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Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund
AGATHA LUBBERS

On Student Unrest
JIM LANTING

Holy Laughter
REV. G. VAN BAREN

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In This Issue

EDITORIAL .................................................................. 1
What Doest Thou Here — Rev. R. G. Moore

FEATURE .................................................................. 2
A Christian looks at the "Population Explosion" — Pat Kamps

THE PROTESTANT REFORMED SCHOLARSHIP FUND — Agatha Lubbers .......................... 4

TRUTH vs ERROR ................................................. 5
Hagar and the Angel of the Lord — Rev. R. C. Harbach

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY ................................ 8
Holy Laughter — Rev. G. Van Baren

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS ................. 10
On Student Unrest — Jim Lanting

NEWS — FROM, FOR AND ABOUT OUR CHURCHES 11
Judy Henson

BEACON LIGHTS INDEX — VOLUME 28 ......................... 12
Editorial

What Doest Thou Here?

In First Kings chapter nineteen verse nine we read: “And he came thither unto a cave and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and said to him, What doest thou here, Elijah?” Jehovah asked this question of Elijah when he had come to the “Mount of God.”

That we might understand this question of our God, we will take a few moments to review the history that brought Elijah to Mount Horeb. Elijah was the prophet of God, called to labor among the ten tribes of Israel. His calling was to be the prophet of judgment in this apostatizing nation, which had followed the lead of King Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel in the service of Baal. Through this prophet God had worked many mighty works of power and many striking demonstrations. These demonstrations climaxed in the demonstration on Carmel of Jehovah as the only true and living God. There Jehovah consumed Elijah’s sacrifice with fire, while the sacrifice of the Baal prophets remained intact.

This powerful demonstration resulted in the apparent repentance of Ahab and the people of Israel. However, when Ahab returned to Jezebel it was evident that Ahab’s repentance was not sincere. For Ahab told his wife all that Elijah had done in such a way that Jezebel was filled with wrath. And she sent a messenger to Elijah to tell him that she would kill him.

Elijah had been filled with joy on Mount Carmel, for there seemed to be repentance on the part of Israel. But, now it was evident that soon Israel would forget Carmel, and would return to the worship of Baal. This resulted in sinful despair on the part of Elijah. He went to the juniper bush in the wilderness, and asked God to take his life! Elijah expected fruits of repentance from the mighty judgments of God, and when these fruits did not appear he was dissatisfied with his labor. Very really dissatisfied with God’s way with him, Elijah wanted to give up his office and his life.

God sent His angel to Elijah with nourishing food to strengthen him for the journey to Horeb. Now, having brought Elijah to Horeb, God asked Elijah the question quoted above. This question is not put forth to him because God did not know why Elijah was there, for God Himself had brought Elijah to the mountain. Rather, this question draws out Elijah. Why are you here instead of in Israel tending to your calling to defend the covenant, is God’s question. Elijah had to learn that he was forsaking his calling in the unbelief of his despair. Then God would instruct him by means of signs, and would renew his commission.

The question, “What doest thou here?” is one that we must all face continually, beloved young people. This question of God we should always be prepared to answer. Never is there a sufficient excuse for being unable to answer it, even as Elijah soon learned.

God demands that we serve Him faithfully at all times, and never may we rest upon former zeal. This is evident from the history of Elijah to which we refer. Remember this young people! This question must always be answered before God. Hence, in your work, in your leisure, in the entertainment which you seek, in the way you prepare for catechism, society, or school rest not on your former conversation. But, be prepared to answer the question: “What doest thou here?”

Also remember that we cannot answer this question properly in our own strength. Pray for the grace needed to walk in harmony with God’s will in all things. Study the Scripture to come to the knowledge of that will. Then in the strength of that grace and knowledge answer: We are serving Thee in love.

Rev. R. G. Moore
A CHRISTIAN LOOKS AT THE "POPULATION EXPLOSION"

PAT KAMPS

"The population explosion may be subject to overreaching prophecies, but it is something to worry about. Its consequences are widespread misery, undernourishment, waste of human and natural resources and a constant threat among desperate peoples to a peace of the world." Sociologists have been projecting a population explosion and its devastating consequences for many years. In 1965 the report of the Citizen's Committee on Population stated "that this may be the last generation which has the opportunity to cope with the problems on the basis of free choice." This same committee reports that the rate at which the population is growing requires urgent action if compulsory birth control is to be avoided.

This is the prediction and problems with which the sociologists are concerned today. Let's look at the problem. Demographer, Phillip M. Hauser of the University of Chicago expects "the world's population to nearly triple in the next half century, a rise of 6.4 billion people; the less developed areas will have 7.7 billion people; the developed countries only 2 billion. Despite the plans to control climate, harvest the oceans and increase agricultural yields to feed all these people, food production must more than quadruple." Hauser predicts that the population squeeze will ignite explosive situations which already threaten world peace. He characterizes the next fifty years by an increase in social unrest, and more, not fewer threats to world peace. He warns that men must begin to control population growth and increase productivity simultaneously. Sociologist, Roger Revelle, states that he does "foresee declining wealth and comfort, diminishing diversity in all aspects of life and a less wholesome relationship of people to their environment."

What about this crowding? Demographer E. T. Hall stated the consequences like this. "Crimes of violence, sexual deviations, breakdown of family ties, lapse of habits of cleanliness, and many other symptoms of social disorganization in our cities might be traceable to the effects of crowding."  

Answers and Solutions:

Those offering an answer to this "problem" can be separated into unbelievers and Christians. Let's look first at the answer the world gives in response to increased population.

The answer of the world is characterized by unbelief and is directed toward humanistic ends. Both their answer and their efforts to stop the population growth are evidence that they fail to recognize God as sovereign over the universe, and as a consequence of this they seek to bring the population under rational human control, directed toward a peaceful relationship between men. The world fails to reckon with the wonderful fact that God maintains and sustains and controls all the forces of nature and the development of man. Their notion is that the earth is theirs and under their control. It would follow then, that when God causes an unusual increase in population and famine and unrest, they consider it their responsibility to control such a dangerous situation.

The world answers in the form of a plea for men of all countries to take up the fight against population growth by controlling the birth and death rates by any possible methods such as contraceptives, infanticide, sterilization and abortion.

A report issued by the Committee on Population of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council stated "no family should be fated through poverty or ignorance to have children they do not want and cannot care for."

In order for every couple to conceive only the children they deliberately choose to have, the committee urges a threefold program of research education and training and services by public and private agencies in the methods of birth control.

Aid is offered by the National Council of Churches and the Church World Services. Through ministers, missionaries, doctors, and nurses, the N.C.C. and C.W.S. seek to educate the ignorant and to make birth control devices easily available through
physicians and hospitals. The N. C. C. and
C.W.S. expect criticism of their actions, but
their answer is this, “Such criticism should
be offset by vigorous support from those
churches and individual Christians who be-
lieve with the N.C.C. that responsible parenthood is a moral obligation.” In a
policy statement four years ago the N.C.C. 
resolved that its duty “to help our fellow
men overseas included assisting with various
measures to alleviate population pressures
and to extend family planning . . . as part
of a wise and dedicated effort to advance
in the underprivileged regions of the earth
the essential material conditions conducive
to human dignity, freedom, justice, and
peace.”

Hence, the world is concerned about the
alleviation of such consequences as social
unrest, inadequate housing, hunger and loss
of material wealth through birth control. By
alleviation of these consequences through
birth control the world disrupts the perfect
and constant law of God in nature: that
perfect attraction of man for woman and
that perfect drive to reproduce children.
They would disrupt the very law upon
which they depend for their calculations
concerning the population.

A Christian’s answer to the world’s plea
for a fight against population growth by
birth control is an expression of belief in
the sovereign control of God and an expres-
sion of willing service to the Will of God.
God created the world in order that he
might establish His Covenant through the
line of continued generations, beginning with
Adam, to the end that he might gather His
Church into the new heaven and earth.
In Genesis 17:7 God says, “And I will
establish my covenant between me and thee
and thy seed after thee in their genera-
tions for an everlasting covenant, to be a
God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.”
In Acts 2:39 we read, “For the promise is
unto you, and to your children, and to all
that are afar off, even as many as the
Lord our God shall call.” All things, then,
that have happened in the past and are
happening at present, and those things
which Scripture says will happen, are in
God’s counsel, under His control, and di-
rected toward the establishment of His
covenant.

First, concerning the promise of God re-
garding the deliverance of the Church
through the covenant, all children of God
serve His purpose by bringing forth seed.
This is, then, a negative reply to birth
control for these reasons:

1. The marriage of believers is used to
bring forth the body of Christ, the elect
children of the promise. Christ will return
and gather His Church when the last elect
child is born. Birth control, then, is an
instrument of the devil (working through
a plea for urgent action to curb population
growth) to keep the last elect from being
born.

2. Today, as well as in the Old Testa-
ment, God opens and shuts the womb. Only
God! Sarah did not bring forth seed until
she was 90 years old (Gen. 21:2). Rachel
also waited until the Lord opened her womb
and brought forth children of the promise
( Gen. 30:22). Samuel was born after
Hannah prayed fervently for many years to
bear a son (Sam. 1:6, 20). God will bring
forth the exact number of children he has
determined in his counsel to bring forth,
in spite of the world’s efforts to stop this.

Secondly, in the light of Revelation
Christians do not need to worry themselves
about preventing a population explosion.
God controls the forces of nature so that
an equilibrium is maintained. Besides, Rev-
elation speaks of famine, war, violence, death,
poverty, greed, etc. (Rev. 6:1-8). These
things WILL happen in the world and it
happens because God causes it to be. That
includes a population growth too. Christians
know this is of God’s hand and according
to his divine pre-determination. The world
refuses to recognize the power of God and
consequently work against the Will of God
by seeking to control God’s affairs.

However, the world cannot stop what God
has set in motion, the same as they cannot
cause the earth to fall out of its orbit. The
horses of Revelation are running today.
Pursuing their course they cause death, and
poverty, and homeless families; in fact all
the “problems” which the world combats
are determined to happen and no one can
stop them. God controls population by
sending forth the horses and their riders of
which Revelation speaks. He does not need
birth control

The red horse runs his course and
bloodshed and violence and war follows.
The black horse’s rider holds a balance
with which to measure the contrast between
scarcity and plenty, poverty and wealth, feast and famine. The pale horse is death. "Death as he riots in our streets, as he stalks over the battlefields, as he kills by the sword and by pestilence, in homicide and suicide, in hurricane and typhoon and tornado, in earthquake and tidal wave, by the beasts of the earth — death in all its forms rides through the earth, killing its one-fourth and sometimes its one-third, but always its proper quota, just as many as is in harmony with the history of the world according to the divine plan. And no one is powerful to stop him!" God will maintain and sustain the proportion of people upon the earth. The horses which are running today kill one-fourth the number of men. The world will not reckon with God's power to control all things!

Also Revelation speaks of the judgments that are called forth by the angels who have the power to kill one-third of men by gathering forces which represent a combination and more terrible manifestations of the red, black, and pale horses (Rev. 8). Through these judgments vegetation is burned (Rev. 8:7), waters and rivers become polluted and bitter (Rev. 8:11), the sun and moon and stars are darkened (Rev. 8:12), and as a result many men die.

When the world asks "Shouldn't we prevent those horrible conditions which the population "explosion" is causing?" we say, "No, they cannot be prevented." Believing Christians are assured that "all the various forces and trends in history are not so many uncontrolled forces, running fatally rampant through the world. But they are strong and irresistible forces which are well directed and controlled, which proceed from the book with its seven seals, the counsel of God, and which must serve God's purpose." The only way of looking at what the world calls a population explosion is to recognize it as a sign of the times which must come to pass before God's Church is delivered.

8. Ibid, 980.
10. Ibid, 391.

Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund

AGATHA LUBBERS

The Committee which is responsible for the administration of the Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund is making plans for the fourth consecutive year to award scholarships to young people who have determined to enter the ministry of the Gospel or to study for the teaching profession.

The Beacon Lights of March, 1960, featured an article by the editor-in-chief at that time, which was entitled "A Proposed Scholarship Program." Since that time the Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund, which is under the control of the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies, has not only become a reality but also has come of age. In subsequent articles various writers have discussed the development of this most significant project. The origin and early history of this Federation function were stormy, but by God's grace the project has stood. Scholarships have been awarded in less time than the estimated ten or fifteen years suggested in the article of our former editor-in-chief. Ten years have not yet elapsed since the time that this fund began to be collected.

Students who are now seniors in high school and are on the "home stretch of this first leg of their secondary school training" were at the time of the inception of this idea students in the third or fourth grade of the elementary school. Now these students are eligible for a scholarship from the Prot-
Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund. Young people today owe a debt of gratitude to young people of a decade ago who by God's grace were concerned that there be teachers in the schools and preachers in the churches.

The Scholarship Fund Committee hereby wishes to remind all young people who are attending college or plan to attend a college that the Committee is anxious to have you apply for one of the scholarships that will be awarded this year.

The Committee reminds you of the following simple rules:
1. All applicants must be prospective ministers or teachers.
2. All applications for the following school year must be submitted to the committee by May 1.
3. Each applicant must fill out an application blank.
4. Applicants shall be judged on the basis of sincerity, ability, and need.
5. Applicants must be either a baptized or confessing member of a Protestant Reformed Church.
6. Applicants shall promise in writing to repay in full should they refuse to teach or preach in our Protestant Reformed schools or churches.
7. The scholarship shall be applicable to tuition only.

College aspirants are urged to contact their society secretary, who will have the application blanks needed to apply for this fund.

The prayer of the Committee is that God will continue to supply those who feel called to the ministry of the Gospel or to the teaching profession and that this Scholarship Fund may be a God-ordained means to that end.

TRUTH vs. ERROR

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

HAGAR AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

"As for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly..." (Genesis 17:20). This text, whether one holds that Ishmael is elect or reprobate, cannot validly be used to prove the common grace theory that God has a general goodness out of which He bestows common blessings upon all men, including the reprobate. For there are many opposed to the idea of common grace who interpret this text to mean that God would bless Ishmael, not personally, but in his generations, specifically in his descendants, Kedar and Nebaioth. Therefore the text can never be any source of embarrassment to our biblical principle that God's goodness is always and only particular. But what we want to do now is to examine the context of Ishmael to present our own personal thesis that he is elect. Some of our brethren who hold very strongly to common grace say they
have never heard of such an idea, that Ishmael is to be regarded as a child of God. That may be, nevertheless there are those, the writer among them, who believe Ishmael was, somewhere along the line of his history, regenerated and converted to the Lord. The context of Ishmael seems to demand this. Let us examine that context. To do so will necessitate our going back to his mother, Hagar, and to Genesis 16.

Much sin is involved in the case of Hagar, and in the case of Ishmael, too. But this fact cannot be used against the election of anyone, or there would not be a David in heaven, nor a Manasseh! As for Hagar, "the Angel of the Lord found her" (Gen. 16:7). It is interesting to note that in the appearances of this mysterious Being called "the Angel of the Lord," He appeared first to Hagar, then to Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Moses, to the elect under Joshua (Jud. 2:1), to Gideon, Manoah and his wife, to David, Gad, Ornan, Elijah and Joshua the high priest. In all these appearances, the Angel of the Lord revealed himself for the help, blessing and protection of God's people. There are two instances in which He appeared to the reprobate, doing so to oppose them, as in the cases of Balaam (Nu. 22:23) and condemned Israel (1 Chr. 21:16). No opposition is evident in connection with his dealings with Hagar, rather there is manifested only such as is in harmony with the majority of His appearances.

It was while in a state of degradation that the Angel of the Lord appeared to her. "The Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain." The finding of Hagar is not, of course, expressive of an act of "chance," much less is it that God had to search for and enquire after her, as though He had not seen her before; but it shows that God was seeking her to bring her the following words of comfort. This was also true of Israel: "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye" (Dt. 32:10). The Lord found her there because He had led her there for her instruction. "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her" (Hos. 2:14). To God to find anyone implies no ignorance of that one's whereabouts, nor any anxious search for that which He had lost, but expresses an act of the highest wisdom and absolute sovereignty. "To find" means to "come to with a sufficiency," to come to with help. Why, then, did this Angel of the Lord appear first to this Egyptian bondwoman? This brings us to ask, similarly, Why should Elijah perform his first miracle for the benefit of a widow of Sidon? Why should that Angel incarnate first appear to humble shepherds and to Gentile visitors from a far country? Why should Christ risen first appear to Mary Magdalene, rather than to Mary his mother, or why did He not rather first appear to that Mary who purposely was not there because she believed in his resurrection (Mary of Bethany who anointed Him ahead of time for His burial), or why not first to John His closest disciple? Why, but because God is sovereign, and often reveals His sovereignty in coming first to the lowliest and neediest.

Give careful consideration to the above. Hold Galatians 4 in abeyance for a while. We shall come to that soon enough, D.V. Consider also the place of this divine encounter. "And the Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness." This fountain is also called "the well" (v. 14). This is the first time a well is mentioned in Scripture. That in itself is of some significance. It is always of importance to learn what biblical principle of "first mention" would teach on any given point of interest. So here. This well is in the wilderness. It was a specific well known well: "the fountain in the way to Shur." It was at this well that God revealed Himself to Hagar. The wilderness is a symbol of this cursed earth. Christ is the well of salvation, the Fountain of living waters (Jer. 2:13). He is the Fountain of life, the well known Water of Life. He comes to sinners in their need, and it is at the Well (Christ) that He reveals Himself to them.

The next time we read of a "well" it is again in connection with Hagar, where we read that "God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water" (21:19). No one sees the Water of Life until blind eyes are opened. The woman at the well of Sychar saw Jesus at first only as a Jew (Jn. 4:9), then as a gentleman ("Sir," or "Mr."—v. 11), then as a prophet (v. 19), next, with more enlightenment, as Messiah (v. 29), and finally, when her eyes were fully opened, as the Savior of the world (v. 42).
The next occurrence of the word “well” is in Gen. 29:1, 2, “Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. And he looked, and behold, a well in the field, and lo, there were flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks . . .” Christ is the Well who refreshes His sheep so that they “never thirst.” In Numbers 21:16, 17, “the well” was the gathering place of God’s people. So Christ is the gathering-center where we congregate to worship. In II Samuel 17:17-19, a well in Bahurim became a hiding place for Jonathan and his servant. So Christ is a Well of salvation to His elect, and their life is hid with Christ in God.

The language of the Angel of the Lord to Hagar is not like that directed to Cain, but similar to that directed to Adam (Gen. 3:9, 11, 13). The Angel’s approach is pedagogical, intended to convict of sin, to lead to confession, and to return Hagar to her calling. “Hagar, Sarai’s maid!” expresses full knowledge of her and her circumstances, as was the case with Elijah in “What doest thou here, Elijah?” He reminds her what she is, a fugitive, a stranger, a slave. For His address to her as “Sarai’s maid,” and not Abram’s wife, censured and disallowed her “marriage,” and pointed her to her proper place as a servant. So we by nature are fugitives from God, strangers from the covenant of Israel, and the slaves of sin with no right to be His servants until He restores us in Christ. “Whence camest thou?” This reminds us of our sinful origin: we came from corrupt Adam, we came from the Fall, we came from a depraved race, we came from, far from, the comforting presence of God, when Adam fled from His presence. The call of the Gospel is to return to Him, for He is the only place of safety. The question, “Whither wilt thou go?” should remind us of the place of danger and of condemnation in which we are by nature, and that by ourselves there is no way out. Whither wilt thou go? We cannot go out of death into life. Whither will we go but deeper into sin and down into hell? The question is asked as though it were a strange thing for her to be “in the way to Shur,” which was on the way down to Egypt. “And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt?” (Jer. 2:18). That is not the way that leadeth to life, but is that broad way leading to destruction. What then? Return! That is the call of God to His prodigal sons and daughters. Return to your place in God’s family (cp. Lk. 15:20). Hence these questions are calculated to prepare us to listen to the counsel of God, that we may find the way out in Jesus Christ, the only Mediator and Savior. And what evidence is there that grace has, in the call of the Gospel, comforted our hearts? That we conform in prompt compliance with the will of God, and return (Jer. 3:11).

The counsel of the Angel of the Lord follows, when He “said unto her, ‘Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands’” (v. 9). This was much like the word that God later had spoken to Elijah when he had fled from Jezebel, and finally found himself not very far from this wilderness of Shur. Then the Lord had said, “Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus.” Much later in history, the Lord returned another run-away slave to himself, when He said of Onesimus through the Apostle Paul, “Whom I have sent again; thou (Philemon) therefore receive him” (v. 12). “Submit thyself!” is in v. 6 translated “dealt hardly with,” and in v. 11 is rendered “affliction.” She was to humbly submit to the affliction to which Sarai (and God through Sarai) had subjected her. The enjoyments of God’s gifts cannot be had apart from conformity to His righteousness. So no promise (v. 10) without obedience (v. 9). Grace is never bestowed at the expense of righteousness. “Grace reigns through righteousness.”

It was a happy pronouncement to her when the Angel of the Lord affirmed, “I will multiply thy seed exceedingly that it shall not be numbered for multitude.” The words of this pronouncement are used throughout Genesis as the content of a blessing which falls upon the elect. Words to this effect were spoken to Adam and Eve (1:28), concerning the animals (8:1), to Noah and his sons (9:1, 7), here, to Hagar, to Abraham (17:6), to Jacob (28:3, 4), of God’s people in Egypt (47:27), and of Israel in the land (Lv. 26:9). The expression is used in Scripture either in connection with a blessing or as the content of a blessing. No exception to the regular usage of this expression is made with respect to Hagar. The Angel of the Lord gives her to expect a portion of the blessing of Abraham,
a numerous offspring. It may then be said that the words of this text, and the similar words appearing in the texts noted above do not apply to the reprobate. For never are they blessed. Also such words are spoken of Ishmael (Gen. 17:20).

(To be continued, D.V.)

FROM THE PASTOR’S STUDY

HOLY LAUGHTER

REV. G. VAN BAREN

GENESIS 17:17 — “Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?”

And so God commanded that the promised child’s name be, “Isaac.” What a name to give to a babe: Laughter! Through all the ages, the laughter of Abraham is memorialized in that name given his son.

Abraham had reason to laugh for joy at the message of the Lord. For many long years he had awaited the birth of this promised son. God had called him from the city of Ur to go into the land which God would show him. And God had promised, “I shall give this land to your seed.” But until this point, that promised seed had not come. Now Abraham approaches his hundredth birthday; his wife is only ten years younger. It is, humanly speaking, impossible to have children anymore. Yet what was impossible for man, is possible with God. God declares to Abraham, “Now I will give to you and Sarah that son of whom I have spoken.” No wonder Abraham laughs. He is about to hold the almighty power of the sovereign God in operation. That power of God, of course, is always seen all about one. But God now works in a unique way. He is about to give a son to the barren. He will give a child to the impotent. What a wonder! The son of promise will be born in such a way that all ages may know that this is only and directly the work of God. And Abraham laughs in wonderment and joy as he begins to comprehend that which God will do.

Shortly after, Sarah herself was caught laughing (Gen. 18:12). But that laughter was different. She laughed in doubt. Indeed, by faith she conceived. But that faith at times also wavered. She stood behind the tent’s door as God was repeating His promise to Abraham. Sarah wondered within herself if this could really be. She doubted the power of God. God had to
rebuke her on that occasion, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Once more Sarah laughed when Isaac was born, and "all," says she, "that hear will laugh with me." Now her faith is seen again. She has beheld the fulfillment of God's promise. Now she can laugh with Abraham in joy and gladness at the work of God.

But another also laughs: Ishmael. After Isaac is born and weaned, Sarah hears Ishmael mocking with Isaac (Gen. 21). This laughter was of a different sort than that of Abraham and even of Sarah. It was the laughter of derision and scorn. It was the laughter of one who cared nothing for the promise of God; certainly not at this time. Ishmael laughed in scorn that this little babe could be the the promised seed. He laughed that this child could bring forth seed as many as the stars of heaven. He laughed that such an one would be he in whom the nations of the earth would be blest.

At the heart of this evil mockery was the envy and jealousy of Ishmael. He was fourteen years older than Isaac. He had certain "rights." One would expect that the blessing and birthright would be given to him. Was he not also of the seed of Abraham? There is a bitterness of soul revealed in the mockery of Ishmael.

All of this laughter reminds covenant youth that they too are called to laugh—especially in their youth. But that laughter must not be an imitation of that heard in the world generally. The world has its "laugh-ins." It makes a mockery of everything sacred and holy. It laughs at the old-fashioned morality of the church. It laughs at the Word of God. It will crack its jokes about Scripture. It distorts and twists that which is presented therein. It laughs about the promises of God: redemption from sin and life everlasting through the blood of the Lamb. And such laughter of scorn will be heard more and more as the end of time draws nigh. Finally, that mocking laughter will turn into persecution. What the world could not do with its jeers and scorn, it will attempt to do with its sword. Young people, beware lest you be found laughing with that world—at its jokes; at its evident scorn on all that which is sacred.

That laughter will be, and is already, heard within the "church" world too. Already now many denominations face the real threat of a take-over by the liberal and modernist. These are they who laugh about infallible Scripture; they laugh at Genesis 1-3 especially; they laugh at miracles; at a crucified mediator; at the Son of God in our flesh; at virgin birth; at resurrection from the dead. These laugh at all that which the church, and Scripture, confessed in past ages. Now they are liberated from the shackles of the past. They will introduce their modern theology—and will insist that all men hear them. All this leads directly to the coming of the antichrist who sets himself up in the temple of God declaring himself to be God.

But your laughter is different and spiritual. Yours is an imitation of that godly laughter of the father of the faithful: Abraham. Are you laughing, young people?

Your laughter is heard in your worship of God each Sunday. Your singing must be with a joyous heart, a heart overflowing with the abundance of the blessings of our covenant God. You sing as those who mean that which is sung. That is not always done. Some won't sing. Some mumble instead of singing. But you must sing with laughter in your heart and voice. Did God not provide the way of salvation for us as members of His church?

Your laughter is heard in your speech. You need not speak with long, pious faces. The joyousness of youth ought to find expression in your conversation. But that conversation must reflect an interest and concern with that which is spiritual. What you say is to be spoken to the glory of our God. Let your faith find expression—accompanied by a spiritual laughter.

You have something to laugh about. The world about us can laugh too, yet its laughter is but foolishness. The world laughs to cover up its sin and misery. As long as it laughs, the world can convince itself that the curse of God upon it is not so bad. It can ignore the condemnation of God as revealed in His Word. The world can laugh itself into hell—where it will laugh no more.

But you have reason for laughter of joy. Have you not experienced what it is to be born again? Have you not rejoiced in the efficacious call of God through the Spirit of the Son? Have you not known the wonder and joy of being delivered through the blood of the Lamb of God? Do you not
know there is prepared for us mansions above—and that nothing on this earth can compare with those? Do you not know that though all the world be against you, yours is the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord?

Do you not understand that even the sting of death is now removed through the work of Christ?

Then laugh. Laugh with all your heart. Abraham did. Sarah did. Why not you?

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS
JIM LANTING

On Student Unrest

Generational conflict, generational struggle, has been a recurrent theme throughout history. Unlike class struggle, however, it has rarely been understood or ever studied. Labor movements have a somewhat defined and intelligible history. Student movements, however, have a somewhat vague and transient character. The student status, unlike that of the workman, is temporary, a few short years, and the quantum-like experience in the student movement is over. Nevertheless, seemingly ineffectual student movements have brought about paramount changes in our contemporary world. Social revolution in Russia, China and Burma sprang from student movements, while governments in Korea, Japan and the Sudan have fallen in recent years largely because of massive student dissent. Here then, is a universal phenomenon which challenges our understanding.

To illustrate its historical significance, one must only cite the classic case of the Russian Revolutionary student movement. In the 1860’s and 1870’s several thousand students, inspired by feelings of guilt and responsibility for the backward people, overtly showed their desire to change the establishment. The largest single group among those who were arrested in the back-to-the-people movement, were children of the nobility, who could have availed themselves of the ample openings in the governmental bureaucracy. Receiving no help from the peasants, the students reverted to extreme forms of individual terrorism. And when this also failed, circles of student intellectuals formed the first nuclei of the Social Democratic Party. Lenin aptly said that without the student concern, the workers wouldn’t have achieved social consciousness, and would have progressed no further than the labor parties.

The student unrest of the 1960’s, however, is much more than just a generation gap, an age-old rebelliousness. Today’s ferment is more deep and more intense than ever before. Geographically speaking, the movement has never been more universal. In the jet age, student leaders can be anywhere in the world in a day’s time. All of the world’s students are viewing the same newscasts, and reading the same books and periodicals. Youth unrest is an international, almost palpable vivid connection and intimate relationship. Student leaders such as Tom Hayden, “Danny the Red,” Mark Rudd, and Abbie Hoffman are known and lauded the world over. The movement is now something universal and ecumenical; it has donned a cloak of international culture.

One may define a student movement as a congregation of students inspired by aims which they try to explicate in a political ideology, and moved by an emotional rebellion in which there is always present a disillusionment with and rejection of the values of the older generation. Moreover, the members of a student movement have the conviction that their generation has a special historical mission to fulfill where the older generation has failed.

But the young, it is becoming clear, are regarded with considerable hatred. Adult anger at the physical superiority of the young has usually been contained by the comforting assumption that eighteen-year-olds are least the moral, intellectual and emotional inferiors of their elders. College students have traditionally been viewed as apprentices, almost supplicants. And until recently they accepted their role as dutiful petitioners for entry into the world of adult insight and skill. Student revolutionaries are often called “Rebels without a Program,”
and been accused of “inability to see and enjoy the element of absurdity in life.” Although the student movement admittedly has no articulated program and does exhibit some vacuity, it is nevertheless founded upon a coalescence of several themes and conditions. It tends to arise in societies which are gerontocratic—that is, where the older generation possesses a disproportionate amount of economic and political power and social status. In addition to this, student movements will not arise unless there is a sense that the older generation has discreted itself and lost its moral standing. Moreover, a student movement tends to arise where political apathy or a sense of helplessness prevails among the people.

But alongside these sociological conditions, some main value themes characterize the student movement. There is a strong stress of Romanticism among many movement participants on a quest for self-expression, often articulated in terms of leading a “free” life—i.e., one not bound by conventional restraints on feeling, experience, communication and expression. This is often coupled with aesthetic interests and a strong rejection of scientific and other highly rational pursuits. Students often express the classic romantic aspiration of “knowing” or “experiencing” “everything.” Another dominant theme of the protest is anti-authoritarianism. The students exhibit a strong antipathy toward arbitrary rule, and centralized decision-making. The anti-authoritarian sentiment is fundamental to the widespread campus protests during the past few years; in most cases, the protests were precipitated by an administrative act which was interpreted as arbitrary.

A third prevalent theme perhaps could be called anti-dogmatism. There is a strong reaction against doctrinaire ideological interpretation of events. Many of the students are quite restless when presented with formulated models of the social order, and specific programs for social change. This underlies most of their antagonism to the varieties of “old left” politics, and is one meaning of the oft-quoted (if seriously used) phrase; “You can’t trust anyone over thirty.” A major criticism of society is that it is “hypocritical.” The students display a strong antipathy to self-interested behavior, particularly when it is overlaid by claims of disinterestedness. The older generation, they claim, has “sold out” the values it espouses, and to assume conventional roles of adult life usually leads to increasing self-interestedness, hence selling out, or “phony-ness.”

A fourth main value theme characterizing the student movement is anti-institutionalism. The dissent students have a strong distrust of involvement with conventional institutional roles. This is most importantly expressed in the almost universal desire among the highly involved to avoid institutionalized careers. Many of the most committed expect to continue to work full-time in the “movement” or, alternatively, to become free-lance writers, artists, intellectuals.

(to be continued)

NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

by JUDY HENSON

On December 29 Marlow Van Ginkel, Judy Van Den Top, and Nona Miersma from Doon made public confession of faith.

Addresses:
The addresses of the servicemen and their wives from Doon are:

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Blankespoor
321 North Weber, Apt. 8
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80902
Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Van Den Top
4010 East Tappan Dr., Apt. 247
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80909

Miscellaneous:
The week of December 15, the Doon Young People's Society held a volleyball outing and afterwards met at the parsonage for refreshments.

Special church services were held in many of our churches on Old Year's evening and New Year's morning. It being February already, perhaps many of us have forgotten about those services and have also forgotten that we are living in a New Year, a New Year with new opportunity, opportunity to love, to serve, to give, to pray, and to learn. Let's not forget!

It's a new name that appears on this article — Judy Henson — but it's still the same person behind the pen. Although I'm married now, I still appreciate receiving church news as much as ever. So, therefore, I'm giving you a new address to which bulletins can be sent:

Mrs. Judy Henson
5971 - 40th Avenue
Hudsonville, Michigan 49426

BEACON LIGHTS INDEX
Volume 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addresses of Our Servicemen</td>
<td>S.E.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Alone&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Address (Editorial)</td>
<td>A.N.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another Look at War (TVE)</td>
<td>R.C.H.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Appeal</td>
<td>L.H.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antidote Against Youthful Lusts (PS)</td>
<td>C.L.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Proper Attitude of Thanksgiving</td>
<td>L.E.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Stranger in a Strange Land (PS)</td>
<td>G.V.B.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athanasius (Portraits of Churchfathers)</td>
<td>H.H.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Attention!” (PS)</td>
<td>C.L.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B

“Becoming an Example of the Flock” (PS) | C.L. | 1 | 9 |
Birth of the Child (Editorial) | R.G.M. | 8 | 1 |
Book Reviews
A Symposium on Creation | A.N. | 4 | 13 |
Flame of Anger | A.N. | 1 | 12 |
Job, Our Contemporary | A.N. | 1 | 12 |
Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans | A.N. | 3 | 9 |

C

Christian Liberty | D.V.U. | 2 | 3 |
Common Grace Easily Refuted (TVE) | R.C.H. | 9 | 10 |
Convention Speech (2)
"How Great Thou Art in Salvation" | G.V.B. | 5 | 1 |
Convention Speech (3)
"How Great Thou Art in Our Lives" | C.H. | 5 | 10 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convention in Pictures</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention Report</td>
<td>D.L.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events and Comments</td>
<td>M.H.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events and Comments</td>
<td>J.L.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events and Comments</td>
<td>J.L.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events and Comments</td>
<td>J.L.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events and Comments</td>
<td>J.L.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darkness at Noonday (PS)</td>
<td>G.V.B.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceitful Days (Editorial)</td>
<td>A.N.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day and the Name of God (TVE)</td>
<td>R.C.H.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation, Please!</td>
<td>V.G.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Retreat – 1968</td>
<td>B.W.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation Board Annual Report</td>
<td>S.S.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleeing Youthful Lusts (PS)</td>
<td>G.L.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the Love of Money</td>
<td>S.G.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship (Crit)</td>
<td>S.G.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God Ordained Disputation</td>
<td>V.G.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hagar and the Angel of the Lord (TVE)</td>
<td>R.C.H.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Laughter (PS)</td>
<td>G.V.B.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Are You Dressed? (PS)</td>
<td>G.V.B.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Love God Because</td>
<td>Mrs. L.K.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impressions of Covenant Christian High</td>
<td>C.D. and D.K.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impressions of Our Seminary</td>
<td>J.S.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Retrospect</td>
<td>T.E.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Involvement” of “Participation in Christ” (PS)</td>
<td>G.L.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Huss: Reformation Forerunner (1)</td>
<td>D.H.K.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Huss: Reformation Forerunner (2)</td>
<td>D.H.K.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl Barth’s Conception of the Word of God (4)</td>
<td>R.C.H.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column 1</td>
<td>Column 2</td>
<td>Column 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Light” and “Day” (TVE)</td>
<td>R.C.H.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Not The World (Editorial)</td>
<td>R.G.M.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King Is Dead (Crit)</td>
<td>A.L.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Most Unforgettable Teacher</td>
<td>K.L.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Third Easter</td>
<td>Mrs. L.K.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin of Life, The (TVE)</td>
<td>R.C.H.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>K.L.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures of Our High School</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformation Day (Editorial)</td>
<td>R.G.M.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea and Its Good, The (TVE)</td>
<td>R.C.H.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Scholarship”</td>
<td>A.L.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stars of Light, The (TVE)</td>
<td>R.C.H.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching the Sciences (4)</td>
<td>A.L.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching the Sciences (5)</td>
<td>A.L.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanksgiving (Editorial)</td>
<td>C.R.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thou Shalt Love the Lord (Editorial)</td>
<td>C.R.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thy Word, Our Guide</td>
<td>J.G.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Truth About The Plain Truth (1) (Crit)</td>
<td>A.L.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Truth About The Plain Truth (2) (Crit)</td>
<td>A.L.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Truth About The Plain Truth (3) (Crit)</td>
<td>A.L.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbreakable Lock, The (Editorial)</td>
<td>A.N.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Not Sing Hymns?</td>
<td>D.M.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Doest Thou Here? (Editorial)</td>
<td>R.G.M.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TVE – Truth vs. Error
PS – From the Pastor’s Study
Crit – Critique
Author's Key

S.E. — Sally Elzinga
A.N. — Arie Nobel
R.C.H. — Rev. R. C. Harbach
L.H. — Lois Hoeksema
G.L. — Rev. George Lubbers
L.E. — Lois Engelsma
G.V.B. — Rev. G. Van Baren
H.H. — Rev. H. Hanko
R.G.M. — Rev. R. Moore
D.V.U. — Donna Van Uffelen
C.H. — Rev. C. Hanko
D.L. — Dave Lanting
M.H. — Mark Hoeksema
J.L. — Jim Lanting
V.G. — Vernon Graeser
B.W. — Ben Wigger
S.S. — Sue Swart
S.G. — Shirley Gritters
Mrs. L.K. — Mrs. Leon Kamps
C.D. — Carol Dykstra
D.K. — Dan Koerner
J.S. — Jim Slopsema
T.E. — Tillie Eerdmans
D.H.K. — Rev. D. Kuiper
A.L. — Agatha Lubbers
K.L. — Karen Lubbers
P.K. — Pat Kamps
C.R. — Calvin Reitsma
J.G. — Jean Gritters
D.M. — Doug Miedema

Due to the multitude of between-semesters tasks, the "Critique" department will stand empty until next month.
SCHOLARSHIPS

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• Prospective P.R. Ministers & Teachers may apply

• Apply before May 1st

• Obtain blanks from your Y.P. Society secretary ...or your Pastor

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