a principal as our principal prepares for retirement. We seek a leader with a calling to oversee the school in faithful submission to God's Word. One will provide spiritual, academic, and organizational leadership; cultivate strong relationships with board, faculty, students, and parents; and preserve/strengthen the culture of TCS. The successful applicant should be:

- Member of the NRC
- Eligible for a BC teaching certificate
- Demonstrate proven educational leadership

Applicants who are still completing qualifications are welcome to inquire, as a mentored transition may be considered. Direct your inquiries to the principal, Doug Stam, at [dstam@timothychristian.ca](mailto:dstam@timothychristian.ca) or school board president, Kevin Romeyn, at [kevinromeyn@timothychristian.ca](mailto:kevinromeyn@timothychristian.ca). Submit applications to the school board president.

## ■ Teachers/Assistants

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, invites applications for elementary or secondary teachers to begin in August 2026. Applicants must be members of the NRC, or a closely-related denomination, and must be eligible for Alberta certification. Any inquiries should be directed to the principal, Mr. Marc Slingerland, at 403-381-3030 or [inquiries@ccschool.ca](mailto:inquiries@ccschool.ca). Should the Lord incline your heart to apply, please submit a cover letter and resumé with references to [inquiries@ccschool.ca](mailto:inquiries@ccschool.ca)

EBEN-EZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, is inviting applications for elementary and middle school teaching positions. We would be gladdened by an inquiry and application of someone who is versatile and dedicated, who also loves the doctrine according to godliness. For more information on this position, please contact Mr. Arthur Verhoef, at [principal@ecscool.ca](mailto:principal@ecscool.ca) or call 905-563-3077.

Please send applications to the secretary of the school board, Mr. G. Brouwer, 1372 Gregory Road N., St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 6P9. Email: [gerry@ecscool.ca](mailto:gerry@ecscool.ca)

EBENEZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN, has an opening for a full- or part-time teacher or coordinator to monitor, oversee, and assist the students with their homeschool curriculums. We have a range of students from grades K-7. For more questions regarding this position, please contact Andrew Van Stelle at 920-452-1967 or email [amtrees@excel.net](mailto:amtrees@excel.net)

EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, LYNDEN, WASHINGTON, is accepting applications for the 2026-2027 school year. We welcome applicants at the elementary, middle, or high school level. To apply or request more information, please contact the administrator, Ms. Beth Bleeker, at 616-826-7663 or email [bbleeker@nrcslynden.org](mailto:bbleeker@nrcslynden.org) or the school board president, Mr. Jerry DeBruin, at 360-224-0901 or email [jdebruin3797@gmail.com](mailto:jdebruin3797@gmail.com)

MOUNT CHEAM CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, anticipates an URGENT NEED for the next school years with multiple openings for teachers in elementary and secondary grades. Applicants must hold or be eligible for BC certification and subscribe to the faith identity of the MCCS Society and the Reformed Congregations in North America. Inquiries should be addressed to the principal, Mr. Jan Neels, at [jneels@mccs.ca](mailto:jneels@mccs.ca). Please send your application, along with supporting documentation, to Mr. Jan Neels and to the board secretary, Mr. Jacob Kerkhoff, at [jkerkhoff@mccs.ca](mailto:jkerkhoff@mccs.ca). See also [www.mccs.ca](http://www.mccs.ca)

NERIAH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CALGARY, ALBERTA, has a unique opportunity for a full-time teacher to join our small school. While all applications are welcome, we are in most need of a teacher for our students in middle and high school. We are seeking an organized individual who is willing to learn, a team player, and able to transition between grade levels during a school day. While a certified teacher is preferred, we welcome all applicants who are passionate about teaching. For more information, please contact the principal, Darlene Dekker, at [darlene.dekker@neriahcs.ca](mailto:darlene.dekker@neriahcs.ca) or school board president, Mr. Daniel Visser, at 403-554-1097 or by email [visser.daniel@outlook.com](mailto:visser.daniel@outlook.com)

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CORSICA, SOUTH DAKOTA, is seeking applicants, initially, to fill a full-time teaching position for the high school grades and secondly, to possibly consider duties of a principal in the future. The applicant should be highly self-motivated, versatile, and one who loves the old truths and paths. NRC membership is required. A teaching certificate is appreciated but not required. For more information on this position, please contact the school board president, Mr. Cornie Blom, at 605-680-0557. Applications should be sent to Cornie Blom, 37885 275th St., Corsica, South Dakota 57328, or emailed to clerk Brad Spaans at [kjspaans05@gmail.com](mailto:kjspaans05@gmail.com)

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is seeking to fill teaching positions in elementary, 7-12 math, and other secondary subjects. These positions are part-time or full-time and can be combined depending on qualifications and experience. For further information, please visit [www.nrcsia.com](http://www.nrcsia.com) or contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at [dan.breuer@nrcsia.org](mailto:dan.breuer@nrcsia.org) or call 712-476-2821.

PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN invites qualified candidates to apply for elementary and middle school positions that may be open. For more information regarding possible openings or for application forms, please contact the administrator, Mr. Tom Kwekel, at [tkwekel@pcskzoo.com](mailto:tkwekel@pcskzoo.com) or call 616-644-2661.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, invites applications for several positions for the coming school year, including:

- Part-time middle school music teacher
- Part-time student counsellor (approximately one day per week)
- Part-time middle school shop teacher (with the possibility of more)
- Two high school teachers (strengths in math and/or science are an asset)

For information about elementary opportunities, contact Mr. Andrew Korevaar at [elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com](mailto:elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com) or 519-495-6629. For information about secondary opportunities, contact Mr. Gerrit Ten Hove at [secondaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com](mailto:secondaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com) or 519-536-3689. We also invite inquiries about our locally developed teacher training program, which offers a blend of paid teaching, mentorship, and training. Cover letters and resumés should be submitted to [hr@rcsnorwich.com](mailto:hr@rcsnorwich.com). Applications will be reviewed, and applicants selected for interviews will be contacted by the school board.

TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, is in need of a middle/high school teacher. We are looking for teachers who are excited about teaching and are dedicated to nurturing the hearts of young people. We have a definite need in middle/high school for the upcoming school year but would encourage secondary and intermediate grade-level applicants. If you are such a teacher, please apply to join our team. Applicants need to be certifiable to teach in British Columbia. For information and/or an application form, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Doug Stam, principal, at [dstam@timothychristian.ca](mailto:dstam@timothychristian.ca), or Mr. Kevin Romeyn, school board president, at [kevinromeyn@timothychristian.ca](mailto:kevinromeyn@timothychristian.ca)

### To All Candidates for Education Positions

Please visit [advertising.nrcea.education](http://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](mailto:advertising@nrcea.education)  
Password: **Schooljobs!**

## God Is the Verifier of His Word

*Rev. M. Heerschap (1911-1993)*

*“Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Habakkuk 2:3b).*

What a God-glorifying instruction it was, my beloved, which Naomi gave to her daughter-in-law, Ruth. She said to her, “Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.”

What did Naomi have in view therewith? In the first place, the honor of God, and in the second place, the welfare of Ruth. “Sit still, my daughter.” She wished to say with those words, “Ah Ruth, you can completely rely upon that man because he has manifested in all things that he is inclined to do well unto you and to redeem you.” She wanted to say thereby, “Ruth, you cannot redeem yourself. Leave it to Boaz, for he has taken the matter upon himself, and he will finish it entirely.”

What a beautiful time then dawns for Ruth! A time that she does not have anything more to do and that she shall soon receive everything. Is that not then a benefit? Nothing more to do; go no more to the field, no more to the threshing floor. Now Boaz will do all, and Boaz will bring everything: “For the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.”

Now Ruth as a Moabitess, an outsider, who from her side can claim no right or title to anything, may surrender the entire matter unto Boaz. She may give it over to Boaz, for he shall manifest that he is a mighty

man of wealth. He is capable and shall also be appointed to do well unto her; yea, he will enrich her with his benefits and blessings. Now Ruth must learn that which God’s Church also inwardly experiences.

It is true, it is a profitable condition in the life of God’s children when they are worked out—when they know nothing anymore and, thus, have no more arguments. They become aware of their deprivation, that they have lost everything. When we have worked ourselves to death, then God begins to work to reveal the eternal salvation which lies declared in Christ. Then it will become truth for that people, even as for Ruth, that their strength shall be in quietness and in confidence.

Oh, what a blessed condition as a worked-out sinner to learn to receive so much upon which we have no right, yea, that God manifests His lovingkindness unto the exaltation of His name.

Was not this the condition of the disciples after the ascension of Christ, when they waited upon the comfortings of God’s Spirit and the establishing of the work of God? They looked forward to the time when that Man, who had taken the matter upon Himself and was now exalted at the right hand of the Father, namely, the blessed Christ, would finish the entire matter for His Church. He will manifest that which He had promised and will also grant it. He will not remain behind but will prove that He is a verifier of His Word.

From **THE BANNER OF TRUTH**  
Publication Number (USPS 041-540)  
2 Krasco Road  
Oak Ridge, NJ 07438

## Faith and Works

When filthy passions or unjust  
Professors' minds control;  
When men give up the reins to lust,  
And interest sways the whole;

Or when they seek themselves to please,  
Decline each thorny road,  
Indulge their sloth, consult their ease,  
And slight the fear of God;

The faith is vain such men profess;  
It comes not from above;  
The righteous man does righteousness,  
And true faith works by love.

Men's actions with their minds will suit;  
By them the heart is viewed;  
A tree that bears corrupted fruit,  
Cannot be called good.

The Christian seeks his brother's good,  
Sometimes beyond his own;  
Or, if self-interest will intrude,  
It does not reign alone.

Help us, dear Lord, to honor Thee;  
Let our good works abound;  
Thou art that green, that fruitful tree;  
From Thee our fruit is found.

—Joseph Hart

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**Banner**  
of Truth

**June 2026**  
Volume 92, No. 6

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