

Courtship & Marriage article 1

Greetings to you in the name of our Saviour,

This letter is the beginning of a series of letters which I intend to send to you. When Mrs. Hanko and I were in Singapore last Fall we had quite a bit to do with the young people. We were at your Youth Camp for a day, and shortly after I came, I spoke to you all for a Reformation Day speech that was intended especially for young people. During the Youth Camp, we had a lot of opportunity to talk with many of you, especially about various problems that you face in your life in your country and culture. Mrs. Hanko and I enjoyed these contacts with you so much that our inability to do so now is one of the things we miss the most after returning home from Singapore.

After corresponding with a few of you and after talking by letter with a couple of parents, I thought it would fill somewhat the hollow that is in our hearts now that we are unable to see each other any more. So this is the beginning of our forum.

We should, of course, have something to talk about. And so I have sent to you a dozen or so books with the title *Leaving Father and Mother*. It is a book written by my father quite a few years ago. My father, as many of you know, is now dead and in glory. He died four years ago at the age of 97. But he was a pastor all his life; in fact, for 15 years he pastured a congregation of 550 families, about 2000 – 2500 souls. He always enjoyed his work with young people and faced many problems with them. Many of these problems involved dating and marriage, and from his experiences, he wrote this book. I thought it would be a good book to use in this forum.

I did not send enough copies for all the young people in Singapore, because I did not know how many of you would be interested in this forum. But if you are interested and cannot get a copy of it, perhaps one of you would be willing to run off copies of the chapter we are discussing so that you may have your own copy. It is not a large book, and it is very easy to read.

I have decided to run the forum in this way. About every two weeks to a month I will send another installment to you. I would like to have you read the chapter on which the installment is based, so that you have the basis for what I write. You may, and probably should, discuss what I write among yourselves when you see each other; and it is quite possible that questions or comments come up in your discussions that are worth more time and further discussion. Or you may have your own personal problems concerning which you would like some more information.

It would be nice, therefore, if you would write me any questions you may have or any remarks you wish to make. If you write them to me, I will publish them in my letters to you and attempt to answer any questions you might have. It is better, I think, that you send all correspondence to me rather than just write in the forum itself. If we allow the latter, the forum will become sort of confused without any order about it. We would not like that to happen. And if all correspondence is sent to me, I can sort it out and shorten it if necessary.

You need not necessarily write me with questions that have to do with the book we will be discussing. I would like it if the forum were a place in which you could ask any questions you wish about any problems you might have. It need not be limited to dating

and marriage; I would prefer if it broadened out to include anything you might want to talk about.

When we are discussing dating and marriage, I am well aware of the fact that customs in Singapore differ from customs in the States, and I am not aware of all the differences. So, if I should say something that does not fit the situation in Singapore, I hope you will write me and tell me what I said that just doesn't fit the situation where you live. In that way I too will have an opportunity to learn.

Not all of you who get this first installment will want to participate in the forum; nor will all of you want to receive these installments. If you wish to get out of the forum, just drop me a line and I will take your name off the distribution list.

My real desire is to help you young people with the many problems you face, and to discuss with you the important things in life with respect to your spiritual well-being. I love our young people and am concerned about their spiritual well-being, for you are the church of tomorrow when the times comes for me and my generation to go to Heaven.

So, good-bye to you all. Pray that our forum may be a success, and may God take care of you and protect you from all harm, physically and spiritually.

With love in the Lord,

Prof. Hanko