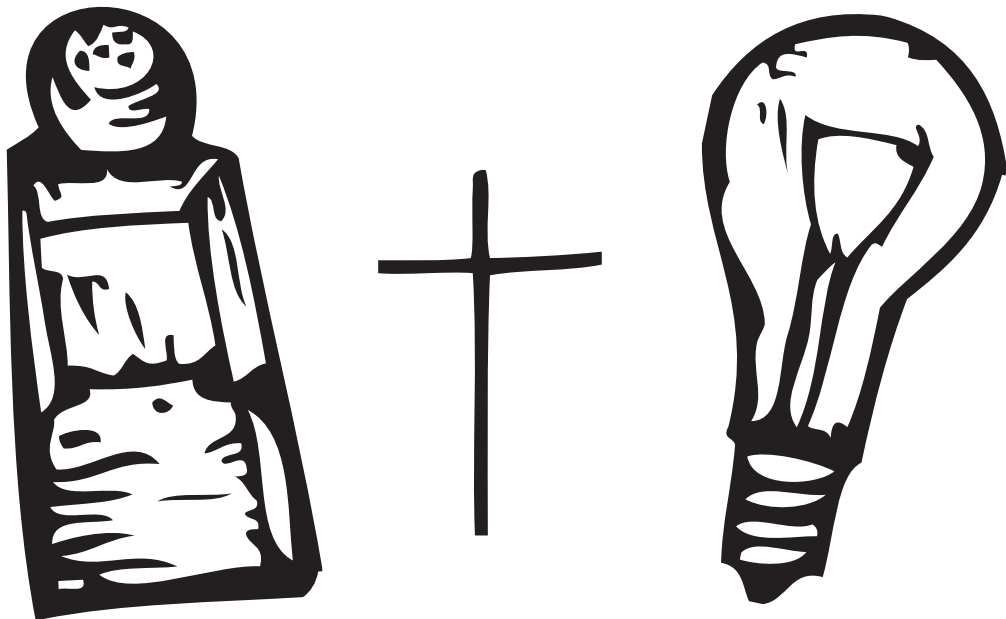


salt shakers

2010 Issue 2 May



Be These!

Hello again! It would be great if “again” applied to you, then it would mean you are a repeat “customer”! And i believe i speak for the Salt Shakers Team when i say that we are truly excited to have another opportunity to bless (season) you with “salt”, from this shaker.

Have you read “The Christian and Rock Music” by Prof. Homer Hoeksema? There are two parts, the first is in the first issue, and the second is in this issue. If you haven’t read it, you have to. Though it was written quite some time back when cassettes tapes were still being used, the Biblical treatment of the matter and the application of the Word is timeless, and it offers us Godly wisdom on the subject in this mp3 and YouTube age. In fact, the article would teach you to discern not only rock music, but any form of “music” you may come across. i better stop here before you won’t need to read the article.

22nd April was “Earth Day” and Wikipedia tells us that it is a “day designed to inspire awareness and appreciation for the Earth’s environment”. It actually sounds great and noble, something that we should all join in! However, as Christians, we should put greater thought into the purpose and intentions of such earthly initiatives, before following blindly and putting our time and efforts to support such causes. It is true that God commanded Adam and Eve to subdue the earth and when they were driven from Eden, Adam had to till the ground for sustenance. This means that God had entrusted the earth to Man for his benefit and with that came the responsibility of being a good steward and taking care of the resources that God had given. We all now know that apparently our fathers have not taken good care of our planet and it is “dying”, “melting”, “burning”, “choking” (just to use some commonly used scare-words) and so there is a call-to-arms in a bid to undo the damage and prolong the life of our dear earth. The problem lies in the fact that the world isn’t doing it because they have finally realised their duty towards God, and are coming back in repentance and obedience, quite the opposite, they are doing it in rebellion against God. It is almost like another Tower of Babel which united humanity in a project of self-glory and self-preservation (if they were making it high enough to survive another flood). It is a project to preserve their source of pleasure and lust, to make it last forever, to build an everlasting kingdom on earth. We can’t knowingly be a part of this cause, can we? Of course we do take care of this earth which our God has entrusted to us, but out of love for Him, and for His glory alone, knowing that one day, even this earth shall pass away, at the glorious coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Phew, that was heavier than i thought! Alright, we do need your comments and feedback as much as possible, so please send them to ck_magazine@yahoo.com.sg. Also, if you have suggestions on topics, please let us know, we want to be relevant to you! Remember, when you’re done with it, pass the salt! **Christ regardless, paul**

Contents	Salt for Savouring Devotion	03
	Rock Salt The Christian and Rock Music II	04-06
	Rock Salt Infant Baptism	07-09
	Coarse Salt Glorifying God in Your Studies	10
	Fine Salt The Heart of Youth Meetings	11-12
	Local Salt Evangelism	13-14
	Seasonal Salt Know Your Camps	15-17
	Salt & Paper Review: A Spiritual Gold Mine	18
	Oh taste and see!	19-20

MEDITATIONS

>> Pastor Lau

Death has struck the Evangelical Churches in Singapore again. Brother Soon Kiah was taken home in the afternoon of May 7 2010.

In this meditation we relate our deaths to Christ's unique death.

How can you and I be so sure that a death that took place about 2,000 years ago has merit meant for people of all times and ages, including ours? No, we are not talking about such a death being a good example for people of all times and ages to emulate and thus benefit from. Rather, we are thinking of a death that was designed and planned deliberately to secure a certain merit meant for a specific people down through the ages. Such a time-transcending purpose involves the Fall of man into sin and misery under the judgment of the Holy God and the Redemption plan of God.

It was true that wicked men (some of whom were in holy offices) persecuted Christ unjustly and had Him executed as a criminal. But in the eternal counsel of God, something else was taking place as well, at the same time. Christ, according to God's plan of redemption, would have to be the substitute for God's people, bearing the penalty of their sins, as He suffered and died the accursed death of the Cross. "They persecute him whom thou hast smitten." (Psa. 69:26)

Scripture clearly reveals that God's plan was in the execution while men were doing their wicked deeds and being responsible for them. Jesus, the Lamb of God, was also fully aware of God's plan all along, as He suffered and died the atoning death. "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! — Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. — They did spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee? — Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross. — Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." (Luke 17:1. -Acts 2:23. -Matt. 26:67,68. -Matt. 27:41,42. -Acts 4:27, 28) This awareness of Jesus concerning God's eternal plan in what was happening in the crucifixion, is crucial in the nature of His death and the benefits we derive from it. If He was not aware of it, then He could not have gone through it for our sake, but for some other reason. Then also, the benefit of His death can be anything but He being a substitute for us. But...

"Surely he hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." (Isa. 53:4) This unique death in time has eternal significance. It was that moment when the death of God's people died - an event celebrated by God's people throughout their history!

What have become of your and mine deaths, if they had died on the Cross of Christ? (2Co. 5:8) If Soon Kiah is a child of God, his death died on the cross. His death had no condemnation upon him. His death was but a passage way to his heavenly home.

If the Lord so will, we too will experience death by and by. What will be our death to us? A gateway to glory or one to eternal condemnation? What makes this great difference?

The Christian and Rock Music I

>> Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

Volume 62, Issue 8

What then should be our approach with respect to the attitude of the child of God toward rock music?

It is my position, in the first place, that our fundamental approach should not be what I would call a kind of empirical approach, according to which we base our judgment on experience and garner all kinds of evidence and supposedly weigh the wrongs and the rights, the pros and cons, and come to a conclusion. Practically speaking, such an approach might lead to a ringing condemnation; but with some it might also lead to a partial approval. That approach has also sometimes been taken with respect to the movie question, for example; and only too often it has ended in the fatal distinction between “good” and “bad” movies and the inevitable trend to find some justification for a large number of movies being classified as “good.”

In the second place, I do not believe our approach should be one of mere negative legislation. This is not to say at all that parents should abdicate their position of authority in the home and in relation to their teenagers. But a mere flat prohibition of rock by

parental fiat will only provoke violation, and that, too, probably on the sneak. But worse, it does not teach our young people freely and voluntarily to reject this tempting perversion which the world offers them, and it does not teach them to see for themselves that it is contrary to their Christian calling. A mere negative “Thou shalt not” only provokes sin.

In the third place, and positively, our fundamental approach should be that of the antithetical position and calling of God’s people in the midst of the world. It should be that of the thesis and antithesis. As I stated in our December 1, 1985 issue, “The thesis, therefore, is that which God’s people hear of God, and confess and affirm of Him, namely, that He is God in relation to all things—our person, our body, our soul, our heart, our mind, our will, our home, our man-and-wife relationship, our parent-children relationship, society, business, industry, property, education, state, church; and that it is good to do His will.” And our thetical calling is to will and to know this thesis from the heart and to develop its implications with respect to all of life, and thus to confess in word and deed that God, our God, is GOD and that He alone is good. The thesis is the Yes of God’s covenant people to their covenant God. And the antithesis is the No of that Yes. It is the No of righteousness over against unrighteousness, of godliness over against ungodliness, of the truth over against the lie, the No of the love of the Father over against all that is not of the Father, but of the world, over against the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life. And according as we firmly and clearly say Yes to God, we will say No to the world and all that is of it. Such is our calling.

Now consider rock music in the light of this antithetical position and calling of the people of God. The matter is very simple, is it not? It is not even a question. It does not constitute a problem. It is not a debatable issue. That is, not if our antithetical position and calling is not merely a matter of the intellect and of lip service, but a matter of the heart and of grace. It is only when we forget and abandon the former that the whole matter becomes debatable, becomes problematic. It is only when we deny and forsake our antithetical position and calling that we begin to argue the matter, begin to find excuses, begin to try to justify our indulgence in rock and somehow convince ourselves that it is all right to participate at least just a little, that there is not so much evil in it, that perhaps there is even some good in it and some genuine enjoyment. And, of course, once we have forsaken that antithetical stance, no amount of argument will convince us that rock is evil. The old saying will hold true, "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."

But let us be specific, and let us apply this principle to the various aspects of rock music.

Consider the source. Does anyone doubt that rock originates in the evil world of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life? Consider the performers. Consider their rebellious dress and appearance (Think of this in connection with punk rock, for example.); consider their lewd, profane language and professed lifestyle; consider their on-stage behavior, their lewd, provocative pelvic

gyrations. Consider the lyrics of their songs, whether "sexually explicit" or "sexually implicit."

And especially, consider the music itself. For, do not forget, lyrics and music go together. We all know this instinctively. In our sacred music, for example, a certain kind of music is appropriate for a certain kind of lyrics. A bouncing, joyous tune does not befit sad and mournful lyrics. The music of a march does not fit the words of a prayer. And the more successfully a composer can match lyrics and music as to mood and emotion and thought, the more successful his composition will be in achieving its goal and design. But let an expert speak on this point. Christian News (Nov. 25, 1985) carried an extensive treatment of the subject of rock music, particularly so-called Christian rock. An article entitled "The Prosecution," by David Noebel, quotes the late Dr. Howard Hansen, of Eastman School of Music, as follows: "Music is a curiously subtle art with innumerable, varying emotional connotations. It is made up of many ingredients and, according to the proportions of those components, it can be soothing or invigorating, ennobling or vulgarizing, philosophical or orgiastic. It has powers for evil as well as for good."

This is worthy of special attention. Rock music (even apart from the lyrics) is not amoral. It is not in itself not evil. It has a corrupting influence. One does not have to listen long to the insidious, intrusive, insistent beat of the voodoo drums, to the clashing and crashing disharmonies of rock to recognize this. And especially here

there is a grave danger in rock. There is in it a certain intrusive appeal to the emotions which becomes almost addictive. But it is an appeal to the emotions of our old nature, of our old man of sin. To indulge in rock is a very dangerous thing, therefore. For just as music can be a powerful influence for good, moving men in the very depths of their being, so it can also be a tremendously powerful influence for evil, stirring up the base emotions of our old man of sin. This is true in general of worldly music, but it is most emphatically true of rock. Never before has the wicked world succeeded so well in adapting its music to its thoughts, all of which thoughts are not of God! Beware, lest you allow yourself to become enslaved to this corruption!

But what about so-called Christian rock or gospel rock?

One could write another two editorials on this subject without any difficulty. In my opinion, the subject is not worth extensive attention, for the simple reason that this is not basically a different matter from ordinary, worldly rock.

However, let me briefly call attention to the following:

- 1) To say the least, the Christian character or the gospel content of "Christian rock" is very scant in many instances and highly suspect in others.
- 2) The lyrics of "Christian rock" are not infrequently guilty of double-entendre. What does that mean?

Double-entendre is “a word or phrase of double meaning, the less obvious one often of doubtful propriety.” An article in Newsweek of August 19, 1985 quoted by Christian News, Nov. 25, 1985, refers to this: “In Grant’s (Amy Grant, an alleged evangelical entertainer) pop psalm called ‘Open Arms,’ for example, she croons, ‘Your love has taken hold/And I can’t fight it’—keeping it unclear whether or not the lover is Jesus.” In its December 2, 1985 issue Christian News quotes from Eternity magazine, which refers to a song by this same Amy Grant entitled, ‘Love Will Find A Way’ in which it is not clear whether she is singing about her lover or about Jesus.

3) Finally, granting for the moment that the lyrics are soundly and unambiguously Christian, the mixing of Christian lyrics and rock music is like mixing fire and water. Or let me quote, with approval, the following from an article by David Noebel (Christian News, Nov. 25, 1985, p. 8):

Rock is music of a decadent, pagan culture. Malcolm Muggeridge addresses this subject in his work *The End of Christendom*. Why, then, do Christian musicians adopt a musical form that glorifies man’s lascivious nature? Why don’t Christian musicians provide music that is higher and purer than that of their secular counterparts? Even many secular artists admit to rock’s evil influences. Rock star David Bowie commented that rock music has always been the devil’s music, and the late John Lennon referred to rock music’s beat in the same manner. David Wilkerson, in his new work *Set the Trumpet to Thy Mouth*, asks, “Is God’s house now a place where even demonic expressions find a place with music borrowed from the altars of Baal?” Since rock music reinforces rock lyrics, and many rock lyrics glorify degenerate lifestyles, why do Christian musicians bother using such a debauched musical form? Christian rock is breaking down the barriers that once surrounded the secular rock world. And as a result, many Christian young people are “rushing in where angels fear to tread.” Christian bands today occasionally share the stage with secular groups, and they’ve convinced Christian youth that rock music is “sugar, spice, and everything nice.” It is, in fact, cultural hemlock.

We agree.

“Music is a curiously subtle art with innumerable, varying emotional connotations. It is made up of many ingredients and, according to the proportions of those components, it can be soothing or invigorating, ennobling or vulgarizing, philosophical or orgiastic. It has powers for evil as well as for good.”

Infant Baptism

>> Ronald Hanko
PRC Website

And although our young children do not understand these things, we may not therefore exclude them from baptism, for as they are without their knowledge, partakers of the condemnation in Adam, so are they again received into grace in Christ.

This passage from the Form for the Administration of Baptism used in Reformed churches very nicely sums up what we wish to show here, that is, that infant baptism is part and parcel of the doctrine of sovereign grace, and that a denial of infant baptism is essentially a denial of sovereign, irresistible, and efficacious grace.

The argument of the Form for the Administration of Baptism is founded on the truth that infants can be and are saved by God (Ps. 139:13, Jer. 1:5, Lk. 1:15, Mk. 10:13-16). If they can be saved, they can also receive baptism as the sign of salvation. To say that they cannot have the sign when they can have the salvation to which the sign points is inconsistent, to say the least.

A baptist will argue, however, that a person must give evidence of having salvation before he can receive the sign. He will insist, therefore, that faith must precede water baptism. So, he says, water baptism ought to be administered only to believers. The bedrock of baptist teaching is, then, the idea that faith must precede water baptism.

This teaching is based on a misinterpretation of Mark 16:15, 16. These verses, however, do not say that faith must precede baptism. Nor does any other Scripture passage. The argument that this is the order of the passage is really no argument at all. It is true that faith is mentioned before baptism in Mark 16:15, 16. That order is important. But that does not prove that the order is a temporal order, i.e., first faith, then baptism. The passage does not say, 'He that believeth and then is baptized shall be saved.' Baptists assume that it says 'then' but it does not. The order in Mark 16:15, 16, is simply that of priority, i.e., that faith is more important than baptism, something we all believe.

Following the Baptist line of reasoning, one might just as easily prove from II Peter 1:10 that calling comes before election, because it is mentioned first. In fact, following the Baptist line of reasoning, the order in Mark 16:15, 16, is first faith, then water baptism, then salvation; an order no baptist could accept. All Mark 16:15, 16, proves, then, is that faith, baptism and salvation are very closely related to each other.

The main point of the Form for the Administration of Baptism, however, is that infants are saved 'without their knowledge'. In this way the Form connects infant baptism and sovereign grace.

That infants are saved without their knowledge is self-evident. But this means that there is no other way to save an infant than by sovereign grace. He cannot respond to the Gospel, exercise saving faith, make any decision, or do any works, and must, then, be saved solely by the sovereign grace of God. Infant salvation, therefore, is a powerful demonstration of salvation by grace alone.

What is more, the salvation of infants demonstrates what is true for everyone whom God saves. We must all become like little children if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven, that is, we must be saved in the same way that a little child is saved, without our having done anything in order to be saved.

Many baptists believe this. Holding to the doctrines of grace and believing the sovereignty of God in salvation, they insist as we do, that God is always first in the work of salvation. Faith, therefore, is not something that precedes salvation, but is itself part of the gift of salvation (Eph. 2:8-10). It is not something we produce in order to be saved, but something God gives us in saving us.

Yet, the same baptists who insist that faith cannot not precede salvation, say that it must precede the sign of salvation. How inconsistent! Ought not the sign correspond to the reality? If it is not necessary to have faith before God can begin to save us, then the sign ought to say so. In infant baptism it does!

The truth is, of course, that no one is saved because he first believes the Gospel. He is saved through believing, but not after believing. That would make faith a work and be a denial of salvation by grace alone. When we believe it is because God has already begun His work of salvation in us. Yet even those baptists who believe in salvation by sovereign grace say that a person's receiving the sign of salvation does depend on his faith! He can receive salvation 'without his knowledge', that is, before he is capable of responding and while he is still dead in sin, but cannot receive the sign of that salvation in the same way.

We do not deny, of course, that sometimes water baptism follows faith. In the case of adults converts it is often so (but even then it marks the fact that they entered the kingdom as little children). We are only saying that

it need not be so. The very idea that one must believe before receiving the sign of salvation and of entrance into salvation is implicitly Arminian - a denial of salvation by grace. This should be clear to anyone who understands the doctrines of grace.

It is even clearer when we understand that water baptism is only the sign of baptism. The real baptism is the washing away of sins by the blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:3, Col. 2:12, Tit. 3:5). The real baptism is not something that depends on our believing response, or even follows our response, but is 'without our knowledge'. Indeed, it was principally accomplished already at the cross, long before we were born (Rom. 5:8). How fitting that the sign should match the reality at this point.

Not only that, but we actually receive true baptism, the washing away of our sins, as soon as we are reborn into the family of God. At that time we are still 'infants' in understanding and obedience (Heb. 5:12-14). Is it so strange, then, that we should receive the sign of baptism at the time of our first birth and when we are still infants?

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him into death: that like as Christ was raised from the Father, even so we also should

Baptism as the sign of salvation ought to reflect the character of that salvation, especially its free and gracious character. It does that in a very wonderful and beautiful way when infants are baptized. In fact, it is our conviction that only the teaching of infant baptism fits the doctrines of grace and the truth that salvation is by grace alone without works. What a beautiful picture of salvation by sovereign grace it is when a tiny infant, not even aware of what is happening to him, receives the sign of God's grace and salvation through the blood of Jesus! Just as that infant receives salvation 'without his knowledge', so also he receives baptism as the sign of that salvation 'without his knowledge'.

All this is the reason why Mark 10:13-16 is sometimes used a proof for infant baptism even though it does not mention baptism at all. The children who were brought to Jesus were infants (the Greek word shows this, as does the fact that they were 'brought'). And, without even the possibility of any kind of believing response from them, Jesus grants them salvation; for what else is it, in being brought to Him, being received by Him, and blessed by Him, but to be saved in Him? The argument,

therefore, is that insofar as these infants received salvation from Him, the sign of that same salvation should not be withheld from them. How could it be withheld?

The Belgic Confession of Faith uses this same argument (Article 34): 'And indeed Christ shed his blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful, than for adult persons; and therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that, which Christ hath done for them.'

When an infant is baptized, therefore, it must be on some other ground than his believing response to the Gospel promises. He is incapable of such a response. He must, in fact, be baptized simply on the ground of God's promise to be the God of His people and of their children (Gen. 17:7, Acts 2:39). Because of that promise of God we may expect a response from him in later life, but neither his salvation nor his receiving the sign of that salvation depends on his response.

This promise does not mean that every baptized infant will be saved. Nor does some vain hope for the salvation of all their children cause believing parents to have their children baptized. The foundation for infant

baptism is the PROMISE of God made to believers that He will be their God and the God of their children (Gen. 17:7, Acts 2:39). Believing parents, therefore, expect that God will gather His elect from among their children and have their children baptized in the sure hope that God who promised will also perform it.

But why should all our children be baptized, when we know that not all will be saved? For the same reason that we bring them all under the preaching of the gospel. Believing parents have all their children baptized because they understand that baptism is a kind of visible gospel that will have the same twofold fruit among their children that the preaching of the gospel has, according to God's own purpose in predestination. Baptism, like the gospel, they believe, will be used by God for the salvation of those of their children who are elect, and for the condemnation of the rest.

Thus infant baptism teaches us that salvation does not depend on us, but on the sovereign grace of God, who grants salvation to sinners in the same way that they came under condemnation in Adam, that is, without their knowledge.

were baptized into Jesus Christ were
we are buried with him by baptism
raised up from the dead by the glory
ld walk in newness of life.

Glorifying God in Your Studies

In the bible,

we are often called to glorify God. In fact, we were created by God to do just that – glorify Him. This can be shown from Isaiah 43:7. “Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.” Yet, we often find ourselves struggling to do so. How do we glorify God? Specifically, how do we glorify God in our studies, something which we find ourselves spending so much time on.

Some people might ask if it is even possible to glorify God in their studies. After all, it is one thing that shifts so much attention away from God Himself and has often led Christians to backslide and turn away from Him. Fear not, because in the bible, we are told that we can. 1 Corinthians 10:31 reads “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” Everything we do now is part of God’s plan. He has called us to be students here on earth and since we are to glorify Him in everything we do, it is our calling especially to glorify God in our studies.

First of all, what does it mean to glorify God? To glorify God is to bring Him honor in whatever we say, do or think. This is very important. When we talk about studying, we often think about school. The way we act in school is vital in glorifying God. At all times, we should put on a good godly Christian example as we are witnesses for Christ. When we speak to our friends, do we speak the way the ungodly do by cursing and using God’s name in vain? (Psalms 34:13) When we talk to teachers, do we do so with respect? (Rom 13:1-3) When people look at us, do they see something different – in a good way – in us? By setting ourselves

apart from the rest of the world (Rom 12:2), people will wonder how it is that we are that way and from there we can teach them more about the Bible and even bring that person to church. By acting the way God wants us to, we bring glory to Him as well.

As we sit down at our desks to do our homework or study for a test, what kind of attitude do we have? Do we grumble and dread it, wishing we could be on the internet or watching television instead? The Lord tells us that there is a time for everything (Ecc 3:1) and that no matter what we do, we have to give our best as a way of serving God and glorifying Him (Col 3:23). When we study hard and do well, we get praised by our teachers and friends and at that time, we can credit God for our good results. When we study, we should always have the mindset of bringing glory to God’s name, not ours. Therefore, a good way to start before studying is to pray to God, asking for wisdom and strength (Col 1:9) to help us in our studies while glorifying Him at the same time.

Last but not least, we must always check to make sure that our studies are not stealing time from God as this is something that many of us do. Our studies should not take up so much time that we do not do our daily devotions and spend personal time

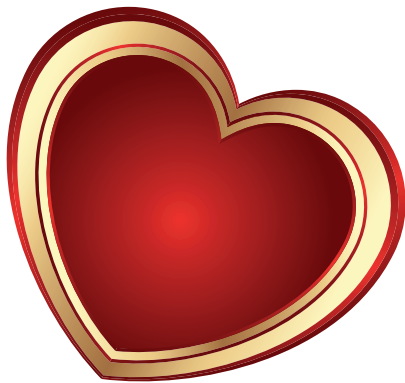
with Him every day. It is also important that we do not allow our studies to prevent us from going to church both physically and spiritually. Recently, there has been an emergence of internet churches. We must not think that attending internet services can substitute going to an actual church so that we can use the time saved from travelling to study instead. It is important to listen to God’s word in His temple because that is where we can find Him (Hab 2:20) and where we are able to engage in good Christian fellowship to gain encouragement for our spiritual lives (Heb 10:25). It is even more important to fully concentrate and listen to what the pastor is saying and the lyrics to the songs which are singing. If we are physically in church but our heart is somewhere else, worrying about our studies then there is no use in going to church for attendance sake. If we find ourselves spending too much time on our studies, perhaps it is time to take a step back and re-prioritise by putting God first once again.

Ending off, I would just like to remind everyone that glorifying God in your studies is important because, glorifying God after all, is our “primary purpose” as described in the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

>> Koh Huiyi

The Heart of Youth Meetings

>> Aaron Lim



“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Ps 133:1)

The fellowship of the saints is an extremely important aspect in the life of the church. Our Heidelberg Catechism, in explaining this concept, teaches us that believers are members of Christ and common partakers of Him and of all His riches and gifts. Hence it is our duty, readily and cheerfully to employ our gifts for the advantage and salvation of other members (LD 21Q55). In Christ, God’s people find their fellowship where there is great abundance of joy and peace.

How should we as young people view youth meetings organized by the church? How important are they amidst the hectic schedule of our school life? When we attend the meetings, how should we better prepare ourselves so that we can glorify God’s Name and be a source of blessing to our brethren?

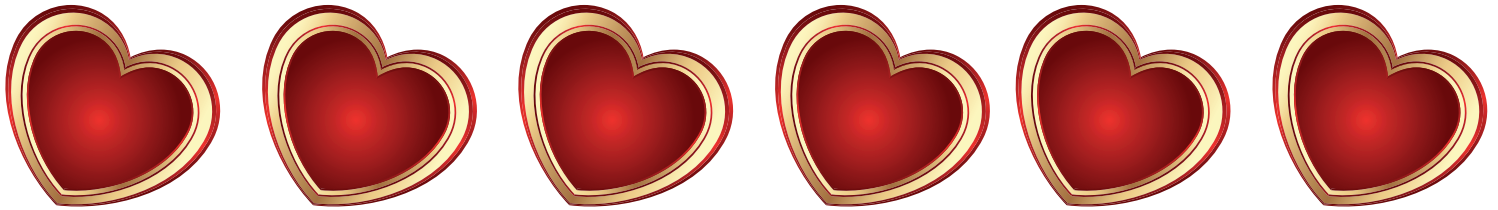
It is first of all necessary to understand that God is at the center of our youth fellowship. He is pleased to dwell “where two or three are gathered together” in His Name (Matt 18:20). He is delighted to bless our fellowship and activities because He loves us as members of His covenant. God binds us together in love for Him and for each other. That is why the psalmist

can proclaim with such joy that it is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity (Ps 133:1).

When we see God working in our fellowship, we will be eager to attend the youth meetings because we desire to be part of that fellowship. Like the psalmist who longs after God and desires to seek him early (Ps 63:1), we will be eager to attend these meetings. Sometimes through weakness of the flesh we are not regular in our attendance or are late for meetings. Nevertheless, when accompanied by prayer, the heart that is eager to seek after God will be strengthened in faithfulness. We will desire to attend these youth meetings as much as possible because we know for certain that God will bless us richly.

The catechism makes an important point that it is our duty to promote the spiritual advantage of our brethren. It is important that we recognise this truth. Each of us has an important and unique part to play in the church because God has made us members of the body of Christ. It is our duty, therefore, to attend these meetings because they serve to promote our spiritual growth together as the body of Christ.

When we do not attend the youth meetings, it reflects the lack of desire for our brethren’s fellowship. We reveal



that our individual pursuits in life are more important than the spiritual welfare of the church. If our studies are an excuse not to attend youth meetings, then we ought to admit that our academic achievements outweigh our spiritual growth. This is tragic because we ought to be setting our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth (Col 3:2).

Because God is at the centre of our youth fellowship, His Word is the means by which we grow spiritually. Like its effect on young Timothy, God's Word will make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ (2 Tim 3:15). To profit from the Bible studies during the meetings, therefore, requires a spiritual preparation of the heart to learn the truths of God. This is accompanied by a deep consciousness of our limited knowledge of God and an eager desire to learn more through our godly peers and their instruction.

The Bible also demonstrates how we can be a source of blessing to our peers through the youth fellowship. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend (Prov 27:17)." When stirred by the love of God, our speech, actions and conduct will encourage our peers spiritually. We will provoke one another unto love and to good works (Heb 10:24) by our godly testimonies.

Youth meetings have played an extremely important role in my life as a teenager. They have shaped my character in tremendous ways and taught me invaluable spiritual lessons. I have always found the best and truest of friends in the church whom I know I shall spend an eternity with. An individual Christian is useless without the church. We need our spiritual companions along life's difficult pathway to heaven.

It is very grievous when covenant parents prevent their children from attending youth meetings. We rob them of their covenant privileges and the fellowship of the saints when we do this. Youth meetings are essential to their spiritual development and well-being as covenant young people. They are the future of the church and we ought to give our utmost support for their fellowship.

It is apt that the youth ministry of CERC is known as the Covenant Keepers. God is our covenant Friend who has called us into covenant friendship with Him through the cross of Jesus Christ. We keep this covenant friendship by faithfully walking in His ways and submitting to His will. We express our love for His covenant by being an active part of the youth fellowship. May the Lord help us to love this truth.

EVANGELISM

>> Ishu Mahtani

“Let us arouse ourselves to the sternest fidelity, laboring to win souls as much as if it all depended wholly upon ourselves, while we fall back, in faith, upon the glorious fact that everything rests with the eternal God.”

Matthew 24:14, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come”

“Good morning, can I share something with you?” Are these some of the words we use when we go knocking on our neighbor’s door with a tract? What if our neighbor did not wish to listen to us? What if the door is slammed on our faces? Or what if the person gets angry and begins speaking rudely to us? It may also be possible that the person may keep quiet, but later decide to lodge a complaint against our Church. We are all aware that we may face such situations when we carry out this good work. But this is something we do for our King in heaven, and we should encourage one other, for the Lord will surely be pleased.

In a tract entitled, “Evangelism and the Reformed Faith,” Prof. David Engelsma mentioned that, “The Church’s most important possession is the gospel.” With this in mind, may we therefore prayerfully consider how we can share this God-given “treasure” with others, so that many can come to the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Where do we begin?

1 Corinthians 9:14, “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” Yes we really need to begin with ourselves. We need to let others see Christ in us. We need to be able to manifest the fruits of spirit. We need to be able to speak to others through our godly living. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the work of evangelism would become natural for each one of us. If the world was to label us as Christians, it would mean that they see in us a people who have consecrated their lives to Christ, and Christ alone.

Who should we bring the gospel to?

Matthew 9:12, “...They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” God sent His Son into this world to heal the sick, lame and blind. He was sent to bring the good news of “healing” to those who are spiritually sick. Do you know anyone in your midst who is spiritually sick and needs to hear the good news of spiritual healing?

Matthew 7:15 reminds us, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

Our Lord also commands us to carry out the work amongst those who are scattered and who have been led astray by corrupt and selfish people.

Priests and false prophets, not only in the OT times, but even now continue teaching heresies and false doctrines. May this give to us more urgency to share with others the Reformed Truths so that many may come to become aware of those precious Truths which our forefathers defended over the centuries.

What IS the good news?

1 John 1:9 also reminds us, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” This is precisely the good news which we need to speak about. As Reformed Christians, we also ought to take every opportunity to speak about our fallen and sinful nature. The need for repentance and to ask for His mercy and forgiveness of our sins is something which is often not mentioned by many witnessing believers. We surely ought to bring this message to our neighbor with much conviction and assurance in our hearts.

John 3:16 reminds us, “For God so loved the love, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life”.

When can we carry out this work:

Whenever God opens a “door” for us.

We should take every opportunity to share the gospel. Bringing the word to others on a more personal level can also be an added advantage. By building bridges of friendship along the way, we will no doubt be able to share the gospel more effectively. Furthermore, if we are able to share with others good Christian tracts, Cds, etc, we will be able to let others take home something which they may be able to reflect on later on.

What we may wish to avoid:

We have often been reminded that we need to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. In this respect, I would like to share with you some incidents which had recently transpired in Singapore, and how it had caused many to become somewhat more aware of their religious rights. I speak of certain rights which had been highlighted by a Bill called the Racial Harmony Act. These 2 incidents and its consequences will enable us to have a better understanding of the ever-changing environment in which we live in.

Incident 1

Not long ago a couple had been charged under Sedition Act (meant for troublemakers in society), and sentenced to 8 weeks jail. A news report stated that a Christian couple had been put on trial for sedition, facing charges of distributing publications that are seditious and objectionable to three Muslims." This was because the tracts which they had distributed portrayed images which Muslims had found very offensive to their faith. Reports stated that the information found in those tracts was deemed "inflammatory, misleading, and distorted." Some mention had been made to the Muslim god "Allah." In one of the tracts which the couple distributed, entitled, "Who is Allah?," it was alleged that Allah is actually an ancient moon god, etc. Many other details were penned in stylish comic-book style illustrations.

Incident 2

In another case, a Ptr had tried to bring to light the teachings concerning the Buddhist faith. By, using the means of a public arena, he allowed his participants to share their faith publicly, and then condemned the faith and the teachings of Buddhism. His act was published in the Youtube, and many were able to witness what transpired. A public outcry followed this incident, which resulted in a cabinet Minister appealing to religious leaders to exercise more tact and understanding towards each other. Leaders of religious organizations were also encouraged to speak up if any leader within their own religious groups made any comments which deemed to be offensive, dangerous or divisive to the other.

I will therefore like to share with you something pertaining about the Bill which I had mentioned earlier.

The Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act 1990

The Minister who proposed this Act, stressed, that - "...the purpose of the Bill is preventive, to nip problems in the bud. It is to prevent matters from escalating and creating tensions, frictions and conflicts between different religious groups. Fortunately, the majority in each religious group in Singapore are conscious of the need to be tolerant and sensitive in our multi-racial society, particularly in the manner they go about practicing their faith and persuading others to join them. The problems are usually caused by a small number of people who are insensitive, thoughtless, irresponsible or worse mischievous, and these few people must not be allowed to jeopardize the precious religious harmony that we have maintained all these years."

So can we continue doing this good work?

Yes, surely! And we must. Matthew 10:16, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." This verse

reminds us that the Lord will continue to direct our steps and lead us according to His will and purpose. He will give us wisdom, strength and understanding when we tread the treacherous paths, or go through fiery trials in our lives. In the rapidly changing world which we live in, we must look up to Jehovah, who will shine His light upon our path. If are to be wise, it would mean that we exercise discernment so that the devil does not make us do that which is sinful in the sight of God, and partake in that which may work against us when we go tracting.

For example, the kind of the tracts we use would be an important area of consideration for all of us. Using good Christian Reformed Tracts, approved by our Church, would not only be a useful tool for us, but it would enable us to explain more clearly and precisely what the Word of God was meant to bring to the hearers.

Secondly, there are many means by which we can bring the gospel to others. Using a public stage to criticize or condemn another faith is surely not one of the options we should consider. On the contrary, this kind of defaming tactics will not only work against our plans to evangelize, but will also cause many to perhaps shy away from us when we plan to evangelize.

In closing, I would like to share with us some tips, as we carry out this good work. May the Lord keep us under the shadow of His wings, and grant unto us His mercies each day.

- Avoid using words of defamation against other faiths
- Avoid the use of graphic images when speaking about other faiths
- Avoid the use pressure or emotions to try and convert others
- Always bring the message based on Scripture alone (Sola Scriptura)
- Always bring the Word, exercising love, patience and understanding

Website Review

“A Spiritual Gold Mine: Pamphlets & Articles of the PRCA ”

This month's book review is different. We're reviewing a website filled with a wealth of knowledge. A website that is like a room filled with spiritual ammunition to fight the spiritual battle.

It is PRCA's database of all its pamphlets and articles. Some background of the website. This section of the PRCA website is maintained by the Evangelism Committee of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church. The Site's pamphlets and articles deals with a wide range of both practical Christian living and doctrinal issues. Issues appealing to both the young and the mature Christian.

Some of the interesting titles are as it follows :

Genesis 1-11: Myth or History? - Prof. David J. Engelsma

The Christian and Culture - Rev. Herman Hoeksema

The Christian And The Film Arts - Prof. Herman Hanko

Is The Christian Faith Easy? - Rev. Steven Key

Is Good Self-Esteem Important for a Christian, and How Is It Developed?- David J. Engelsma

The Sin of Gambling - Douglas J. Kuiper

Church Membership in an Evil Age - Steven R. Key (Pastor of the Randolph Protestant Reformed Church)

Is Denial of the “Well-Meant Offer” Hyper-Calvinism? - David J. Engelsma

The Gospel - Rev. Herman Hoeksema

Try the Spirits: A Reformed Look at Pentecostalism - Prof. David J. Engelsma

Marriage and Divorce - Prof. David Engelsma

The Antichrist - Herman Hoeksema

Hope you would find this site helpful for your spiritual growth as it did for mine. If I may add add, faith is deeply personal, an assured confidence in Christ as our Saviour. The Christian faith engages all aspects of an elect child of God. The Spiritual side, the emotional side and the intellectual side. As in Psa 119:130 puts it “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” May we be made wise by diligently studying the word of God and His doctrines. As we grow in truth, may we also grow in faith and godliness (1Tim6:3). Have a blessed time reading!

>> Josiah Tan

Website: http://www.prca.org/pamphlets_and_articles.html

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

1 Tim 4:13-16

>> Ruth Teo

CK Retreat

Titus 2:12-14: Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

With the June holidays around the corner, it's time to mark your diary and set aside some time for a spiritual retreat and Christian fellowship. The Ck retreat 2010 committee brings you a line-up of exciting activities to get your spirits recharged and souls rejuvenated.

The theme for the upcoming CK retreat is "God's Peculiar People." "Peculiar" means that which is one's own possession. Peter 2:9 reads: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." In today's sinful world, there are countless worldly entertainment that pique our interest with their dazzling images, be it movies or television programmes. Our human natures are often times all too weak to resist the temptations of the world. Therefore, It is important for us to know that we, being his chosen children, have a unique calling in this world- to live a life of contrast from the rest of the world, to be his "peculiar people" (Deut 14:2), that is, to do all things that glorify God and God alone, for it was only through Christ's death for us on the cross that we were "redeem from all iniquity" and bought out of the slave-market of sin and the devil. Titus 2:13, 14. Message will be delivered by Pastor Lau and Post-message workshops will be conducted for youths, God willing .

Besides this, we will also be organising night cycling starting at Changi Beach Park where you can pedal through stretches of pristine white beaches dotted with coconut palms while enjoying the gentle sea breeze at night. We will also be having a make-your-very-own- pizza lunch and a Bbq dinner where youths can all bond.

With such interesting and enriching activities lined up by the committee, don't hesitate to sign up for the retreat now! Hope to see you there and most importantly, let us use this retreat to glorify God alone "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's." The more we know of God and the more we walk with God, the more spontaneous and vibrant and faithful will be our witness.

KNOW

YOU

>> Jonah Chua

CKS Retreat

The theme for this upcoming CKS Retreat 2010 is “Covenant Defence 101”. It is most appropriate that I first introduce the theme, and following i will give, a glimpse of what will be the focus in this spiritually renewing event.

This CKS Retreat will be a wonderful occasion where the youths come together as a family for spiritual refreshment and a great time of bonding. Nothing can be more rejuvenating than having a sweet time of fellowship in the Lord. The messages and workshops are based on the theme, it will certainly be a fruitful time of spiritual nourishment for the youths! Message topics such as “Defending God’s Covenant”, “Defending our Faith”, “Defending the antithesis” will benefit the youths as they sojourn as children of God in this world.

Workshops conducted touch on issues like the conditional covenant. This is a doctrine that has come to prevail in most Reformed churches today. It is severely important that we learn and understand the truth. It is also important that Reformed Christian youths know of the longstanding controversy in Reformed Churches between the doctrine of an unconditional covenant and that of a conditional covenant. The youths will also have a workshop on witnessing the reformed truth whereby they will further learn of the differences of our Reformed truth as compared to the subscriptions of other denominations like the Pentecostal and the Baptist. The youths will also be sharing and participating in message and workshop discussions.

Remembering and keeping God’s covenant is what God commands us to do. 1 Chron 6:15 “Be ye mindful always of his covenant, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations”. We have to be always spiritually minded of God’s covenant to us, and this truth is of special importance, taking it for granted risks a loss of covenantal consciousness. It is of an importance that transcends all other matters in our lives, and we defend it at all costs.

On a last note, this retreat will be a means where our faith will be strengthened and the bonds of our love and care will be nurtured. There will also definitely be fun games and activities, but most importantly, the Word of God will be heard. Let this Retreat be to God’s glory alone!

Ps 103: 17-18 “But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.”

UR

CAMPS



we are one.

God willing, come 14th June 2010, we will make our way to Awana Genting Highlands for our annual church camp.

We will be there for 5 days and 4 nights to fill our week with God's word and activities that are both fun and edifying. God's word will be brought to us by Rev. Daniel Kleyn, a PRC minister stationed in Berean PR Church, Philippines. Rev. Kleyn will be accompanied by his wife, who is the daughter of two people whom we are very familiar with.

Rev. Kleyn will bring us 5 exciting messages emphasizing our camp theme, "WE ARE ONE – One Lord, One Faith, One Body In Christ"(Eph 4 : 4-6). We hope these messages will further strengthen our spiritual bond as one body in Christ amongst our members and campers. Our committee has also designed games and activities like Amazing Grace and the camp fire which will build our bond, love and care for one another, and help us learn to work together and give thanks to God. We do hope that all of us will come and be charged with God's word and continue to grow spiritually even after we leave this camp.

Of course, as in any other camp, there will be no shortage of food! You will be fed, pampered with an all in buffet 3 times a day and complimented with supper at night. Strawberry lovers will get a chance to see and eat their beloved fruit and durian fans may also get a feast.

So let us come together to be edified spiritually and physically as one CERC! Don't forget to sign up!

>> Bro Yoon Chuan



Prayer & Thanksgiving

Psalm 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.**THANKSGIVING**

For our mothers and fathers who graciously bring us up, provide their best for us, and help us understand a glimpse of our place as covenant children of God is like.

For the organizers of the Church camp, CKS retreat and CK retreat who have labored hard in seeking our edification through the camp activities and messages.

For God's grace in sustaining us through half of the school year, may we use our holidays for His glory and enjoy the many opportunities of Christian fellowship available to us.

For God's providence in providing Rev Kleyn as he will be bringing the Word of God to the campers in the Church camp.

For our Pastor who have been faithfully ministering the word of God to us.

For our Pastor who have been ministering to the saints in Penang, and to help out with the Church there.

For Prof Hanko who have visited us recently, and brought the word of God to us. He held talks for the youths (reformed worldview), for the Church (Church order) and for the family seminar. Thank God for providing Prof who rendered his service for the Church.

For all the adult Sunday classes and CI classes that have been of great spiritual benefit to both the youth and the adults.

For the bible studies conducted for CK on TULIP. That the youths have a greater understanding of the 5 points of Calvinism.

For God's mercies on His Church in preserving it, so that the congregation continues to grow in faith as the Word of God is brought to them.

SUPPLICATION

For the safety of Rev and Mrs Kleyn as they journey to Singapore to minister to us.

For humility, contentment and submission to God as the results of our past examinations are released to us.

For a willing heart to attend the coming Church Camp, CK retreat and CKS retreat. That we will prepare our hearts for these spiritually renewing events.

For safety as we make our way to Malaysia for the June Camp. Also that God will preserve and protect us from all harm and danger throughout our stay there.

For good weather throughout the Church camp, so that all the planned activities can be carried out, God willing.

For the wisdom that God will give to the speakers as they bring the Word of God to the campers.

For the sweet time fellowship that we will be having with each other in Church camp, where we will grow in love and care for each other.

For the coming evangelistic event CKS is organizing, that it will be fruitful. That God will bless this event.

For the nomination of Church office bearers in this coming month. That God will provide man required to serve in the office of Deacons.

For the safety of Church members who are overseas.

For a disciplined mind as we read and study the Word of God daily for our further edification, that we will continue to grow in the grace of God.

For the elders of the church, that God will give them wisdom in leading the church, making God fearing decisions always.

For the youths that the importance of participating in church activities will be impressed upon them. Listening attentively with a right heart in Sunday school classes and bible studies.



**SALT SHAKERS
Launch**

**CK celebrates
10 years**



**Thank you Prof & Mrs
Hanko**



Sing to the Lord!



Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church

We are a Reformed Church that holds to the doctrines of the Reformation as they are expressed in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt.

Place of Worship	Time of Worship
11, Jalan Mesin #04-00	Morning Service: 9:30am to 11:00am
Standard Industrial Building	Afternoon Service: 2:00pm to 3:00pm
Singapore 368813	

For letters to the editorial: ck_magazine@yahoo.com.sg

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