BEACON LIGHTS
for
PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH

June-July 1963
A New Series
From Dort to Today
REV. H. HANKO

Convention Diagnosis
DAVID M. ONDERSMA

Psychology and Life
WAYNE LANNING
BEACON LIGHTS
FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

VOLUME XXIV JUNE-JULY, 1963 NUMBER 5

Published monthly, except June and August by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

EXECUTIVE BOARD:
Harry Langerak .....................President
Calvin Reitsma .....................Vice President
Marilyn Ondersma ..................Secretary
Mary Pastoor .......................Asst. Secretary
Dave Ondersma ....................Treasurer
Edward Langerak ..................Asst. Treasurer
Sharon Prince ......................Librarian

EDITORIAL STAFF:
Robert Decker ......................Editor-in-Chief
H. W. Kuiper .......................Associate Editor
John Kalberk .......................Managing Editor
Nancy Heemstra ....................Finance Manager

STAFF:
Helen Flikkema .....................Clerk
Carol Van Putten ..................Asst. Clerk
Clarice Newhol .................Assts. to Man. Ed.
Lois Schipper ......................
Roger Harbin .......................Chairman
Mary Pastoor .......................Public Relations Staff
Edward Langerak ..... ................
Sharon Prince ......................
Indy Bylsma .......................
Louise Looyenga ................ Subscription Managers

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Rev. Robert Harbach ............Truth vs. Error
Agatha Lubbers ....................Critique
Mrs. C. Kregel ....................News Editor
Charles H. Westra ................Current Comments
Rev. G. Lubbers, Rev. G. Van Baren
From the Pastor's Study

All material for publication should be addressed to MR. ROBERT DECKER
1004 Temple, S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan
Grand Rapids subscribers please forward subscription dues to JUDY BYLSMA
904 Adams, S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan
Subscribers outside of the Grand Rapids area please forward subscription dues to LOUISE LOOYENGA
2604 Almont, Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

All undeliverable material (Forms 3579) should be returned to Louise Looyenga, 2604 Almont, Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

Subscription price: $3.00
Second Class Postage paid at Grand Rapids, Michigan

In This Issue

EDITORIAL
Henry W. Kuiper .......................................................... 1

FROM DORT TO TODAY
Rev. H. Honko ............................................................. 2

A REPORT FROM THE FEDERATION BOARD
Calvin Reitsma ............................................................ 4

TRUTH vs. ERROR
Rev. R. C. Harbach ...................................................... 6

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY
Rev. G. Van Baren ....................................................... 9

SOME QUESTIONS
Ed Langerak ............................................................... 11

CONVENTION DIAGNOSIS
David M. Ondersma .................................................... 12

PSYCHOLOGY AND LIFE
Wayne Lanning .......................................................... 14

NEWS
Lois E. Kregel ........................................................... 16
OUR FLEETING DAYS AS COVENANT YOUTH

H. W. KUIPER

You, as the covenant youth of our churches, are well acquainted with the fact that man is here upon this earth but for a season. This is not recognized by all, I would have you notice, and this also is evidenced in many ways. But we will discuss that presently. This thought is very Scriptural, too, is it not? We notice among other things that the Word of God clearly teaches the truth as it is expressed in Psalter 392 verse 2:

“For man is like a breath, a sigh. His days on earth as quickly fly. As shadows o'er the plain.”

Or to quote portions of another of the Psalms, we note the same instruction in: “. . . we spend our years as a tale that is told . . . for it is soon cut off and we fly away.” Ps. 90:9, 10.

We say that you are well acquainted with that fact. A word or two about that, first of all. The transient character of man’s sojourn here shines through all of Holy Writ, and therefore having been exposed to the Word all these years in all of our spheres, we know it. And, too, this principle that all things temporal shall pass away presently, be changed in the last day and purified in the glorious moment of the coming of our Lord as the Lord of Glory, has been an integral part of our instruction from our youthful days upward. And, we can see it, can we not? Who of us has not been to a funeral to witness that in this “life” death inevitably comes to all, and that men’s days are indeed fleeting, even those of the very aged?

To that sojourn of man in this “life” we refer in the caption as “Fleeting Days.” We recognize that for you as youth the days do not appear to be fleeting. They stretch forth into the future seemingly without end, but we do well to insist upon the adverb "seemingly," to be sure. It merits sober consideration and meditation on your part. To that end we chose the subject.

There are specific implications for all in this truth that man’s days are few. We see that the ungodly is aware of it and we also see the frightening response from the froward, unregenerate and rebellious soul. For the ungodly, recognition of this fact leads them to rush headlong deeper into ungodliness, and we are taught the folly of their philosophy of life in Isaiah 22:13, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” The certainty of their death, presently, thus recognized, calls forth that cry of the earthling, the citizen of this world, because he knows that God is a righteous God and will destroy forever all unrighteousness. It is a cry, dear youth, that takes on a multiplicity of forms with respect to every avenue of our life’s walk, whether it be in business, religion, education, amusements, virtue, the use of time, diligence, etc. It permeates all that they do. But it is also a cry that exhibits, and that horribly, an unabashed rebellion against their Maker, and a flagrant disobedience to His commands which leads certainly to utter destruction and condemnation.

But more especially, we are concerned with covenant youth! What then is there for us to consider in this thought of fleeting days? How will this knowledge determine the character of our youthful walk, as we are replenished with grace from our God? Thus: With that grace, you know that although by nature you are one with children of darkness you have been called to walk in the light as children of light! And then you do walk in it! You find yourselves in
the midst of the summer season, when much of the unifying force of school, society, and catechism seems to be gone in this day. Do you walk as a child of light? These days are fleeting, remember, speeding away from you. Are you in them walking in a way in which one day you shall desire to have walked?

But, at once we see "storm clouds," don't we? For Christ Jesus Himself has told us that the light is hated and opposed by the darkness! It is not so that darkness is unfriendly to or merely "dislikes" the children of light. No. It hates those of the light! And the objective then is complete annihilation! The one who becomes a non-conformist to the slogan of the earthisling must also expect to feel it when darkness vents its bitterness and violent strife against him.

Then what about the days that you are called to live in your sojourn here? How will they be filled? By walking in and maintaining the cause of truth and uprightness in all your ways? Do we have the grace to want that for the sake of our God? If so, dear youth of the church, know this: your pathway is beset with all the scorn and derision that the enemy can muster. But be careful to know, too, that God sustains you through it by His grace.

Yes. The crowd will go the other way. And the pitiful little group, that little "backward" minority, who always "prate" about the commands of God, about extolling His Name, about that "ridiculous" walk of sanctification, continue to receive grace from their God, sufficient unto the burdens and trials and scoffings and persecutions of each day, sustaining them, each day and again, throughout their days. And then, when presently their little life's day is done, and when they have to traverse the weird and howling wilderness no more as pilgrims and sojourners in this earth, they have the joy wherein they shall praise their God. "And sorrow and sighing shall flee away." That is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.

Yes. That crowd went the other way.

---

FROM DORT TO TODAY
the development of the reformed faith

REV. H. HANKO

"In the beginning of the seventeenth century, Arminianism rose as a necessary and wholesome reaction against scholastic Calvinism, but was defeated in the Synod of Dort, 1619, which adopted the five knotty canons of unconditional predestination, limited atonement, total depravity, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints... The Bible gives us a theology which is more human than Calvinism, and more divine than Arminianism, and more Christian than either of them.”

"It was only a century after Martin Luther had nailed his theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg, and not even a hundred years since the undaunted Genevan Reformer (John Calvin) had flaunted Rome's power, when the Arminian errors appeared not only sporadically, here and there, upon the scene of Dutch Calvinism, but threatened seriously to split both state and church wide open, and necessitated a National Synod, which should with bold strokes cut down the devils of heresy which
assailed the precious heritage of the truth from their very ranks!"

Such are the contradictory opinions that have prevailed in the Reformed Church world among historians and common laymen until the present day whenever the Arminian controversy of the 16th and 17th centuries is discussed.

The staff of Beacon Lights has requested a series of articles which deal with the development of the Reformed faith beginning with the Synod of Dort and continuing through to the present day.

It can be said without contradiction that the development of the Reformed faith throughout this entire period has been, more than anything else, a development of the sovereign grace of God over against the vicious error of Arminian free-william. This has not always been true in the Church.

In its earliest history, shortly after the times of the apostles, the truth of the trinity and the divinity of Christ were the subjects of development and defense. Heresies of every conceivable kind arose which necessitated terrible battles for the defense of the faith, battles which lasted the better part of five centuries. The Reformation was a development of the truths of justification by faith, the authority of Holy Scripture and the priesthood of all believers over against the Roman Catholic lies of salvation by works, indulgences, the infallibility of tradition and the clergy, and the right of the church to forgive sins.

But, since Dort, the greatest battles and, in fact, the only battles in which the Church has engaged have been the battles of the sovereign grace of God in the work of salvation over against the God-dishonoring and salvation-destroying errors of Arminianism. Though Arminianism was officially condemned by the Synod of Dort, Arminianism marches on through the entire Church world — Reformed and otherwise — with the most astonishing success, until it is almost impossible to find a place today where the truth of the sovereignty of God in salvation is steadfastly maintained and where the Calvinism of Calvin and the Synod of Dort is honored and respected — yea, and even known.

There are other battles being fought today — battles against Modernism, Barthianism, Roman Catholicism, Communism, etc. But these errors are fought where the principle and leaven of Arminianism has already worked through the Church. And, because the Church may have yet strength in part to fight against Modernism, but has capitulated to Arminianism, the battle is really lost. But where the truth of Calvin and the Canons of Dort is maintained, not Modernism and Communism constitute threats, but Arminianism is the enemy to be resisted unwaveringly.

Yet, in a sense, the conflict between Arminianism and Calvinism (or, more correctly, Arminianism and Scriptural theology) is age old — a conflict that has persisted from Paradise. Arminianism is but another manifestation of man's pride — a pride that caused our first parents to fall; a pride that continuously seeks salvation by works; a pride that comes to its most refined expression in Arminianism. Pride lies at the root of all sin. Pride leads men to rebel against God, deny His glory and seek glory for man "For by grace," says Paul, "are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8, 9. But by works men have always tried to save themselves. Already in Israel there were those who, in the wanderings in the desert, insisted that the whole congregation was holy altogether apart from the sacrifice of Aaron and the intercession of Moses. Cf. Numbers 16:3. The Pharisees of Jesus' day were no exception. It is not strange then that this basic error should develop into the Pelagianism of the early Church, the work-righteousness of Roman Catholicism, the Arminianism of the 16th and 17th centuries, and the thorough-going Arminianism of our present day. It may be that an Arminian will object and insist that he maintains salvation by faith only; but by making faith man's work he makes faith a work and denies what Scripture means by salvation by faith alone.

If such a series of articles as this needs any justification, the following may be noted:

1) There are many today who claim to stand in the tradition of Calvin and the Synod of Dort, but who deny the very genius of the Genevan Reformer and the very heart of the Canons. Their teachings are wholly irreconcilable with the truth we confess as Protestant Reformed Churches —
A REPORT FROM THE FEDERATION BOARD

CALVIN REITSMA

It has been almost a year since the Federation Board has spoken to the public through the Beacon Lights. Therefore, lest our constituents and friends conclude that the Board has been inactive, we take this opportunity to report on our activities.

One of the purposes of the Federation Board is to help produce unity among all our Young People; therefore, at our first meeting after the last convention, the Board planned the Fall Mass Meeting which was held November 6, 1962, at our Southwest
Church. As part of the program, Mr. Donald Dozema showed pictures of the 1962 convention.

A Society visitation schedule was arranged by the Board and sent to all the societies in the Grand Rapids area.

The Board has given much attention to the Beacon Lights, which has played a large part in strengthening and unifying our young people. The Board must appoint the writers of our Bible Outlines and the Beacon Lights staff members when vacancies develop. During the past year, Louise Looyenga and Judy Bysma were appointed to replace Janet Kunz and Beverly Hockstra as subscription managers. The Board also accepted the resignation of Mr. Dave Engelsma as Editor of Beacon Lights and appointed Mr. Robert Decker to take his place.

The Board has also been concerned with the Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund. The Board appointed Mr. Charles Pastoor as a member of the Scholarship Committee to replace Mr. James Veldman.

A Scholarship Public Relations Committee was also appointed by the Board. This committee planned and organized the Scholarship Fund Drive held this past spring. The Board takes this opportunity to thank all those who worked on this drive and those who contributed to this cause.

The Board also appointed the Spring Banquet Committee. The Banquet, which was held at First Church (Grand Rapids) was a great success; and the Board again thanks the committee for its work and cooperation in this another means of forming unity.

The annual convention is another effective and perhaps the most exciting way of sustaining unity among our young people. The host society does most of the planning for the convention; but it is subject to the approval of the Federation Board. At this writing, the Board has received from the Edgerton society (host for the 1963 Convention) the following information:

The date — August 20, 21, and 22
The theme — More Than Conquerors
1. In the Church
2. Over against an Evil World
3. In the Last Days
The text — Romans 8:37
Theme song — Psalter No. 126
The Board has appointed a Committee to provide transportation from the Grand Rapids and Chicago areas to the '63 Convention. (A report from this committee is printed elsewhere in this issue.)

The Board has drawn up the following proposals for discussion and action at the 1963 Convention:

It is proposed —
1. that we continue to study the book of Genesis during the 1964-65 season.
2. that the assessments remain at $10.00 per individual; $6.00 of which shall be appropriated for convention assessments, $2.00 for Beacon Lights, and $2.00 for the Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund.

The following officers must also be elected to the Federation Board: Vice President, Treasurer, Vice Secretary, and Advisor for two year terms.

We wish to remind you that ONLY YOU can make this the greatest convention ever. How? By being in Edgerton on August 20, 21, and 22. See you at the '63 Convention.

The Federation Board
CALVIN REITSMA
Vice President

THREE WEEKS IS REQUIRED TO CHANGE YOUR MAGAZINE ADDRESS
To insure delivery at your new address, please notify us at least three weeks in advance of your moving. Send us your old and new address and include your postal zone number. Thank you.

WRITE TO:
IN TOWN: July Bysma,
904 Adams St., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

OUT OF TOWN:
Louise Looyenga,
2604 Almont, S. E.
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507
CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND OBSERVANCE OF DAYS

“One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord; for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks” (Rom. 14:5, 6).

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” does not imply that the other six days of the week are not holy, but that the Sabbath is especially dedicated to God’s service. Generally speaking, no day is holier in itself than another. This does not mean, however, that the truth concerning the Sabbath Day is a matter of indifference. The Sabbath does not enter into this area of the adiaphora. Then, “he that regardeth not the day” may not legitimately be used in defense of a Seventh Day Adventist disregard of the Christian Sabbath. Nor are Lutherans, and some other Protestants, correct in regarding the Lord’s Day as any other day of the week. We have met brethren who believe that anything may be done on the Lord’s Day that may be done the other days of the week. Under the New Dispensation, our liberty in Christ gives us the right on that day to shop or engage in all kinds of sports lawful on other days. We deny this. Paul is not referring here to the Lord’s Day at all. The Lord’s Day is an institution commanded of God, and therefore is not something indifferent. The Sabbath and the keeping of it holy is not left to the judgment of each person to be fully persuaded in his own mind as to how he shall observe the day. (“Lord’s Day” and “Sabbath Day” we use interchangeably.) The moral law of God deals with commands and prohibitions. Paul treats of so called things indifferent, things neither commanded nor prohibited. In such matters we have liberty to make up our own minds. There are days, the observance or non-observance of which is left to individual choice. Some do not care to have a wedding performed during Lent. They esteem Lenten days above more ordinary days. This is a weak point of view, for the strong esteem the “religious calendar” days alike, and would regard Lenten days not as particularly holy days, but as special opportunities in preaching to proclaim and re-emphasize the triumphs of Christ crucified and risen.

The person who esteems one day above another is the weak, while the one who esteems every day alike is the one with greater knowledge and therefore greater liberty. For him, every day is a season of prayer and joy. He knows that he may freely decide in his own mind whether he shall observe particular days or not, just as a man has freedom to eat or abstain from particular meats. “He that eateth, eateth to the Lord.” To eat means more than
mere pressing with the teeth. It means to exercise Christian liberty in adiaphora. Some may wish to refrain from exercising their God-given liberty, to abstain from things which God has never forbidden. This is their privilege. A man may regard not a day which we regard, and do so "unto the Lord." His non-observance he intends as honoring to the Lord. So there are those (the weak) who eat not, yet eat not as unto the Lord. They abstain from everything they consider as polluted, even from things which are not, but over which they have doubts, denying themselves nearly every luxury, just to be sure they do nothing forbidden by God. This rather finicky practice is to be freely granted them: they have the right to impose on themselves all the minute and complex regulations they desire. But they must not attempt imposing on others, nor criticize those who regard "every day alike" and "every creature of God (as) good, and nothing to be refused."

The distinctions Paul here has in mind touch upon the Jewish seventh-day-of-the-week Sabbath, the seven additional annual Sabbaths of the Mosaic laws mentioned in Lev. 23:3, 37, 38, such as, the Passover Sabbath, the Unleavened Bread Sabbath, Pentecost, Day of Atonement, et al., the jubilee sabbath which came every fifty years, the sabbath of the land which came every seven years, and the new moon observances (Num. 28:11; II K. 4:23). Some Jewish Christians, without insisting on the celebration of these days by any legal observance, evidently felt that some adherence to these days was allowable. They set the day apart for their own private devotions, even though they knew that the distinction of days (and of meats) had been abolished with the arrival of the New Dispensation. Well, let such abstain from certain meats, or let them observe their days, without creating any friction over the matter. The one who enjoys all meats, and who regards not a certain uncommanded religious observance has a right to his sentiment without being judged or censured. He has the proper understanding that all distinctions in days not ordered by Scripture should cease. For there is no food cleaner than other food, nor days higher than other days.

"One man esteemeth one day above another." He celebrates certain days which others, esteeming every day alike, would not. Actually, a studied observance of days reveals an ignorance of Christ. Yet perhaps it appeals to him, as it does to some, to set aside such days as Advent, Epiphany and Palm Sunday for special spiritual devotion. He that regards these days, regards them unto the Lord. There need be no objection to this procedure, especially if done in preaching and hearing the Word of God on Christ's comings and on His triumphal entry. For by such observances no offense is committed.

"Another man esteemeth every day alike." Actually, every day is a holy day. "Day unto day uttereth (Divine) speech, and night unto night teacheth (heavenly) knowledge." Spiritual worship and life are not limited to holy days. The truth of God thrills the Christian's heart every moment. He does not wait until an appointed gathering to express his faith and joy. Like Enoch and Noah he walks with God every instant and constantly responds to the claims and raptures of his salvation. He being a new creature in Christ enjoys all things new. The Christian doctrine and life are too magnificent to be trimmed down to "days and months and years." For the Christian, every day is alike, every day is a feast day, every day is a sabbath, and every moon is a new moon.

"He that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he regardeth it not." A Christian Jew strong in the faith will not, any more than the most enlightened Gentile Christian, observe the Passover, for he knows that would deny that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. For the same reason he would not observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because Christ is his Bread of Life, and he eats and drinks Christ at His table in the Lord's Supper. He would not keep the Sabbath Feast of Firstfruits, because Christ has as the Firstfruits of them that slept fulfilled this in giving His people the firstfruits of the Spirit. To keep the O.T. day of Pentecost would be to claim that these firstfruits have not been given (whereas the three thousand saved on that day were, of the firstfruits, the earnest), and that the Church has not been baptized with the Holy Spirit. He certainly would no longer regard Yom Kippur, for "Christ hath for sin atonement made," and that once-and-for-all. A
Jewish Yom Kippur is now just as Christ-denying as the Romish mass, and as much crucifies the Son of God afresh. "To regard the (sabbath) days of the feast of Tabernacles is tacitly to say that the Word has not tabernacled among us" (John Gill).

Observance in this day and age of the fiftieth-year sabbath, jubilee, would deny the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free from sin, Satan and the curse of the law. To regard the seventh-year sabbath, entailing rest from tillage, plowing, sowing, and reaping, would deny salvation in Christ by grace through faith, and that not of self, not of works. Keeping the seventh-day-of-the-week sabbath subjects men to the type and denies the antitype, the spiritual rest in Christ now, and the eternal rest remaining for the people of God in heaven with Him.

"To regard a new moon is in effect to say that the Church, fair as the moon, has not received evangelical light from Christ the Sun of Righteousness" (ibid.).

These sabbaths were "a shadow of things to come" (Col. 2:17), were simply a silhouette of Christ. But the body of these things, these shadows, is Christ. He is the substance, the truth, the reality of them. In Him the old things of the civil and ceremonial law are passed away, and all things relating to church order, worship and discipline are, in the New Dispensation, become new.

There is therefore no longer the slightest reason for reverting to any of these old observances. Not only the weak, but the wicked (the superstitious) regard "one day above another." The pope one day a year sleeps on the floor to demonstrate his sacrifice and humility. His Romish dupes, not to be out-done, during Lent swear off pastries and chewing gum. But there are, especially, two days regarded above all others in the year. They are Easter and Christmas. We need not be offended at the names given these days merely because they are heathen names. All the days of the week, which the strong esteem alike, bear nothing but heathen names. Offense arises in connection with these days in that of the two. Easter is regarded the holiest. On that day, people attend church who never do so otherwise. In fact, on that day parking cannot be found anywhere within a circumference of five blocks around the church. On that day the risen Christ is done lip-service, whereas the rest of the year He is treated as though He remained in the grave and never rose from the dead. Christmas is the next "holiest" day, which, by the way, as to its perverted Santa Claus innovation, is observed also by the wicked world in general, by the atheist Soviets and by the Jews. The popular heathenish observance of this day, modern men would inform us, will prevail, even if it could be proved that Christ never existed. This is regarding the day unto Mammon and Belial, not "unto the Lord!"

"He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord." The way he does this may be somewhat legalistic, rather than in the liberty of Christ. He may, with regard to Sunday, think it wrong to bake a cake, relax in a quiet game or knit a sweater. His spirit of self-denial we cannot really criticize as long as he does not impose it on others. The other Christian who does these things does them as unto the Lord, recognizing the liberty he has in Christ and rejoices in it as a happy child of God. The former, however, reveals a weakness of conscience, but we do not condemn him for it, as long as he maintains his practice in a live-and-let-live fashion. Nor do we expect him to enjoy the liberty we have until he is spiritually advanced to embrace it by faith. He may be a weak brother, but he is conscientious, and for that he is approved of God.

The apostle speaks to the church, "Now after that ye have known God . . . how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain" (4:9-11). What Paul does here is to warn against the false prophets who required the keeping of days, months, times and years as necessary to the obtaining of righteousness. This was to return to the weak and beggarly elements, to depart from Christ, to be by Him profited nothing. If the Galatians, then, greatly sinned in their observance of days and seasons, how do we escape sin when we observe our religious days? We, by our observances, do not burden the conscience, nor attempt making satisfaction for sins by them. What we do
is to observe certain religious days with the sole purpose of keeping alive the ministry of the Word, to provide the people of God with blessed opportunities to hear the Word of God, to bring the church the knowledge of God, to keep in communion with God and with one another, to worship and pray together, and to live a life of thankfulness together for all God’s blessings.

(To be continued)

. . . the tide of trouble will test, purify and improve the good, but beat, crush and wash away the wicked.

—St. Augustine

Amos 3:3 — “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”

CHOOSING ONE’S FRIENDS

The time of youth is a difficult time—especially in the age in which we live. Ask any young person. There are many difficult problems he must confront. What must one’s life’s work be? To what degree may the youth go along with the entertainment presented about us? Must youth also walk according to those strict, and apparently foolish, requirements which parents often lay down? Finally, though not the least, how must the covenant youth go about choosing friends?

Very often, youth insist on facing these various problems alone. They expect, I suppose, that they are able to resolve them without guidance. Interference is resented. It is not unusual at all that pastors, teachers, and even parents become aware of a specific problem in the life of a particular youth only after the problem appears to have reached proportions of such greatness as to defy proper solution.

One great, and common, problem is the matter of choosing friends. This seems such a minor matter at first, that youth often give it little thought. It’s proper, then, that we sit down once again and ponder this question.

The time of youth is normally the time when one meets new people and makes new friends. Older people have their friendships already established. But the youth have many opportunities to establish new friendships. In school is one place where this is usually done. (For this reason, also, Christian parents desire that their children go to such schools where the seed of the covenant are trained.) When young people find work, often they find friends at the same time and place. And, of course, when the youth seek entertainment, the probability is that there also they will meet and make new friends too.

Many problems have arisen, and continue
to arise, in the choice of friends. Those friends are not always of the best sort. Often they have no relationship to the church at all. These must be termed children of the world. It seems so innocent, sometimes, to have friends among these—for, after all, this only involves some of youth's activity during the week. Sometimes these friendships involve relationships between two of totally different denominations. Here too, the difference seems insignificant (don't we believe in the "freedom of worship" of God?). Yet the belief, the confession, of another surely influences that which youth does and says. Probably most serious of all, friendships arise between those of opposite sex. A young boy meets and "falls in love" with a young girl. They may not have the same religious background, in fact, the one might have no religious background at all, but it seems to make no difference to them. They may be told of the innumerable times in the past that such a relationship ended on the "rocks"; they may be told of all the problems they will have to face—but it makes no difference. Their friendship is an established thing, and no one can break it.

The words of the prophet Amos ought to be an important guide for young people. Other passages of the Word of God speak in the same vein. Two can not walk together except they be agreed. A measure of agreement is necessary between two in order that friendship can develop in the first place. If two young people have no common interests, friendship will not be established between the two either. But far more important than mere ordinary interests is the matter of spiritual agreement or oneness. If a proper and spiritual friendship is to be established, there must be spiritual unity. Light and darkness can not agree together; Christ and Belial have no concord. This point of spiritual "agreement" is not merely a goal which is nice if it can be attained—but otherwise not very important. On the contrary, this is the principal point for a young person to remember when seeking friends—and particularly life's partner. This very plainly means that friendship with those outside of the church is impossible. One may have to work with a person who makes no pretense of being a child of God; one may go to school with such; one may encounter him in his daily activities; but all this is far different than the establishment of friendship. Young people had better remember that such friendship is not merely inadvisable; it is very really impossible. The principle applies also to friendships established between two of differing church affiliations. The greater the difference, the more impossible friendship becomes. That should be well understood.

The reason is that friends (who supposedly agree together) must walk also together. Their walk involves their various activities. They seek entertainment together. They work together in their hobbies. They help one another in school work. Or, if that friendship matures into matrimony, two will raise and educate a family together: they will work as well as worship together. All their being is involved in the walk. There are two possible walks; of darkness and of the light. There is no neutrality.

The walk of the Christian (Christian young people too) is and must be the walk in that straight and narrow way leading to life. It is inconceivable (and contrary to Scripture) that anyone walk with you who himself will not walk that way. And this is true not only on Sunday when one must go to that church where he believes God's Word is most purely proclaimed, but it is true every day of the week and in all of one's activities.

In the limited space I have, I would offer some suggestions which I feel ought surely to be followed. Negatively, always avoid all improper friendships. One need not avoid speaking to one of the world, but the spiritual resolve ought always be there: I can never be friends with one of this world under present circumstances. That is true respecting casual friendships, but also as far as dating is concerned. Dates can easily lead to more serious friendship—therefore these may never be with such who are not in "agreement" with you. And further: break improper friendships before it is too late.

Positively, seek the advice of parents and pastors. They may seem "out of date," but the fact is that they have had twenty or more years of experience, observation, and training than you. Be willing to be guided by their good advice.

Ten

BEACON LIGHTS
Secondly, seek friendships (and dates) from those of your own church as far as that is possible. But by all means make sure that all your friendships are only with those who profess to fear the Lord.

One word yet to young people who date. I repeat, dates can be only with those who fear God. At the same time, by all means before any serious consideration is made of marriage, young people ought to be very sure that they agree spiritually. This is not a matter which can be decided after marriage. Not merely must they agree on the “general principles” such as the matter of redemption through the cross, but they must be in agreement concerning which church most purely proclaims the truth of the Word. Marriage involves necessarily a “walk together” which is very, very close. Any disagreement on the basic matter of the truth of God’s Word makes this “walk together” difficult and almost impossible. Therefore, besides all of the trivia which are discussed on dates, God’s Word must also be discussed. Be sure that for the sake of dates or prospective marriage you do not compromise concerning the Word of God. Take your date to society meetings and above all, to catechism classes. And only after it becomes evident that he or she is in agreement with you theologically, begin discussing marriage plans. Remember always: how can two walk together except they be agreed?

Some Questions

ED LANGERAK

As Convention time draws nearer, we as young people must ask ourselves several questions. The answers will determine whether or not the convention will be a success. For we must decide if we will attend. And certainly a main factor in the success of the “convention of P.R.Y.P.” is the amount of “P.R.Y.P.” that are there.

There are three questions. We must decide if it is worth it, if we can possibly make it, and how we can get there. Let’s face it, in a majority of cases, the answer to the first question will determine the answers to the next two. The old adage, “where there is a will, there is a way” is not out of date, it is simply too often ignored. Now, nobody but you can tell yourself that something is worthwhile and make you believe it. Therefore, each of us must face this question and answer it for ourself. I would only like to point out that the worth of the convention and the worth of your Protestant Reformed heritage are inseparably connected. If what we believe is worthwhile, then an expression of that belief such as the convention, where we can meet and talk with and have fun with young people of the same belief, is worthwhile. So it might be well to consider the full implications of this question before we answer it.

Well, assuming that most of us have decided that it is worth it, we must see if we can possibly make it. Here again, only you can decide. Let’s just make sure we do not confuse this question with the former one. If we have decided that the convention is worthwhile, this question might be an easy one. Think about it.

Finally, we must find a way to Edgerton. Most of the western societies probably have one or two car pools in which a group of the delegates and visitors ride together. This means is both fun and not too expensive. In the Grand Rapids area the Federation Board has chartered a bus to Edgerton. We urge as many as possible to ride the bus. You will discover (if you have not already) that it is a lot of fun to ride with forty other young people. The entire cost of transportation will be about thirty dollars plus the amount you will need for food (five or six dollars). Reservations must be in by August 1. Ten dollars is needed when you put in your reservation by calling David Odersma (GL 1-2869) or Ed Langerak (GL 3-2504). The Edgerton society has been working hard on the convention and it appears that this could be one of the best we have ever had. Your answer to the above questions will help determine.
convention diagnosis

DAVID M. ONDERSMA

The youth of our Protestant Reformed Churches are again awaiting their annual convention. These conventions have been held annually for twenty-two years, except for several years during the mid forties. In reviewing the analyses of these past conventions, it is amazing to note the similarity between the first conventions and those held in recent years. Since the first convention held August 2 and 3, 1939, it has been a tradition for the program to include three inspirational speeches, business meetings, an outing, with the banquet as the grand finale. It was not many years later that the Mass Meeting was included in the activities, extending the convention to three days in length. This same program presented for twenty-two years has not lost its appeal for many of our young people. The following impressions of the early conventions might well have been expressed just last year or the year before:

"How eagerly we looked forward to it (the convention) all summer! And our anticipation was well rewarded, for we certainly enjoyed those few days of Christian fellowship with our fellow members from the various societies."

"The Convention is past, but the many pleasant memories of it will long remain with us."

"Being a delegate to our Convention was truly an experience of Christian fellowship and inspirational joy for me. Every activity was enjoyed and it was good to meet and visit with the young people from many of our Churches."

"Thanks to the Host Committee and to all those who made this year's convention a success."

Adherence to the precedents set by past host societies has in many ways kept our conventions a rewarding experience for everyone who attends. But it is my purpose in this article to diagnose a dark shadow which I see circumventing our conventions. This shadow has been glimpsed, at least partially, even by those attending the earliest conventions, so I do not contend that the blame should be placed on recent host committees. It is the fault of all who have taken part in the preparation and planning and those who continue to cling to past precedents. These impressions of early conventioneers best exhibit the character of this dark shadow:

"I think it was a fine convention and I enjoyed every bit of it. I especially enjoyed the addresses by the three speakers, on the well-chosen subject, 'Steadfastness.' I think a discussion such as we had following the afternoon speech is a fine idea. However, there seems to be a tendency for the young people to sit back and let the ministers present take over to a great extent. This I am quite sure is not the intention in having such a discussion. What we should have is a
lively discussion by all those present."

"The convention was wonderful! I thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship with other young people of the same faith. There were, however, some things which were disgusting. For one thing, I didn't like the singing of popular songs on the bus tour through Chicago by some of our young people. Then, too, there were some who stayed at home or went elsewhere while the speeches were being delivered. These things should not occur at a Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention."

"This was but the second convention which I attended so that if I desire to compare it with previous meetings, I can do so only by comparing it with the last meeting. If there was any marked difference in the two conventions, I would say that this year's meeting lacked somewhat in its social atmosphere. But I should hasten to add that this tendency is very likely to grow if we young people cling to just our own local delegates and visitors instead of promoting acquaintance with all those who attend. Is not this one of the aims of holding a Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention?"

"When the Protestant Reformed Young People's Federation holds a convention, it does so not only for the purpose of bringing our young people together for a few days, but also in order to enact new decisions. These decisions are to be used to further the cause and purpose of the Federation and are for the good of our young people as a whole. Matters of this nature are not to be passed over lightly, as if they must be hurriedly agreed upon, in order to get on with the less boring affairs such as the festivities.

"At our past conventions, this has often been the case. A motion is made and seconded, and then it is passed with little or no discussion, except by one or two delegates—usually the same one or two. Sometimes the delegates will vote on the measure without even realizing what they are voting for, and certainly without giving it any consideration."

"At the coming convention, various questions will arise, questions that are vital as far as the Federation is concerned. The answers to these questions will affect every one of us. Have we not the right, then, to demand that our delegates give a little more thought to them?"

How well these comments fit even our recent conventions. Is one of the pleasant memories we have when leaving a convention that of having met new friends? I think not. Most of our youth have congregated for the entire convention with those they see every day at home. Something must be done to help overcome the shyness of our young people. Future host societies might well consider this and devise ways to encourage our youth to intermingle with one another.

Where are our debates and discussions! These are seriously lacking in our convention programs. What better ways than debates and discussion groups do we have to allow our youth to air their common problems they face as covenant youth. What better activity could we endorse that would unite and knit our young people together as one whole. Even though some of our Churches are hundreds of miles apart, we could feel more as one—as one Church.

A word also has to be said about the qualifications of our delegates. How do we elect our delegates? Do we vote for a person merely because he is a friend or do we vote for those best qualified? These delegates will be making important decisions and, therefore, must be interested enough in the welfare of their peers to take every measure necessary to be well-informed, organized, critical representatives. This means a properly competent delegate must give advance consideration to proposals and be willing to attend the business meetings to insure no impairment of our welfare. These qualifications are seriously lacking in many of our delegates! How childish it is to hear announced at the opening of our first business meeting that no traveling expenses will be paid to those delegates who do not attend the meetings. A lack of interest is definitely apparent.

Something must be done—not only by future host committees but also by the young people in all the churches every year. Otherwise, this dark shadow will become a permanent addition to our convention program.

Thirteen
Psychology and Life

WAYNE LANNING

Psychology! Already you are probably skeptical and suspicious aren't you? Usually when one hears that word he immediately thinks of the psychiatrist and his couch. But really psychology is much more than that. Even in its simplest form it enters into our lives every day. Children use psychology on their parents and parents use it on their children. If a child wants to ask his parents for something he "automatically” knows when the most opportune time has arrived. Every time you try to convince someone of something you are actually using psychology on him. So to categorically condemn psychology is to condemn methods and techniques that you employ yourself nearly every day.

But psychology is more than just such an elementary concept as mentioned above. It is formally defined as "a scientific study of the behavior of living organisms.” This includes the systematic knowledgeable approach required of all sciences. As a science it attempts to explain the WHY of the behavior that we engage in unconsciously. Just as medical science can explain how the digestive processes slow down when you are engaged in strenuous activity, so can the science of psychology explain how you will act under situations of stress. However, each person acts differently to the same extent that each person’s bodily processes are somewhat unique. That unique “something” in each person is called his personality or his psychological make-up. It consists of the totality of the characteristics (likes, dislikes, desires, needs, etc.) that influence his behavior. Just as your body needs food, water, and air, so does your personality need certain things. It needs, among other things, love, understanding, friendship, and a god to serve. Some people feel the need for these more than others and will go to greater lengths to acquire them. Perhaps an actual example will serve to illustrate the idea.

Just a short time ago I was engaged in a counseling session with a juvenile delinquent from Detroit who had been committed to Boys’ Training School for robbery. When we discussed why he had gotten into trouble he told me that in the neighborhood in which he lived everyone of his “friends” committed these various crimes and that in order to be accepted as one of the gang he too had to steal. Upon further questioning it became evident that he had a tremendous need for acceptance and that rather than lose his friends he would steal instead. I am sure that we are all agreed on the fact that he stole because he is sinful. He is surely responsible for his actions but (whereas the ultimate cause may be his total depravity) the human cause is his need for acceptance by the peer group. His environment placed him in such a position that he was faced with the temptation to steal. Then some aspect of his psychological make-up pulled him in one direction and his natural knowledge of right and wrong pulled him in the other. Many people are placed in similar situations and never
yield to the overt act of stealing because their psychological needs are not as great as this boy's were. However, in a case such as the one mentioned above (assuming for the moment that he is unregenerate) any decision that he might have made would have necessarily been a sinful one because his unregenerate heart is incapable of making any decisions that are not contrary to God's commands. His whole being is at enmity with God and he desires only to disobey Him.

The next question that we may logically ask is, How do the children of God differ from the unregenerate and in what different way are their decisions influenced by their personality? Except for their true love for God the personality structures are basically the same. They too have their likes, dislikes, desires, and needs, just as the unregenerate do. The old man of sin is still in them and their behavior is affected by it. Perhaps one more illustration will help to make the difference somewhat clear.

Assume that in the school that you are attending the clay has come for the big test. Assume also the very real possibility that you are faced with the temptation to cheat, either by looking at someone else's paper or by letting them look at yours. Now YOU are faced with the responsibility of sinning or of saying no and not cheating. The choice is yours to make and you will be held responsible for it, before God and man. Will you say no and run the risk of having your "friends" turn against you or of getting a very low grade on the test, or will you take the seemingly easy way out and cheat and then rationalize by saying that it wasn't really so bad because everyone else did it too? Does sinning by groups make it less wrong? Here too each person's psychological make-up enters in to pull against his knowledge of right and wrong, only in this case it is more than just a case of natural morals. It should now be a strong conviction against sin. If your need for acceptance or for high grades is so strong that it overpowers your desire to restrain from sin then you will probably give in and cheat. The fact that this need overpowers you is due to your own sinfully weakened human nature and in no way excuses you from the seriousness of the sin. You still have the responsibility to say no.

One last thing to consider now is how one can say no to an overpowering need in his personality that he may not even realize is present. First, we must admit that a sin has been committed and this sin needs forgiveness. Prayer for strength to restrain at a later time is also necessary, but how does one pray for strength to fight something that he doesn't even know is present? So in addition to prayer, one must also recognize the reason that the situation brings about a temptation within him. He must have an awareness of his internal and unconscious weakness. Why is it such a temptation for him to cheat? The answer to such a question is not very easy to arrive at by oneself. Unless you have a tremendous ability of introspection (looking within yourself) you probably won't be able to recognize your problem without help. But to whom should you go for help? A counseling psychologist? Perhaps. But first why don't you try your minister or if the problem is one that the minister really can't help you with, then see your school counselor (if you are fortunate enough to have one in your school). Talking to a good listener will very often help you to help yourself understand your problem. But always remember that solutions to your problems can only come in direct connection with prayer. The Lord's counsel is the best and it is ultimately He alone who can help you through your struggles.

---

... overseers or rulers are set over the churches, to reprimand sin, not to spare it. Nor is a man fully free from blame who is not in authority, but who notices in those persons he meets in social life many faults he should censure and admonish. He is blameworthy if he fails to do this out of fear of hurting feelings or of losing such things as he may licitly enjoy in this life, but to which he is unduly attracted.

— St. Augustine

BEACON LIGHTS
Our Servicemen:
We have the addresses of two servicemen; the first is a member of our church in Edgerton, and the second is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. The addresses follow:

Pvt. E2 William Bleyenberg
US 27375779
HCCO 2nd Arp. 36th Inf.
APO 39, New York, N.Y.
Pvt. Larry D. Lubbers. 2058640
Plt. No. 329, N/C, R.D.
San Diego, Calif.

News of our Schools:
The last issue of South Holland's Reflector contained many interesting literary contributions written by a number of the students. One in particular, entitled, "Why I Like Our Own Christian School," summarized the idea of Protestant Reformed education from a student's point of view. It was written by Beth Van Baren, and its closing paragraph follows: "Having received this instruction it will help me and my classmates, as the seed of God's covenant, to walk antithetically in the world, as children of light in the midst of darkness."

Graduation exercises of the Free Christian School of Edgerton were held on May 28; the class motto was: "Hold Fast That Which Is Good."

Hope School Commencement exercises took place June 7 at Unity Christian School Gymnasium; Rev. G. Lanting was the speaker.

Commencement exercises of our South Holland School were held in Illiana Chapel on May 31.

Although school has been dismissed for the summer, Hope School Circle is still busy; on June 21 they put on a Strawberry Social at Hughes Park in Hudsonville. The evening was chilly, but the food was delicious, and those present had a fine time.

Calls:
Rev. G. Lubbers has declined the call from our Loveland Church.
Rev. C. Hanko has declined the call from our Redlands Church.
Rev. B. Woudenberghas declined the call from Southwest.

Wedding bells
rang on June 13 for Dorothy Vander Lee and Kenneth Vink (First); and for Judith Dykema and Benson Hendricks (Southeast) on May 3.

New infant members
A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Velman (First)
A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. John Vanden Top (Doon)
A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Davis (South Holland)
Twin daughters, born to Mr. and Mrs. Arvin Bleyenberg (Edgerton)

Called Home
Mr. George Vink (First) at the age of 50 years; Mrs. Cornelius Lubbers (Hudsonville) at the age of 84 years.

Here and There
Commencement exercises for Candidate David Engelsma were held in Southeast Church on June 11. Those present had the privilege of hearing two excellent speeches, one by Mr. Engelsma and one by Prof. H. C. Hoekema; music was furnished by the Radio Choir and the Small Choir of Adams St. School.

Synod decided to send Rev. C. Hanko and an elder to investigate the Jamaica area in response to their request for closer contact with us.

Sixteen
BEACON LIGHTS
For a time our missionary will continue his labors in Houston; he will also investigate the Paterson, N. J. area as a possible future field of labor.

Rev. H. Hanko was the speaker at the commencement exercises of Doon Christian School.

Rev. G. Van Baren plans to lecture on June 26 in Randolph Church; this lecture will be the first of a series on "The Face of Calvinism," treating the five points of Calvinism, and will be entitled, "Total Depravity."

On Sunday, June 2, our church in Edgerton held services in its own building after almost ten years of meeting in the Runals Memorial Hall. The pastor and his wife planned to be in the parsonage by July 1.

Under supervision of the Consistory a committee from Hull Protestant Reformed Church laid the groundwork for organizing a Sunday School. The first meeting was held on May 26.

Two new pamphlets have made their appearance: the eleventh in the series published by the Church Extension Committee of South Holland and Oaklawn is entitled, "A Firm Foundation"; the name of the latest pamphlet in the Reformed Witness Series is "The Christian Walk" by Rev. G. Van Baren.

South Holland's picnic was held on Memorial Day at Glenwood Woods; a full schedule of events was planned, including a program, sale, lunch, and games. An invitation was extended to Oaklawn's congregation to join them.

Now back with humble shame we look
On our original;
How is our nature dash'd and broke
In our first father's fall!

To all that's good, averse, and blind,
But prone to all that's ill;
What dreadful darkness veils our mind!
How obstinate our will!

Conceiv'd in sin, O wretched state!
Before we draw our breath,
The first young pulse begins to beat
Depravity and death.

Wild and unwholesome as the root,
Will all the branches be:
How can we hope for living fruit
From such a deadly tree?

—Hope's Bulletin