BEACON LIGHTS
for
PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

February 1962

Take Heed How Ye Hear
REV. R. HARBACH

The Resurrection and the Life
REV. R. VELDMAN

More Beacon Lights
Literary Contest Results
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All material for publication should be addressed to
MR. DAVID ENGELSMA,
846 Thomas, S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

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OPEN FORUM

NEWS FROM, FOR, AND ABOUT OUR CHURCHES
Mrs. C. Kregel
THE AGE IN WHICH WE LIVE IS NO LONGER THE DAY OF LITTLE THINGS. IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY APPARENT THAT ORGANIZATIONS MUST BE BIG IN ORDER FOR THEM TO CONTINUE TO EXIST. CONSOLIDATION IS THE VOGUE OF THE DAY. THE SMALL-TIME FARMER, THE CORNER GROCERY MAN, THE TWO ROOM SCHOOL AND EVEN THE SMALL DENOMINATIONS OF CHURCHES MUST YIELD TO "PROGRESS." DIMINUTIVE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE LITTLE PRESTIGE AND ARE RARELY DISCUSSED EXCEPT IN A DISPARAGING WAY.

PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH ARE MEMBERS OF A CHURCH WHICH IS SMALL ACCORDING TO THE STANDARDS OF THIS WORLD. PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH ARE MEMBERS OF A CHURCH WHICH HAS STOOD UNIVERSEVERCALLY FOR THE TRUTH THAT GOD IS SOVEREIGN AND FOR THE TRUTH THAT THE GIFT OF GOD'S SOVEREIGN GRACE IS ONLY FOR HIS PEOPLE. BECAUSE SHE HAS MAINTAINED THIS SCRIPTURAL POSITION MANY WITH ITCHING EARS HAVE LEFT THE COMMUNION OF THESE CHURCHES. INSTEAD OF BEING IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE THE CHURCHES OF WHICH WE ARE MEMBERS SEEM TO BE DISAPPOINTINGLY OUT OF STEP.

WHEN DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES ARE MINIMIZED THEN THE NECESSITY OF MANY INDIVIDUAL DENOMINATIONS AND CHURCHES OF A DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER LOSES ITS SIGNIFICANCE. A COMMON GROUND OF MUTUAL ASSENT IS SOUGHT. "NO CREED BUT CHRIST" BECOMES THE PLATFORM OF UNIFICATION. CHRIST BECOMES NOTHING MORE THAN A PARTY LEADER WHO WAS A GREAT TEACHER, A GREAT EXEMPLARY FIGURE, AND ONE WHO IS ON A PAR WITH ALL OTHER SO-CALLED SPIRITUAL LEADERS OF THE HONORED PAST.

DENOMINATIONAL MERGERS ARE NOT ENTIRELY NEW BUT MERGERS ARE BEING CONSUMED SO RAPIDLY THAT WE AS PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH SHOULD NOT BE OBVIOUSLY OF THESE EVENTS IN THE AMERICAN CHURCH WORLD.


EVEN THOUGH THIS MOVE IS ONLY OF AN EXPLORATORY NATURE, THE CAREFUL OBSERVER WILL NOTE THAT THE PROVERBIAL CAMEL HAS POKED HIS NOSE INTO THE TENT. THIS IS JUST ONE STEP AWAY FROM THE DESIRED END OF SUCH INVESTIGATION.

MORE CLOSELY RELATED TO THE YOUTH OF OUR CHURCHES IS THE RECENT DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCHES WHICH CALLED THEMSELVES PROTESTANT REFORMED SINCE 1951 AND THEIR MERGER WITH THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH. (THIS WRITER REMEMBERS THE DAYS WHEN THE HEARTS OF MANY WERE SORELY TRIED. MANY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHURCH WERE CURTAILED AND DISRUPTED DURING THOSE DAYS IN 1953. FOR
several months Beacon Lights did not appear in the homes of subscribers. Then in February of 1954 the first issue of the reorganized Beacon Lights staff made its appearance. This issue marks the beginning of the ninth year of publishing since the "split.""

The opinions of most theologians and church leaders who are disciples of the so-called "ecumenical movement" are staunch supporters of arguments such as these:

Denominational divisions which perpetuate outworn human creedalisms, traditions, national and sectional prejudices, and encourage ecclesiastical rivalries, prides and ambitions are wrong. Where human traditions and viewpoints are absolutized, division is sin. Biblical unity is oneness in Christ, but this is to be manifested in life. Just try and explain divisions to a non-Christian. I think the most cogent reason for union is evangelistic to demonstrate we are one.

In this quotation can be found much high flown diction and theological jargon. These are the words of those who have become disciples of the spirit of this age and will do any thing under the banner of so-called unity. Union, merger, consolidation at any cost. Union without unity. Union based upon compromise — compromise of the fundamental tenets that made the Reformation both a possibility and an actual fact.

Protestant Reformed Youth must take a position. Protestant Reformed Youth must take a stand on these issues and must know what they stand for as a small, struggling, militant church of Jesus Christ. Protestant Reformed Youth will have nothing to do with the theological jargon that spills forth in blurred and indistinguishable scratching from the pens of these preachers of ecumenicity and mergerism.

The Protestant Reformed Churches have a story to tell. These churches have a message to proclaim and this message and story of God's sovereign love and dealings can only be told as long as the creeds and doctrinal standards formulated by the fathers of the church are maintained. These standards have stood the test of time. They are not right because they are old but they are old because they are right. For 350 years children of the Reformation have been cheered and led by the words and ideas penned in these confessions. They are the legacy of the true church because they embody the truths of the Scriptures.

In order for Protestant Reformed youth to take a position in these days of mergerism they must be informed. Information should then be weighed and analyzed in the light of the Word of God as this is interpreted in the Reformed Standards.

"We believe, that we ought diligently and circumspectly to discern from the Word of God which is the true Church, since all sects which are in the world assume to themselves the name of the Church."

agatha lubbers

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TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR!

In the language of today this directive of Jesus means, "Take care how you listen!" How do you listen? How do you listen to preaching of the Word of God? For we never leave the service in God's House exactly as we entered it. Every sermon we hear has either a hardening or a softening influence. The Word either proves a savor of life or a savor of death. The Word is either a cause of life or a cause of death. The Word is either a fragrance which invigorates, or a miasma which kills. Therefore, "Take heed how ye hear, for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemed to have" (Luke 8:18).

How do you hear— with discrimination? Many cannot tell the difference between a Seventh Day Adventist speaker and an orthodox preacher, the former are so apparently frank and earnest. Some are not able to distinguish the difference between the preaching of Peter Eldersveld and that of Harry Emerson Fosdick. They lack spiritual discernment. We must learn to know the Word of God, and how to judge all things according to it. Learn to discriminate. Do not set yourself up as a sermon-critic, nor as a self-styled expert in theological matters. But learn to think your way through Scripture. To hear well you must think! The preaching is not a convenient opportunity for a little dozing, nor a moment of case where one may be relieved of the necessity of thought. Of course, this is to presuppose that the pulpit gives you something to think about! When it does, take care how you listen, and be a thinking listener. The Bible is our absolute, infallible standard of faith and conduct. Accept it not only as God's revelation, but base all your thinking on it. Test all your sentiments, feelings and opinions by this divine standard. "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good" (1 Thes. 5:21). Reject whatever cannot be undergirded with a "Thus saith the Lord!" Make this your practice: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try (prove) the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 5:1). Refuse the pretenses of those who muffle, belittle or adulterate the infallible Word of God.

How do you listen—with attention? Listen assiduously. Why should you be distracted with inattention? Would you be inattentive during the reading of a will that concerns you? Why then be inattentive while an elder is reading a sermon? The Word of God is Christ's last will and testament to us. The preaching of it should be to us infinitely interesting. Some of you older young people have received love-letters. Ever have trouble with inattention reading same? How do you read a love-letter? the same as you would a bill or an invoice? So the preaching of the Word should be irresistibly attractive. Give the people of the world the opportunity to read a modern novel, to hear a lec-
tured on "flying saucers" or to see one of the denizens of Hollywood, and note with what avid delight they lose themselves in such a curiosity. But with what heavy and dull eye they view the pages of Scripture, and with what untrained ear they hear the Gospel! Brought up on candy and pastries, they have no stomach for solid food (I Heb. 5:12-14, ASV). So this generation of young people (not all of them, of course), brought up on the husks of "superman" comics, and a certain caterwauling dignified with the term "music", is so shallow that it has no taste for the Bread of Life. Hear well. The preaching of the Word deserves the deepest attention. Hear well, and you shall live well. He who hears well, works well. Hear often. Waste no Lord's Day, nor any of its services. What opportunities God gives for Bible study, diligently use.

How do you listen — with reverence? Pray in the secret place for God's blessing on the public ministry. Then you will come to His house expecting a blessing. Come with that specific object in view. Many come to church mechanically, indifferently, with no particular object in mind. They hardly know why they are there; unless perhaps they attend as a heresy-hunter, or scout around from church to church as a sermon-taster, or listen sharply for what they believe to be a stern rebuke of some wrong their neighbor committed. They do not listen to be spiritually fed. Why is it that some places of worship do not have a spiritual atmosphere? Is it not because, before the service, the atmosphere is loaded with a buzz of chatting? or that the minister is regarded as a pulpit-thumper, and the people as pew-holder? or that the worship time is endured painfully or spent unconcernedly? Listen with reverence and godly fear.

What profit is there in this sort of listening? "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given." To those who have, and to those only, more shall be given. Men with thankful hearts shall receive more. Then hear with thanksgiving. These evil days the devotees of the bars, race-tracks, dance-halls, night-clubs and gambling dens throng beyond capacity these places. How much more then we owe it to God to throng His house with becoming solemnity, joyous worship and so hold fast that which we have. The promise of gifts from God is to those who have. Listen retentively. Desire to retain the truth you hear. Whosoever has to him shall be given. They who retain the truth shall be furnished with the truth.

It is to be hoped that you are not like the way-side hearers — hard. They either resist the truth, or merely let it drop from their attention. They hear, but are not interested. If the church service happens to be uninteresting, it is very generally, if not exclusively, blamed on the preacher. Not much is said or thought about the disposition of the hearers. Criticism of the pulpit is quite common, and not always very wise. Criticism of the pew is rarely heard. We have a theological seminary where we teach men how to preach. Where shall the people learn how to hear? Let each church be a little seminary where we learn to cultivate interest in Christian doctrine and the every day practice of Christian living. (By the way, why are there not more young men attending our theological seminary? Is it because the "take heed" in the hearing of the Word is lacking?) It has been said, rather cynically, "Good preaching is one of the lost arts." Some truth in that! Yet good hearing is almost disappeared from the earth. Good hearers in the pews make a good preacher in the pulpit. Half of the pulpit's eloquence is in the pews. A receptive, sympathetic and responsive audience adds fervor and intensity to the preacher's delivery. Good hearing is necessary to effective preaching. Dullness of hearing makes dull preaching.

What impression does the hearing of the Word have on you? Do you feel its impress, intent and thrust? Or do you never take any note of what is said by the preacher? Does the Word fall on you like water on a duck's back, or as rain on a rock, or a seed on a footpath?

Have you ever read Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Northern Farmer"? This farmer of northern Scotland was such a hearer, as he himself testifies:

"An' I hallus coom'd to's choorsh afoor
moy Sally wur dead,
An' 'carl 'um a buzzin' awaay loike a [june-bug] ower my 'ead.
An' I niver know'd what a mean'd but I
thotw a 'ad summ't to say
An' I thoawt a said what a owt to 'sa said,
an' I coom'd awaay."

Four

BEACON LIGHTS
Then after "choochoo" he and his son Sam return homeward by horse and buggy, and what is the theme of their conversation? Father turns to his favorite and almost only line of thought:

"Dostn't thou 'ear my 'erce's legs, as they canter away?
Proputy, proputy, proputy — that's what I 'ears 'em say.
Proputy, proputy, proputy — Sam, thou's an ass for all thy pains;
Thee's noor sense 'o' "is legs, nor in all thy brains."

Though his "erce" was a nag, his son was an ass because he wanted to marry for love instead of money. But the point is, this farmer, no more used to going to church, when he did go, chiefly because it pleased his wife, never got anything out of the preaching. The preaching was like the buzzing of a June-bug over his head, just a passing pestilent noise. He never understood what the preaching was all about. He did believe the minister had something to say, and he presumed that the "parson" said what he ought to have said, and so he came away, as empty headed as ever, except for the worldly mammon-thoughts which were always in his mind. The rhythmical beating of the horses' hoofs on the road home from church carried more of a message to him than any sermon of his minister. The sound of those hoof-beats seemed to him to say, "Proputy, proputy, proputy!" Property! Property! Property! To him the great things in life were money and land! He never thought again of the words spoken in God's house. The June-bug had flown. But when his cows came home in the evening, he heard again the same message which delighted his stony soul, a little slower in tempo, perhaps, but still "Proputy! Proputy! Proputy! proputy!" His horse, and even his cows, made more sense to him than either his son or the minister of the Word. Here is the type of person who loses the whole impression of a serious sermon by the idle remark of a trifling companion.

Some are like the stony-ground hearers. Outwardly, they hear much, but retain little. Impressions are quickly produced in them so that we are led to believe them, at least to begin with, sound Christians. They are very demonstrative, yet so very independantable. He is in contrast to the staunch Christian. When trouble or persecution arises the enthusiasm of one goes out, and that of the other comes out. Afflictions develop caprice in the one; constancy in the other. "Permanence is the proof of genuineness." They seem to hear with sincerity, but sincerity without depth is like a tree trying to grow in one inch of soil.

Others are like the thorny-ground hearers. They hear the Word, and temporarily retain it, but it is not long when the impression made on them is lost when worldly anxieties impose on them. They become so absorbed over money, business and the common, every-day earthly round, that they have no time for the Lord or for spiritual things. The "cares of this world" choke out the Word. A promising young Christian mother, let us say, has this experience. There are many domestic trivialities which require her attention. She cannot be concerned either about her own or her family's spiritual welfare. Not now. She is "careful and troubled about many things." The housewife has shrivelled down to a mere housekeeper. The management of her home takes all her time. There is none for spiritual things. All she can talk of, when she finds time for conversation, are her household problems or her family trials. She has no vision beyond her house or her kitchen sink. The dust on her furniture lies more heavily on her conscience than her sense of sin, or her sense of responsibility to God. She is spiritually choked, because meaner things have all her devotion.

How do you hear? Like the good ground hearers? They hear with an honest and good heart. They pay attention to the Word, train themselves to listen to it, will not permit themselves to be distracted by petty interferences. They meditate upon what they hear. They not only hear, but also keep. "Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth (thinketh) to have." "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest HEED to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let slip" (Heb. 2:1). "Take care how you listen!" "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!" For Jesus said, "My mother and My brethren are those which hear the Word of God and do it" (Luke. 8:21). Is that how you hear?
Teaching through playing is no substitute for the patient, rigorous individual training that must go on if a child is to become a competent instrumentalist. So many learning processes and so many delicate and complex coordinations are involved in the first piano lesson that it is little wonder that children soon become discouraged. If, however, the child’s first musical experiences are joyful, if in his musical play his rhythmic, aural and muscular responses are quickened, the child with these fundamentals, can go wherever his musical instincts lead him, with the security of a firm foundation.

The basic fundamentals are developed in the kindergarten and the first grade. The program with emphasis on the fun and beauty of music includes: singing, listening, responding, and creating.

Music is preeminently a means of glorifying God. This is best done and most gloriously accomplished through words. This can, however, be also done by instrumentation.

The music education of every child should begin with singing. It is the natural medium for self-expression. Therefore, music educators should be concerned first with the voice—the instrument of song. The tone quality of the child must be considered although the child should not be conscious of it. If the desire to express the beauty of music is awakened in the children, if they are reminded of the thought in each song, and if they are aware of the importance of interpreting that thought, the light, high quality will come naturally. Good posture cannot be overemphasized, whether sitting or standing.

The general method for teaching singing is done by rote singing. The following are two methods for teaching the rote song: the whole song method and the phrase method. The whole song method is more accepted.

Rhythm band work is working with simple percussion instruments, such as drums, rhythm sticks, sand blocks and triangles. This is something that is begun in the kindergarten and the first grade and should result in a greater appreciation of music.

Every lesson of the listening program should be one of appreciation. There are a number of ways to develop appreciation, two of the best being singing and listening to much good music.

One can introduce the listening program by playing restful music while resting, listening to songs and records dealing with things familiar to the child’s experiences, and listening occasionally to songs in singing class.

There are many schools where the facilities are such that the children have an opportunity to hear and observe bands and orchestras of older children and adults. When this is true, the study of the instruments of the band and orchestra may be begun at a very early age.

Listening to music with contrasting moods is an approach to the listening program. Lullabies and marches, weather, nature, birds, and animals; story telling music; and contrasts of major and minor moods are a means of music contrasts.
Every normal child has native rhythmic responses. Some children need a great deal of encouragement and help and it is the responsibility of the teacher to assist each child to respond to a wide variety of rhythmic activities.

It is very important that this phase of rhythms be very well established, for an ability to respond accurately to them will facilitate the rhythmic approach to reading readiness of music which will come later.

Walking, running, skipping, hopping, jumping, galloping, swinging, and swaying are all forms of fundamental rhythms. Singing games also help the rhythmic responses.

Creative experiences enter into every lesson, if in no other way, through recreating a known song. Little children are creating when they can sing a song beautifully. They may also create their own musical instruments. Making up songs should be a regular part of the music program. Little children are very free in making up their own song. They often hum their own tunes at play or work.

The above are the four main emphases on the music program in the elementary school. Before music reading is presented, it is well to keep in mind that all of the activities begun and carried on the kindergarten and first grade will be continued and enlarged upon. The program should be varied to meet the needs and the moods of children.

CORAIN STREYLE

Books

Servant of Slaves
Grace Irwin – Zondervan – 432 pp. – $4.95

This biographical novel of profligate slave trader turned Calvinistic preacher, John Newton, comes like a cool breeze in hot places. Grace Irwin writes of sin with frankness and of grace with sensitivity. Both were strongly present in the life of John Newton, but the triumph is grace's.

Already as a lad, Newton was infatuated with Mary Catlett. But in her presence, his poetic thoughts would not be expressed by the tongue and he stood frustratingly mute. Conscription into the English navy plunged Newton into all the physical and moral horrors of the slave trade but it also gave him the opportunity to overwhelm Mary with his gifted pen. That love remained firm throughout Newton's life, although he himself experienced the immense change from sinner to saint, from slave trader to preacher.

A successful novel is no new thing to Grace Irwin. Many have read and acclaimed Least of All Saints and Andrew Cunningham. Servant of Slaves shines as a brilliant example of Irwin's ability to understand and enter into the experiences of her characters. Her delightful account of Newton's first sermon seems to allow for no other explanation than that she too underwent the torture. And the life of Newton breathes the confession which the man himself declared, the grace of God is sufficient.

d. j e.

Beloved World
EUGENIA PRICE – Zondervan Publishing House – 505 pp. – $4.95

Like other attempts to retell the story of
Scripture, *Beloved World* is a big result of a giant venture. Here the similarity ends. Whereas the others aim at being Bible story books for children, the present book proffers itself to the whole gamut of ages, from children to ministers. Where the others hug the Scriptural facts quite closely, condensing and simplifying, *Beloved World* strikes out boldly from Genesis to Revelation, filling in gaps, suggesting dialogue, and interpreting freely. The theme which it traces is that of the beloved world. It is easy to see that any error in interpretation of the world beloved by God will have dire consequences for the entire book. Unfortunately, Miss Price has nourished a gross one.

A book which lays claim to being of such a nature that the reader “could find his way to the very nature of the God who inspired the original text” demands close scrutiny. Repeatedly, the God of the original text becomes unrecognizable in *Beloved World*. Of Cain it has this to say, “In no way did God approve of Cain, but all that Cain did could in no way change God’s love for him.” In connection with the disobedience and punishment of Lot’s wife occurs the strange sentence, “But God kept His promise. As always, He did all He could do in the face of human disobedience.” And at the occasion of the Last Supper, it is said of Judas Iscariot that “The Lord loved this disciple turned enemy.” Therefore, “Tears sprang quickly to His eyes as the sin in Judas crashed against His sinless heart!” The beloved world of author Price is every man, woman, and child that ever lived. As this theme rises, so falls the Scriptural revelation of God who is really God.

If the God-loves-everybody-but-is-powerless-to-save-them motif accounts for the former quotations, sheer modernism produces the following statement: “Moses had been prepared, providentially, for a belief in one God, since the Pharaoh ruling Egypt during his adopted life had thrown over the established worship of many gods and adopted the sole worship of the sun god.” The plain teaching of Scripture is that neither a belief in one solar god nor a belief in thousands of frog gods does anything but lead away from the God of heaven and earth.

That which the Bible does not tell, Miss Price fills in plausibly, fascinatingly, but, by the same token, unreliably. At times she strikes powerfully upon the meaning of events and persons, as in the case of the despair of Israel in Babylon, and then her artist’s pen is doubly effective. But in the main *Beloved World* fails to accomplish its purpose and in its failing hinders a proper view of the Word of God.

The Man God Mastered


Several good biographies have been written about the life of John Calvin. Near the top of the list must be placed *The Man God Mastered* by Jean Cadier.

Jean Cadier is a Professor of Theology at Montpellier University and President of the Calvinist Society of France. He is thoroughly acquainted with the life of Calvin, his documented facts give the book a ring of authority and authenticity. His style, maintained through translation from the French by O. R. Johnson, proves to be readily readable.

The book itself provides a brief sketch of Calvin’s life. It deals more extensively with the more important periods of the life of the reformer. As all biographies, it tells the what and the when of the subject. But its greatest asset is that while doing this, it also attempts to explain the why. Cadier makes several brilliant apologies for Calvin’s sometimes questionable actions. It is shown that to judge the man, we must first judge the times.

The reviewer was very satisfied with the book and heartily recommends it as entirely worthwhile reading to all who bear the subject’s name.

Ed Langerak

The department of Photo and Art has been re-established in Beacon Lights. David Ondersma and Bob Hager have been appointed to work in this area. The new pictorial headings in this issue have been designed by David Ondersma. The next issue of Beacon Lights will contain more of this graphic artistry.
POETRY
2nd place JIM JONKER

Autumn Anthem

The glowing trees are tinged with flame;
The fiery forests with colors blaze.
And written there I see His name
And hear the silent call to praise.

NON-FICTION
2nd place CHARLES H. WESTRA

in the still of the night

The stillness of the night clearly indicated it to be a night for wandering and for un-scrambling criss-cross thoughts; a quiet valley in the jagged range of helter-skelter living; a time to be spent evaluating and categorizing the impressions and experiences of the recent overcrowded weeks.

These busy weeks had also left a residue of personal problems which could be resolved only in unhurried solitude. But in a society of togetherness, solitude is a plague to be avoided at any cost against the telephone, door to door commerce, and well-intentioned friends. It is available, however, to one who pursues the maligned practice of strolling through darkened city streets during the small hours of the night. For then each person is an island in the encompassing sea of night — free to ponder without distractions.

As this particular night came on, the city huddled under its raven wing and thick clouds held back the moon’s second-rate light. The birds had long ago stilled their impromptu concerts. Each tree was a collection of friends nodding in the most gentle sort of conversations and only briefly were any urged into more agitated exchange by scampering, short-lived breezes.

The slow pace I find most conducive to nocturnal wanderings brought the first real relaxation I had experienced for some time and set the mood for solving the four problems which had been clamoring for their solution with increasing vigor during the past few days.

The first of these problems concerned an article I had been asked to write for a church paper; the second was a pending history exam; the third, my draft status in relation to increased international tensions; and the fourth, that nagging reoccurring problem of most young people: “What am I here for?”
The last question, being most general, I decided to schedule last. The relation of my draft status quickly cancelled itself, since short of switching to a pre-seminary course there was little I could hope to accomplish by pondering the matter.

With these two problems committed to a sort of procrastinator's limbo, there remained only the pending history exam and the article for the church paper. Although both were to be completed on the same day, when viewed together, the deadline gained in flexibility while the pressure of the exam remained rock solid.

The exam, then, would receive first attention, to be followed by planning the article. Any remaining time could be spent on the sometimes stimulating, sometimes frustrating question, "What am I here for?"

By the time my schedule was completed, most of the window-diamonds had been plucked from neighboring homes and buildings by unseen hands. The soft, all-enveloping darkness had arrived and brought with it the isolation I was seeking. The time for the solving of problems had arrived.

After I had spent considerable time reviewing the material presented in the history courses, I became aware of several interrelated trends upon which specific information hung like pearls on a string. These trends had eluded me during the semester, yet suddenly they appeared, as if generated out of the stillness of the night, and pointed to the material which needed additional study: which lists should be memorized and which terms the class would most likely be asked to define in the exam.

At the next streetlight I scribbled a few notes to preserve this newly discovered illumination. I checked my watch. It was already after midnight, but the time had been well invested.

I stopped for coffee at an all-night restaurant. The yawning waitress obviously hated her work, and even more, the night hours. How could it be otherwise? The charm and soothing isolation of the night was denied her by the glare of the cold fluorescent lights and the wailing juke box. I too hurried from the place, afraid that the tyranny of the blare and glare might have struck again and robbed me of the detached mood so necessary in solving the remaining problems.

But it hadn't. The matters to be acted upon came quickly into mind as I turned in the direction of home; thankful that the night was still dark, the wind still a whisper, and I still awake to enjoy it.

The second problem to be handled involved the assigned article for the church paper. It was to be a warning against the growth of a particular ecclesiastical ideology, and although several possible outlines suggested themselves, they lacked the spontaneity I felt the subject deserved. Then, as if from the darkness itself, a most satisfying outline appeared: open the article with a shocking, specific incident close to the experience of the most probable audience. Keep the opening brief, punchy, with short words, short sentences. Identify the subject quickly, stun the reader with several valid projections, then move quickly to the conclusion, omitting insignificant details and excess verbiage.

There was my answer! Suddenly the assigned article changed from a chore to be completed with toil and frustration into an entity demanding expression in words and phrases that its message might be shared with others of the faith.

As I stopped again under a convenient streetlight to scribble a few notes regarding the matter, the bell in the downtown cathedral struck two a.m.

Elated over the satisfying solutions my lone wolf style of meditation had produced, I resumed walking but now at a quick buoyant pace. The increased exercise generated a warm glow that matched the inward comfort of having solved troublesome matters. In quick succession I walked through the blocks which led home and for the first time that night allowed a threatening yawn its rightful but brief existence, I had my answers—it was time to relax.

Or was it?

My elation slipped off into the darkness when the thought came to mind that I had left the real problem, the most basic of all, completely unsolved.

The matter of the exam and the article would soon be accomplished and forgotten. But the question that outweighed the others I had left unanswered. "Who am I, what is the purpose of my sometimes satisfying, sometimes pointless existence?"

Just what AM I here for? To stomp and
stumble around town all night planning
soon to be forgotten history exams and
feeble articles in church papers with micro-
scopic circulations? To consume my share of
bread and wine and then stand in line for
the next open grave? Was this the grand
total of my existence? Is this what I have
been so "wondrously made" for? What a
waste of effort on God's part?

Why couldn't I have been denied exist-
ence itself rather than to experience this
senseless, pointless one? Or if I must be,
why couldn't I have an obvious mandate, a
clear insight into my identity and purpose?
Why couldn't I also see the letters "P C"
formed by the clouds of heaven and go forth
preaching Christ till the day of my death
believing in my simple, uninitiated mind
that I had performed my calling as a faith-
ful servant? Why couldn't my life be
molded into some definite shape by some
external forces, yes, even by tyranny or per-
suasion? Why must I endure the curse of
limitless opportunities shackled to such a
lack of understanding that not one of them
stands out as the purpose of my life?

Deep in a quagmire of despair I neared
my home and then deliberately walked on
past. And why not?

Almost an entire night of meditation had
produced nothing but quick answers to
transient problems and a fake, fleeting sense
of accomplishment. And now even that was
gone. Impulsively I continued on into the
night as if somehow physical exercise could
produce a blueprint for my life.

Groping for any shred of comfort, I re-
called the sense of accomplishment I had
experienced earlier. Was it really as fake
and temporary as it appears now? It had
seemed real enough at the time, and even
quite satisfying. This feeling of accomplish-
ment had generated a cozy sense of pride
in my ability to supply the answers to my
own problems.

Then in an indelible sort of way I began
to sense, rather than recognize, the answer
I was seeking. This satisfaction had been
focused upon my individual accomplish-
ments. Since both they, that is the accom-
plishments, and I are rather transient sort of
things, any satisfaction resulting from my
accomplishments are doomed to be hollow
and of no lasting value.

But what then was worth pursuing? What

sort of activity or life or goal would produce
a more durable satisfaction?

In the stillness of that dark night a multi-
tude of half-understood sermons evolved
with endless catechism classes and family
devotional periods to burn into my mind the
world and life view that produced both self
identity and the purpose of existence.

It was this: I was part of an eternal sys-

tem and not an end unto myself. I was a
student attempting to develop whatever tal-
ents I had for use in this Christian system
we call The Church. That is why the solu-
tion to the exam problem gave no satisfac-
tion but only for a moment. Outside of
being part of God's plan it meant nothing.
But now it took on a small, but eternal
value.

Not only was I a member of a church, a
college, but also an occasional contributor
to one of the church papers; which again
was of no real consequence except when
viewed as part of an eternal chain of events
which irresistibly were being used to de-
velop the church.

Here was both my identity and purpose:
to function as part of this eternally preor-
dained system called The Church in what-
ever capacity I would be led. I could not
effectively fit anyone else's identity, nor
could anyone usurp mine. In a word, I
belonged — I fit. And the purpose of my
existence, although still hazy as to the de-
tails, pointed clearly in one direction, to-
wards my Creator.

I felt elated, almost transported as my
despair and lack of direction were swept
away by this long known, but only recently
understood truth!

Let the secular philosophers continue their
fruitless questionings about the identity and
purpose of the human race. As long as they
refused to admit the existence of God, Who
tailors every existence to fit His purpose,
they would never find their own identity as
I had found mine. True, I would join them
in their discourses, but for exercise; the
answers they sought in blind vanity were
everlastingly mine!

Out of the still of the night.

The cathedral bells rang 4 a.m. as I
turned home for the second time. A milk
truck swung into view, stopping, starting,
twisting, and turning like a clumsy giant
bird courting the dawn.
The dying sun was casting a few sparse rays through the bars of the solitary window of the cold cell. The prisoner, an erect and dignified man whose garb revealed him to be a clergyman, gazed thoughtfully at what he knew would be his last sunset. The day is dying, he thought, and before tomorrow is really begun, I must die too. He trembled slightly at the thought but remained calm. Often he had preached sincerely that death was not to be feared and his faith did not fail him now. Yet he seemed somewhat perplexed.

Why, he asked himself again, why must I die? Why must I die now? My best years, I always thought, lie ahead. I’m young and strong, have barely begun to preach. Does not the Lord sorely need laborers in His vineyard? What will happen to my parish? With the shepherd gone, will persecution scatter the sheep?

He knew the real answers and knew that the question “Why?” was not his to ask. He recalled what old Hans Scharman, an elder in his consistory, had told him the day before his trial. “Reverend, I can only tell you what you have told us so many times. We are all in the Lord’s hands. His will be done. He knows how to deliver the godly. His purpose, if unseen, is surely wise.” The minister smiled to himself, shook his head in agreement, and knelt to pray.

When he rose he turned again to the window and discovered the peering face of a young boy, perhaps ten or twelve years old. “Hello! What’s your name? What are you doing here?” he inquired.

“Hello”, responded the lad. “I’m John, and I’m just watching. What are you doing here? Why did they lock you up?”

The clergyman paused. Conspicuous against the State” — hadn’t that been the charge? Preach the Word, and the voices of the rulers stand condemned. And then you stand condemned as a traitor. To the boy he replied, “I’m here for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For that I am to be shot.”

He noticed a semi-sympathetic look cross the boy’s face. “Do you know about Christ?” he wondered.

“My grandfather used to talk about it before he died,” answered John. “But in school they told me it was a fairy tale. Grandpa didn’t think so, though.”

“Did you love your grandpa?” asked the pastor, and, seeing the affirmative nod, went on, “Will you help me? For his sake, for his memory?”

John wrinkled his forehead thoughtfully. “Well, maybe. I don’t want to get into trouble. What do you want me to do?”

“I want to write a letter to my congregation. I want them to know I die gladly for His name. I want to encourage them to stand fast and believe. I want them to have my testimony that God is wise, good, and ever faithful. That’s my last wish and it means more to me than I can tell you; my peace will be complete if I can do this. Please, will you,” he entreated earnestly, “deliver that letter?”

“I guess so. Where must I bring it?”

“I’ll have the name written on the outside. I’ll write the letter tonight and slip it in this crack by the window. You can get it tomorrow morning.”

“All right,” replied John. “I’ll do it. It shouldn’t be hard not to get caught.”

“God bless you, son,” said the man. “Be faithful, for my hopes go with you.”

The lad left and with a thankful heart the pastor slipped a paper and a small pencil from his pocket. The dim glow of a small bulb in the hall shone through the door and gave him barely enough light for writing. He wrote slowly and carefully, feeling his troubled spirit grow lighter with each word. Finished, he folded the paper and cautiously slipped it into its hiding place. Then he sat down, and quietly awaited the new day.

The blackness of the sky began to lift, an-
nouncing the dawn of day and death. Soon there was the sound of approaching footsteps and the commissioner entered his cell.

"Good morning, Pastor." He spoke curtly, yet politely. "Dawn is almost here. Please come with me."

"Yes," replied the man, "it’s time." He rose slowly to his feet and calmly and resolutely marched from his cell.

With a guard on each side, the prisoner followed the commissioner down the passage and out into the cool and crisp air of his last morning. Two more guards met them outside and the procession advanced to the open field behind the jail. When they stopped, one of the guards tied the minister’s hands behind him. The commissioner led him to a gnarled old tree a short distance away and asked him to stand there.

The pastor stood stiffly, scrutinizing the official. The commissioner turned to him, made as if to speak, but said nothing. From his pocket he drew a clean black handkerchief and began to fold it. He stepped up and proffered the blindfold. The clergyman shook his head.

"No," he said, breaking the stony silence, "I want to see the murderers."

"Very well, sir," replied the commissioner, his face beginning to redden with rage. "You may see what happens to those who trouble the State." He turned to walk away and noticed a small figure running madly across the field toward them. He paused and stared, and the pastor too turned and looked.

It was John. He approached, puffing and panting, rushed past the guards, and ran to the commissioner.

"What are you doing here" demanded the official. "What do you want?"

"I want to help the State," answered the lad. "I want to show that I’m a good citizen and loyal to our country, like the teacher said we had to be." He reached into his pocket, grasped a piece of paper, and handed it to the man. The clergyman gasped as he recognized his letter.

"And what is this" asked the commissioner.

"He wanted me to deliver it. He left it in a crack by the window, but I brought it to you," John said.

The commissioner read it slowly and began clenching his fists. Suddenly he turned to the prisoner and shook it in his face.

"So, beloved pastor, you never learn. You still would incite against the government. All you want to do is make trouble, even when you die. Well, you won’t have the opportunity to trouble us again. And this will not trouble us either."

He smiled unpleasantly, clenched his teeth, and in a fury began tearing the letter to shreds. He threw the pieces at his feet and stamped and ground them into the dirt.

The pastor gazed at John who stood proudly before him with an impish grin. He took a step forward, tense and angered. The commissioner pushed him back. The pastor looked at the man and then at the boy again. His gaze reflected a burning hatred, then sorrow and despair, then pity. The lad’s aspect changed also. His insolence vanished and he hung his head in a sort of embarrassed shame. But quickly he recovered, his bravado returned, and once more he faced the pastor coldly.

"You’re a brave lad and a fine citizen," said the commissioner, "one who knows his duty."

The pastor sadly shook his head. Between grit teeth he whispered, "May God forgive you."

John stood motionless and silent. Then suddenly he burst into tears, turned quickly and began to run again, furiously and vigorously, apparently wanting to leave faster than he had come. He was still dashing down the road as the crack of four rifle shots shattered the stillness of the new dawn.

TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

The Free Christian School Society of Edgerton, Minn., will be in need of a principal to teach the four upper grades, 5, 6, 7, and 8, for the 1962-63 school term.

If more information is desired, please write or send application to H. Miersma, Woodstock, Minn.

H. Miersma, Sec’y

Thirteen
“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life.” John 11:25.

“I am the resurrection and the life.”

These familiar but marvelous words of Jesus express the theme of this entire beautiful eleventh chapter of John, the record of the miraculous raising of Lazarus from the dead. You well know the setting.

The raising of Lazarus marks a climax in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. From many points of view it was His greatest miracle.

I do not say, that this miracle as such was greater than any of the others. All took divine omnipotence to perform. From this point of view, why should this miracle be considered greater than the casting out of devils, the healing of the blind, the stilling of the tempest, or any of the other mighty works of the Lord Jesus?

I do say, however, that this wonder constitutes a high water mark in a ministry wherein all spoke of divine power and majesty. Here we have the greatest, visible evidence of the very godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here we have the first real glimpse, typically speaking, of the death and resurrection of Christ Himself. From the viewpoint of its significance and effect this is the miracle of all miracles. Here it is, therefore, that both faith and unbelief come to a head in Him, Who would be for a fall and rising of many in Israel. Many believed in Him, we read. His enemies, however, determined that He had to be killed as quickly as possible.

Of this entire remarkable narrative the phrase quoted above constitutes the heart. It all happens for the purpose of proving, corroborating, demonstrating, for friend and foe to see, what Jesus says in this passage, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

Therefore Lazarus had to die.

Therefore Jesus tarried on the way until Lazarus had been dead four days already and decomposition had fully and noticeably set in.

Therefore Jesus spoke to His disciples, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”

And therefore He raised Lazarus from the dead by the power of His mighty, “Lazarus, come forth.”

It was all that we might see and believe and therein rejoice: “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.”

“Truly a passage every child of God should learn by heart. Not only commit to memory, but learn by heart. There is a difference, is there not? So many things are committed to memory that are never learned by heart.

Jesus says it with all possible emphasis,
"I am the resurrection and the life." Resurrection and life, mighty concepts, both of them. The resurrection and the life, there is no other. I am, not I have or give. I, again, there is no other.

We do understand, do we not? that this could never have been said by the mere human nature of Christ! Never can mere creature say: I am the life. That would be the height of arrogance and self-deception. A man may live. be alive, receive life. Never, however, is he the life. The same applies to the humanity of Christ. It too, is mere creature, flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, possessing nothing of itself. It, too, could never say: I am the resurrection and the life.

That Jesus says this, nevertheless, is only because He is the eternal Son of God, the second person of the adorable trinity, God Himself in flesh appearing, eternity in time, infinity in the flesh. The fountain of life, the power of resurrection is in God alone.

"I am the Life!"

Life is an incomprehensible, indefinable mystery. Who among all the sons of men, all the giants of science and biology, can tell us what it is and whereof it consists? We see it, experience it, know when it is no longer there, enjoy it—but what it is nobody knows.

I've heard it said: Life is the adaptation of the inner man to outward conditions and environment, the ability to act and react with respect to things round about us. This is true. of course. A corpse cannot do these things. When it is hot, a corpse does not perspire; when it is cold it does not shiver; when you place food before it, a corpse does not eat; when you speak it doesn't respond. However, this is a description of life rather than a definition.

Even in the natural sense of the word, but certainly in the higher sense life is more than mere existence. Existence and life are not identical. Life is existence that reaches its purpose, existence in the sphere to which we are adapted, adaptation to an environment which in turn is perfectly adapted to our existence.

Scripture approximates a definition in John 17:3, where Jesus says: "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." True life, therefore, is knowledge of God, deep, spiritual, experiential knowledge of God. It is fellowship with God; the personal, abiding experience of Him; the yearning of the entire man for the eternal Fount of all good; positive action and reaction of heart and soul and mind and will, eye and ear and mouth and hand and foot, to the God of all life; to draw near unto God. The opposite of all this spells death. It is to live apart from God, not to know and love and dwell with God, not to taste the sweetness of His communion, to hate and oppose Him, and to be the object of His fierce wrath and divine contradiction forever. How glorious is the one; how unspeakably terrible the other!

"I am the life," says Jesus.

Christ is the life as the eternal Son, irrespective of the creature. He knows the Father as only the eternal Son can know the Father. Eternally He lies in Father's bosom. Of Him the Father says: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." He is the expressed image of the Father's person, the brightness of the Father's glory, the only begotten one. All that is in the Father is in Him too. That is His personal place and divine glory as Son.

And Christ is the life as our Mediator and therefore for all His own. In Him all the fulness of the godhead, all the riches of divine perfections, dwell bodily. To know Him is to know the Father. To see Him is to see the Father. He is the most we shall ever know or see of the Father. To serve Him is to serve the Father. To come to Him is to come to the Father. All that belongs to life is contained in Him alone. To possess Him is to possess the Father. He is the power, the principle and contents of all life.

"I am the life!"

Therefore He can say, "I am the resurrection."

Resurrection is not something new next to and independent of life. It is life in conflict with, in the midst of, in triumph over death. When life comes in contact with death you get resurrection.

Being the life, therefore, the Mediator must needs be the resurrection. He is this

BEACON LIGHTS

Fifteen
for Himself, when His own humanity descends into death and the grave. He is this for all His own, whom He desires to quicken according to the mandate of His heavenly Father.

Isn't that wonderful? That Son has power over death in every form. When He appears upon the scene death must retreat and vanish. When His own human nature is laid in the tomb He rises again the third day, in His own time and manner, by the power of His own Godhead. When He speaks the spiritual dead, thousands upon thousands of them, hear His voice unto faith and repentance. He speaks again and all that are in the graves hear His voice and come forth, they that have done the good to the resurrection of life, they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.

And note the obvious connection between the two.

He is not the life because He is the resurrection. Resurrection, surely, does not precede life. Then, where would be the power of that resurrection? It certainly can never be said of the eternal Son of God, that there was a resurrection from death whereby He became life.

What Jesus means to say is this: I am the life, eternal life, because I am the Christ, the Son of the living God. Therefore I am the resurrection, and death can have no dominion, nor the grave victory, where I appear upon the scene.

Precious Savior! So great, so wonderful! Hosanna to Him forever more!

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**Letters...**

Dear Editor:

I wish to express my appreciation to Rev. Mulder and Professor Hoeksema for presenting their respective convictions concerning missionary activity and its position in the Protestant Reformed Churches. This is an important timely topic and discussion and action on it is and will be profitable.

However, it is distressing to note the manner in which the authors evaluate each other's articles. There is a lack of both Christian love toward fellow saints and common courtesy to other writers. It seems that we could use a great improvement in these areas. In the effort to maintain our orthodoxy, we would do well to bear in mind 1 Corinthians 13. Here we find that greater than both faith and hope is Christian love.

Perhaps the advice of John Calvin is pertinent here. When a colleague was attacked for mistranslating Scripture Calvin says: "I invite the readers if they meet with passages of this nature not to bite a man who is a worthy servant of the sacred Word, not to attack him, but rather to inform him of his lapses in moderate language. This simplicity is suited both to Christian piety and to a doctrine of liberty."

Let's apply this to our present situation.

And when we write, let's remember throughout our entire article that "cutting charges and wild accusations will simply antagonize fellow saints and justly so."

Edward Langerak

Dear Mr. Editor:

Much as I deplore some of that which was written in the January issue of *Beacon Lights* concerning missions and related matters, I am going to refrain from making any comments—there will probably be comments enough without mine.

Rather, so that the readers may discuss something very positive and concrete, I would like to explain briefly what the Society for Protestant Reformed Action is doing in this vicinity. Although our beginning is small, we believe we are certainly "going forward." If any of our churches or any individuals are interested in further information, or desire to be placed on our mailing list, let them write to: The Reformed Witness, Box 18, Doon, Iowa.

Our Society has done the following:
1. Periodically we sponsor lectures or
speeches which treat the basis and need of active witness to the truth.

2. By means of directed advertising, more than 200 Reformed, Christian Reformed, and other families have personally requested over 2000 pamphlets published by the Sunday School of First Church.

3. Those who have responded, continue to receive at regular intervals, materials dealing with various aspects of the truth as we maintain it.

4. We print and distribute once a month a total of over 3,300 copies of a particular pamphlet which is called the “Reformed Witness.” These pamphlets treat various truths of doctrines which we maintain as churches. Each pamphlet contains approximately the same amount of material contained in an article of the Standard Bearer. Because much labor is donated, we are able to both print and mail out each 250 pamphlets at a cost of approximately $5.00, or, for 2 cents a piece!

5. Besides sending these pamphlets to individual addresses, we distribute them by bulk mail to every post office box and rural route box of certain communities. Up until the present, we have been distributing this material to six different communities—giving total mail coverage of these areas. After these pamphlets have been distributed for a length of time, we intend to sponsor lectures in the various areas—and advertise them prominently.

6. Pamphlets distributed in certain localities contain regular information concerning the “Reformed Witness Hour” broadcast, and sermons or lectures which are being given.

7. In connection with the above work, we have also sent out copies of the Standard Bearer and a few copies of the book: “Protestant Reformed Churches in America” to those who have requested them.

May I state finally that I believe that the entire cause of “missions” in our midst would be greatly served if:

1. Other local churches also inform the readers of Beacon Lights what they are doing in their own area. Possibly this can guide others to initiate similar projects.

2. Define proposals for more effective mission labors on a denominational level be set forth. Then we have something to discuss.

May God continue to bless our churches and grant that we may faithfully present a united testimony—also to those without our churches—of the glorious truth which God has so graciously given to us.

Your brother in Christ,

Rev. G. Van Baren

REPLY

Beacon Lights welcomes the suggestion of Rev. Van Baren and invites the churches to inform its readers of the local missionary efforts. — ed.

Dear Editor:

I have just completed my reading of the latest issue of the Beacon Lights and now feel compelled to make a few comments concerning the “flavor” of the articles on our mission mindedness.

Certainly all would agree that this is a topic of vital importance to everyone interested in the future of our Protestant Reformed Churches. I feel, however, that the present approach used to “discuss” the matter is far from desirable. When any articles must prompt some cutting charges and wild accusations, I am sure that our people will be antagonized then also, and justly so. Not only will the people be set at odds with each other, but also the ministers. Then instead of a closely knit, unified clergy, we have instead a rift formed which may take months, or maybe even years to repair. Are those the conditions under which our churches must function? I certainly hope not!

Now I am not trying to say that we should not have any discussion on these matters, but then let it remain a discussion with long suffering and brotherly love emanating continually from all sides. Never should the fight for THE Truth develop into a fight for MY “truth,” for that can only lead to much bitterness and hard feelings which, I am sure, should be entirely unnecessary between fellow Christians.

Therefore, Mr. Editor, I sincerely hope that the forthcoming articles will be written in such a manner that a good, wholesome attitude is quite evident.

Sincerely yours,

Wayne Lanning

SEVENTEEN
Dear Editor:

It is our opinion that certain articles appearing in the past issue of Beacon Lights lack a sufficient measure of what is commonly known as Christian Charity. This charity is defined in I Corinthians 13, especially verses 4-7 where we read: “Charity suffereth long, and is kind... Charity vaunts not itself... (charity) is not easily provoked... (charity) endureth all things.”

We believe that Beacon Lights, as the magazine of our young people should reflect the spirit of Christian love. In order to accomplish this purpose, more serious thought and consideration must be given to opinions of our fellow Christians.

Therefore, we appeal to writers and readers alike, that this lack of Christian Charity may not lower the excellent Standards of our publication, Beacon Lights.

Yours in Christ,
Gerald Kuiper & Harry Langerak

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OPEN FORUM

Open Letter to the Rev. A. Mulder

Dear Rev. Mulder:

I had not intended originally to carry on an extended discussion with you in the pages of Beacon Lights because I do not want to monopolize the space of “Open Forum.” However, I had not anticipated the type of reply you gave to me, your colleague and brother in the ministry, when I penned my first “Reflections.” But, having read and reread several times both my own remarks and your reply, and having seriously tried to understand why you reply as you do, I must confess that I fail completely. And I am constrained to write again.

First of all, let me point out that the very title of your reply is incorrect, and therefore misleading. That title, “Missions Defended,” implies that missions were under attack in my article, and therefore that I had revealed opposition to and had attacked missions. Now nothing could be farther from the truth. I did not attack missions in general. Nor do I attack our Protestant Reformed missions. Nor did I attack mission-mindedness. In fact. I expressly stated that we should know our mission calling, should perform our mission calling, should examine our faithfulness to our mission calling; and, moreover, I went on record in favor of a good, healthy “mission mindedness.” On my part, I am willing to concede that this mistaken title was just that, — a mistake, a slip of the pen, — and I will not call it an insinuation. But I flatly reject the claim and the implication of that heading, and I feel you should make correction.

In the second place, I cannot comprehend, nor agree with, your public protest against my use of the term “schismatic.” Unless and until you show conclusively that my use of that term is not according to truth and fact, you have no right to designate it “name calling,” which is after all tantamount to slander. And, moreover, though you publicly protest, you fail completely to furnish a single ground for such protest. That, in the first place. Secondly, permit me to point out that our official ecclesiastical assemblies, — consistories, classes, and synod, — have more than once designated those who left us as schismatics. And are they not exactly that? Did they not create and take part in a split in our churches, a split that was occasioned by the heresy that they and their leaders embraced? And, though undoubtedly degrees of guilt may be distinguished in this regard, is not the name of their sin “schism”? And is not one who is guilty of this sin, who walks in it, and who com-
pounded this sin by seeking to deprive our Protestant Reformed Churches of name and place, rightly called a schismatic? Is not this sin against God and His church to be designated as such? And is it not to be called to their attention too? Must we cover it up and ignore it? Can reconciliation ever take place properly in that way? Is it not rather according to true Christian charity to designate sin as sin, until the sinners turn and confess his sin? But what puzzles me, Rev. Mulder, is this. Why do you publicly protest against something against which you have never protested at our ecclesiastical assemblies? As early as 1954 our Synod in its letter to these people said: “You have become schismatic.” It warned them: “You are walking in the way of schism and rebellion, which is very sinful before God. And therefore we appeal to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you return from your evil way, and at the same time in true repentance return to the fold of the Protestant Reformed Churches, of which once you were all members. But you must do this in the proper way, by confessing before God and us...” And did not Classis East in its well-known decision of October, 1953, state: “These brethren, therefore, and all who follow them in this sinful way have by the same token become schismatic...?” (italics mine, H.C.H.) You see, I have simply used the language of ecclesiastical decisions that are binding upon you as well as me. And when you “publicly protest” against this terminology you are protesting against decisions of our churches against which you had every right to protest officially, but did not. And if indeed this use of “schismatic” is so important that it constitutes a “major reason for the failure of our mission efforts in the Reformed community,” and was in your opinion wrong of our churches, then you have done our churches a serious wrong by your failure to protest and correct us all. But if, on the other hand, we, that is, our churches (not only I personally) are correct in the use of this name “schismatics,” then you are materially wrong in your public protest, as well as formally in error, and, I gather, should re-examine your “private mission enterprises” in the light of our binding ecclesiastical decisions as well.

But what puzzles me in this connection is the question what you do want to call the schismatics. I notice that you later speak of them as the “De Wolf group.” Now certainly, that was not the name they wanted to be called. Nor is it a nice name. For that name certainly denotes them as a sect, followers of a man. And no religious group wants to be known or called a sect, even though they are such.

In the third place, what truly grieves me much is that you accuse me of violating Christian ethics and of insinuation and evil suggestion in your reply. And you promise to prove this, but fail to do so. Now these are not very brotherly charges, Rev. Mulder. I could wish at least that you had showed me, your colleague in the ministry, a little of the charitableness that you seem to want to show to the schismatics. Unless you can prove conclusively that your charges are true, without either tearing them out of context or adding your own imaginary insinuations and evil suggestions to them, you should retract. And I will demonstrate that your heavy charges are not true, and then fraternally ask you to retract them. Whether I am careless, as you say, is a matter of opinion, although I assure you that I did no rush into print. You may call me cunning, too, although I have never prided myself on that score, and most people have usually called me blunt. But if you charge me on the score of ethics and insinuation and evil suggestion, that is a different matter. And I must urge you, in the love of Christ, to retract.

1. You attempt to make me say exactly the opposite of what I wrote when you state: “Then again, throughout his article he definitely shows an aversion to any criticism in the least of a project (in this case our missions) so carefully ‘watched’ by synod, and which in his opinion is quite adequate, as the entire tenor of his article implies.” I wrote emphatically: “I do not at all mean to say that our mission efforts have been beyond criticism and that there is no room for improvement. This has never been the official position of our churches either. Our mission program has always been subjected to careful scrutiny and correction, for example, at our synodal sessions. And to be sure, when we have arrived, so to speak, then it is high time that we understand that something is radically wrong.” You see, Rev.
Mulder, I am not averse, as you say, to any criticism in the least of our mission project. I happened to disagree with some (not even all) of your criticism. And I considered your charges to be extreme and unfair. After all, it was you, not I, who climaxed a series of charges by writing: "All in all it seems we have long since buried a hearty zeal for missions (Is not a buried zeal dead? H. C. H.) in the sea of effortlessness (Is not that the sea of no effort? H. C. H.)." But when I criticize your criticism, why do you insist on saying that I am averse to all criticism of our mission project?

2. Why do you not take my questions at face value, rather than imagining all kinds of insinuations and evil suggestions? I wrote: "I am only asking questions, you understand. But by all means let us have some answers to these questions before we are asked to examine ourselves." I meant that. And I asked these questions for three reasons: 1) Because you had evinced a very critical attitude toward our mission program and mission mindedness, but had not stated positively and specifically what you wanted and what our program should be and to what standard we should measure up. 2) Because I did not want to pre-empt your editorial position, but wanted by means of my questions to give you a golden opportunity to make correction not only, but to give our readers some positive instruction and guidance in re mission mindedness. For that reason I made some of my questions very concrete too. a) I did not take offense at your citing the great commission, as you wanted to imply. I called the term "mission mandate" a misnomer, because that great commission includes all the preaching of the church, not merely mission work in the restricted sense of the term missions. I did not so much as suggest that it is out of date "somewhat" (the quotes are yours, not mine.) My question went out from the supposition that we all agree as to that great commission, but that now we must determine in the light of that great commission what our specific calling is, what our efforts must be, and where our calling lies. b) I did not attack your orthodoxy by my reference to the schismatics' mission project. I made clear reference to the fact that they went "all out" for that project to the neglect of their home front. And my question was a concrete one concerning proper balance and emphasis on missions. I merely asked concretely: what do you want? And, by the way, you still have not given us a picture of the properly balanced mission program. c) I did not suggest that you wanted to call several more missionaries at present, even though you certainly suggested that we have not called enough. But you characterized the lack of ministers and our vacancies as "only excuses." Therefore I asked questions about this. To date you have not answered. If our vacancies and lack of ministers are indeed only excuses, then how many more missionaries should we have? And, by the way, let me again deny that our mission zeal is "buried." Let me also state that you are very unrealistic when you choose to ignore the fact that we had to start from "scratch" in 1954. And let me state too that I am very glad that we never obtained five missionaries in 1953 who would have dragged the Liberated hordes into our churches and overwhelmed and corrupted our churches. That was the plot, Rev. Mulder. Thank God, it never succeeded! I am sorry that you are not acquainted with that bit of history, and that therefore you do not see that there was a prime example of evil mission mindedness. 3) My third reason for asking questions was that I hoped to stimulate further, well-grounded discussion of our mission calling and mission mindedness. About some of my questions you charge that they could not possibly arise if I considered missions a chief task of the church. But you do not prove this; and I deny it. You offered the criticism that our church papers do not write about missions enough. That was a criticism with which I agreed. And I submit that the questions which I raised could well be treated for the profit of all, and thus stimulate a healthy mission-mindedness. But then they must be answered carefully and adequately, and not dismissed as unimportant and irrelevant.

Finally, about that matter of stinginess. Your full statement was: "Then, too, we take mission offerings. but to other causes we give our dollars (not underscored as in your reply to me, H. C. H.) while the mission offering gets our dimes." In other words, you make a comparison and by that comparison intend to emphasize that our
churches give poorly to the cause of missions (dimes rather than dollars). I deny this. I proved that percentage-wise (that is, comparatively, or proportionately) our mission budget is 22% of our synodical budget. I also stated that when our people are called upon to give, they will do so and meet the needs adequately. The record proves this. Our mission work has never lacked funds. And I am certain that if a reasonably balanced mission program is proposed, our people in the future too will gladly support it. But let me make one more correction at this point. You make a comparison between our giving for education and for missions. This is not an accurate comparison. Education is one sphere; the church is another. And missions is but one aspect of the church’s work. To make a fair comparison you must match ecclesiastical budgets with educational budgets, not our mission budget with our school budgets. To do the latter is something like comparing the food budget of one family with the total budget of another family. And I think you will find too that our total ecclesiastical budget compares very well with our total educational budget.

In conclusion, two requests:
1. Please retract your unkind and unbrotherly charges against me, unless, of course, you can prove them, in which case I will confess my sins.
2. Please engage in positive, constructive, well-grounded, and thorough discussion of our mission calling, our mission program, and our mission efforts. Then you will edify, and will culture and nurture genuine interest in missions. And, by all means, be specific, and tell us what you want and what we ought to have.

Your brother,
Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

REPLY TO REV. H. C. HOEKSEMA

Both Rev. Hoeksema and our readers of Beacon Lights can expect my reply to the above letter in the March issue of this magazine.

For now, however, I would like to make a few observations:

(1) I greatly appreciate the change in spirit manifest in this bit of correspondence. It is far different from his former reaction as anyone can judge. (2) With Rev. Hoeksema’s argumentation I scarcely agree, in fact, on very few points. (3) And, I have nothing to retract.

Rev. A. Mulder

NEWS from, for, and about our churches

MRS. C. KREGEL

The Mothers’ Club of Adams St. School recently enjoyed a talk by Miss Ruth Dykstra on “Teaching of Art in the Classroom.” Miss Dykstra brought with her some illustrations from the kindergarten, second, and third grades, and pointed out the various ideas she had taught the children to try to bring out in their work. She also aptly mentioned the fact that each child was encouraged to do his best with the talents God had given him.

Hull’s bulletin carried an announcement of a public lecture in Doon, under the sponsorship of the Society for Protestant Reformed Education there. Rev. George Lubbers spoke on the “Distinctiveness of a Christian Day School.”

* * *

Rudolph is carrying on without a minister, as they have for some time now, but hoping and praying for the time when they may again have a pastor of their own.

BEACON LIGHTS Twenty-one
News from Randolph was sent in by a serviceman from the church who was home on a twenty-two day leave. His testimony was this: "I also learned from just eight short weeks in the army how dear the truth is to the serviceman." Here is his address, followed by the addresses of two more servicemen from his church:

Pvt. Frank De Vries, U.S. 55677321
Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

P.F.C. Theodore De Vries, U.S. 55676159
A.P.O. 36, New York, N. Y.

P.F.C. Milton J. Alsum R.A. 16670961
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

South Holland reports a change of address:

Pvt. Frank Van Baren, U.S. 55704142
TNG. Co. B. PMGS
Fort Gordon, Ga.

The following address came from Southeast's bulletin:

Homer Teitsma, M.R. 2 525-24-13
U.S.S. Calvert (APA 32)
c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, Calif.

A few lively after-recess topics (suitable for re-use by other societies) were gleaned from bulletins of South Holland, Hull, and Oaklawn:

Can the Anti-Christ Come Out of the Roman Catholic Church?
The Struggle of Faith
The Role of the Church in Directing Youth Programs
Educating the Pre-School Child at Home
Shall Bible Instruction in Our School Be Replaced with Catechetical Instruction?

Wedding Bells rang on Dec. 19 for Daniel Meulenberg and Marcia Cooper (First).

News from Loveland was sent in by a serviceman from the church who was home on a twenty-two day leave. His testimony was this: "I also learned from just eight short weeks in the army how dear the truth is to the serviceman." Here is his address, followed by the addresses of two more servicemen from his church:

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The Radio Committee of The Reformed Witness Hour reports to us that another member has been added to their "family" of radio stations. Station K.V.A.M.K., Houston, in the "great state of Texas" has been contracted to air the broadcasts of our distinctively Reformed radio program. By the advice of our missionary, Rev. George Lubbers, who recently contacted several families in the area, the Mission Committee decided to sponsor this outlet. May the Lord cause, through this preaching of His Word, many listeners in this area to hear and believe the truth of His glorious gospel concerning the absolute sovereignty of God.

Transfer of Membership:

Mrs. R. Kooiker came to Southwest from the Good News Baptist Church.
Mr. and Mrs. Marinus Kamps and four baptized children transferred to Hope from Hudsonville.

Southwest received Mrs. H. Huizinga from Beverly Chr. Ref. Church.

In response to their sending out 635 copies of the pamphlet "The Word of Truth" by Rev. B. Woudenberg, the Pamphlet Committee of First Church has received many requests for the Sunday School tracts, and also a number of contributions to the work. They have been able to add seventy-five names to their original mailing list.

Future Conventioners:

A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. Boreas Dykstra (First)

A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Kooiker (Hull)

Here and There:

Rev. J. Kortering was to lecture at Isabel on Jan. 15. His topic: "The End of the World, How and When."

Loveland was supplied recently by Mr. David Engelsma, and Rev. Gerald Vandenberg, who took his family with him.

The Ladies' Aid Society of South Holland has purchased new pew Bibles for the church auditorium.

Rev. Lubbers told of his experiences in the Dakotas and in Texas at a meeting in Southwest Church, sponsored by their Mr. and Mrs. Society. The collection which was taken was to help pay for a tape recorder which Rev. Lubbers uses in his work.

20-6-B
JOHN ZANDERUS
BEACON LIGHTS