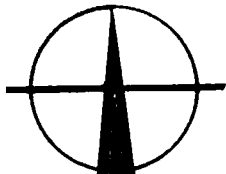


BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH*



August - September 1969

PRAYER FOR PEACE?

JEANNE GRITTERS

PLIABLE

REV. R. C. HARBACH

THE ECSTASY OF LIFE

ROSALYNN REITSMA



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OUR GOD-GIVEN ENVIRONMENT

In the beginning the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. Then the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and there was life. From the brooding, inky mass of nothingness came life, and it was good. Then God said, "Let Us make man," and the life had a king.

The duty of a king is stewardship, and even though Adam fell, the duty of man's stewardship has not changed. Man is duty bound by the very fact of his creation to rule the earth in wisdom and justice. Man must subdue the earth.

But were the mandate of God given just to man alone, our duty would be, like man's, dimmed by the vital presence of sin. But we are not man, we are CHRISTIAN man, and our duty should be much more clearly seen and much more vitally important. It is as though all mankind were myopic, but Christian man were given glasses. In our intimate contact with God, we are duty bound to see His will more clearly than the world. More than man, Christian man must obey the mandate to subdue the earth, and must exercise his stewardship.

The earth was created in a verdant splendor which man cannot imagine today. The great beauties of the world today are but dim reflections of the wonder and grandeur with which the earth praised the Lord in the dawn of time. The veil of sin has been dropped over the natural world with the same power as it has been dropped over the heart of man. Yet God is speaking through this natural world too. The man who cannot see God in the velvet of a flower's petal or hear His voice in the breath of the wind is truly a dead man. God is speaking through the voice of the universe, and it is our duty as much today as in Eden to exercise stewardship over the vehicle of this voice.

The earth around us is speedily becoming a vision of hell rather than a picture of God. Our streams and rivers are open sewers, our lakes are dying, plant and animal life is rapidly being destroyed. Many species of birds are extinct, or on the verge of extinction. To make our life better and easier,

we have carelessly used pesticides, foolishly allowed our waste products to glut rivers and streams. Because we are lazy, our roadsides are full of paper, cans, and other debris. We erect buildings and carelessly dump barrels and other trash in the nearest convenient spot. We fill up marshes — that are refuges for some of the most beautiful creatures on earth — as excuses for landfill projects. (Which is a delicate way of saying that we are too cheap to buy smokeless incinerators for our garbage.)

The creation over which God has placed us stewards is an extremely delicate mechanism — more delicate than even modern science-oriented man realizes today. Any careless tampering with the ecological balance of nature can and often does have serious consequences. Wisdom must be exercised even in the control of disease-bearing organisms, lest the destruction caused by the elimination of the organism be greater than the disease itself.

The day is soon coming when the sound of a bird's song will be a forgotten memory to our children. The sight of a flock of ducks majestically circling over a clear lake on a crisp fall morning is fast becoming a rare sight. How often do we hear the slap of a beaver's tail on a quiet pond, the call of the Canada goose heading homeward? Many of our children know the sight of our once most-common animals only by viewing them in the slums people call zoos. There is nothing more pathetic than the sight of a great bald eagle (one of God's creatures, remember) sitting (not perched, for there is seldom anything to perch on) in a tiny cage in a reeking zoo. Even if all the bald eagles in the world today were to be put together and if all would breed without dangers of death among their offspring, they could not keep themselves from extinction. Never again will the shadow of this magnificent bird darken the sun.

Man was created to use the earth for the glory of God. He was sent to subdue the earth, not destroy it. Truly, it is the judgment of God upon the wicked earth that the earth is becoming a functioning dump, yet this does not free us from our duties of

stewardship. Simply to say that God will preserve His Church even in a polluted world is the sinners' way out of a difficult task. We are not doing the Maker of all that is beautiful and great any honor by sitting back in judgment alone. The world is even recognizing the dangers they have made around themselves. Conservation and anti-pollution groups are constantly crying out their warnings of destruction. This is the way wicked man works, but what of the Christian?

The first step a Christian ought to take after he has come to an awareness of the problems he is creating, is to stop polluting. Don't throw trash out your car windows, don't dump wastes into creeks and rivers. Use with wisdom the chemical and mechanical devices the Lord has given man. Remember, you are stewards for the Church of tomorrow, too.

But this stewardship extends even farther. The environment in which we live is an immensely complex unit. To judiciously use all the Lord has given us while still main-

taining our rightful position as stewards demands knowledge of the world in which we live. Saying that it is too complex or too sinful and not fit for study is no excuse for ignorance. Even if the world should end today, we would be judged on our stewardship.

Finally, our voices should not remain silent when man continues to destroy the creation. As stewards, it is our duty to use all in our power to preserve the creation God has given us. This we should do, not to "Make the world a better place to live in," but to honor and glorify the Creator.

We have been placed on this earth for one purpose: To glorify Him Who made us. To sit silently by as the earth He has given us becomes a picture of death rather than a reflection of the beauty that is to come is sin.

May the sight of a flock of birds winging in silent splendor into the sunset always be near us to remind us of the presence of the Creator. C.R.



CRITIQUE

PRAYER FOR PEACE?

JEANNE GRITTERS

Prayer is one of the most wonderful gifts that we as Christians have. As we pray, we withdraw ourselves completely from the world around us, and stand face to face before the Almighty God. To Him we pour out our every thought, our troubles and our anxieties, our thanksgivings of praise. In prayer we stand closer to God than at any other time. "Take time to be holy; speak oft with thy Lord. Spend much time in secret, and think on His Word." Our Confessions tell us that prayer is the chief part of thankfulness, and when it proceeds

from a true faith, it is one of the best of our good works.

But as in all parts of our life we are so imperfect, so also our prayers are often foolish and imperfect. I am thinking of one aspect of our prayers which is especially misused today. This is the prayer for peace. A common one goes something like this: "Lord, we pray that the war in Vietnam may stop, so that our soldiers may be spared; grant us a lasting peace between all nations." This may sound like a perfectly natural and well-meaning request to you.

But we must remember that all wars are in God's Council, and serve His purpose — which is the eternal peace of His chosen people. God builds His kingdom by war as well as peace, and we must never go against His divine plan. We must expect wars and "rumors of wars" as signs of the end, and a lasting peace will never be fully realized until the saints are all gathered together in heaven.

By nature we all dislike wars, and also by nature we as sinful Christians only will and desire that which is evil. Even with God's grace, we often choose very foolish things. We don't stop to think that this is the way God wants it to be.

True prayer does not center around "things," especially those things that we carnally desire. This is shown by the Lord's Prayer. Its main subject is God, not us, and in it we are taught to pray for His kingdom, His will, and His glory. Even when we pray for our personal needs, such as daily bread and forgiveness, we conclude our prayer with "For *thine* is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory . . ."

During these troubled times, therefore, especially during the war that is going on, the Christian finds himself often confiding to God in prayer about his problems. He

tells Him of the nephew who is far away, exposed to death many times a day, or of the son who needs a guiding hand in the midst of death and temptation far away from home. He tells God all his thoughts, his fears, and his desires. This is the way it should be, for didn't God command us to cast all our cares upon Him, and to let our requests be known unto God? However, when we pray in faith we are not telling God what to do. We may never tell Him to do what we think would be the most desirable for us. In prayer we learn to seek God's will only. We unburden our hearts with one purpose — that God may teach us that His way is always the best way. If we have a heavy heart about the war, and pray to God that we really wish it would stop, we must not forget to say, "But Lord, if you want the war to continue, then let it keep going; but give me a peaceful heart, knowing that Thou doest all things well."

If we are looking for peace, therefore, we must learn first God's will, and submit ourselves to it in every way. He who prays "Not my will, but thine be done" has not only learned how to pray, but will also experience true peace with God daily in his life.

CONTRIBUTION

Missions: Young People in Missions

RON VAN OVERLOOP

The topic of young people in missions is one which is continually brought up in the discussions of the young people. This is missions in which they are active participants. In connection with a discussion of this nature the Summer Workshop in Missions project of the Christian Reformed Church is always brought up. The SWIM project is under the supervision of Classes and is available for qualified members of the Christian Reformed Church who are at least 17 years old. These SWIMers spend eight weeks in communities where a mission board or chapel is instituted. Their duties during this stay consist of canvassing a city with pamphlets, following up on the more interested, and assisting in Sunday School and Daily Vacation Bible School.

An interest for a similar project in the Protestant Reformed Churches has been expressed by many of our young people. Those who express this desire and interest are on the whole quite sincere. They have a true desire to work for our churches and tell others exactly what our churches believe. They also seem to think that in this way they would also strengthen their own personal faith.

I should like to deal with just a phase of this varied topic, that is, young people involved in our missions in Jamaica. I shall attempt in this article to propose a project which could be used in Jamaica. Both the values and demerits of such a project will be presented.

The first part of this topic which we

shall discuss is the young people who would be involved in a project of such a nature. Who are they? What are they? First, it can be said that they are *interested* youth. These young people have expressed a desire to enter such a program. Their desire is an unselfish one, not just a wish to see the world. This is not a weak desire, but rather a strong one because these young people are willing to sacrifice practically their whole summer vacation to go and participate in such a program. I, personally, have heard many express this desire for the great experience they would gain.

Secondly, these young people are a *qualified* youth, both practically and spiritually. Practically, at 17 or 18 years of age they are at the prime of their life. Physically fit, strong, full of vim and vigor, with plenty of get up and go. Also, at this age these youth are free as a bird, for when they are a little older their mind is on marriage and they would then have to work during the summer months for need of money. Spiritually they are also qualified, for they know the principles of our beliefs and not only know them but also believe, maintain, and uphold them as the truth. There are many who are better qualified spiritually but they usually cannot go for practical reasons. The young people are yet qualified but just do not have the experience.

Thirdly, it can also be said that under such a project the young people would have to be carefully *screened*. They would have to meet many requirements, both practical and spiritual. First, it would have to be determined whether the desire is sincere or not. Also I think it would be advisable if they would participate in a week or two of preparatory classes. In these classes they would learn things which they will need on the mission field: things which would otherwise come only from actual experience on the mission field.

The second part of our topic which we shall discuss concerns the missionaries on the Jamaican field. Who are these men spiritually? First, the missionaries are ministers of God's Word. They are proclaiming the truth of the Scriptures, and feeding the milk of the Word to the spiritual infants on the field. Secondly, there are also qualified elders who assist the ministers. Then, who are these missionaries physically and prac-

tically speaking? They are the Revs. Hanko, Heys and Lubbers and the elders Meulenberg, Zwak, and Feenstra. These ambassadors who have already gone to Jamaica to labor, though still healthy and full of enthusiasm, are certainly not in the prime of their life. Some of these gentlemen have already retired and the others are rapidly approaching the retirement age. The handicaps which I implied are definitely not spiritual ones but rather physical. They are in need of manual and physical assistance. Rev. Lubbers has related that he had to rest five times to climb a hill to reach a church while he was in Jamaica as missionary.

Next we shall discuss the positions of the missionaries and of the young people in relation to each other. The ministers and elders would be in complete authority and control. They would be teacher, guide, and trainer of the young people. The young people will hold the position of complete submission. They would be student, pupil, and follower. They would hold the same position as Timothy did when he was under the leadership of Paul.

Closely related to the position is the use of those involved in such a program. The young people would assist manually, carrying loads and luggage up and down hills, etc. Also, as Timothy, they would assist by teaching Sunday School and many other odd jobs which the missionaries need done, but which take up much valuable time.

Drawing this article to a close, let us mention a few of the pros and cons concerning a project as briefly outlined in this article. First, let us consider the arguments which could arise against this proposed project. An argument against the young people would probably be that there is no desire for such a mission endeavor among our young people, and if there is a desire it is not a proper one. Also, the young people are not qualified spiritually. They are just young kids yet. Another argument could possibly be that the young people would take too much authority and act too much on their own. Still another argument which could be brought up would be that the young people would make ministers of themselves and try to "save" others. Yet another argument is that the cost of such a program would be much too high.

Now then, let us look at a few of the

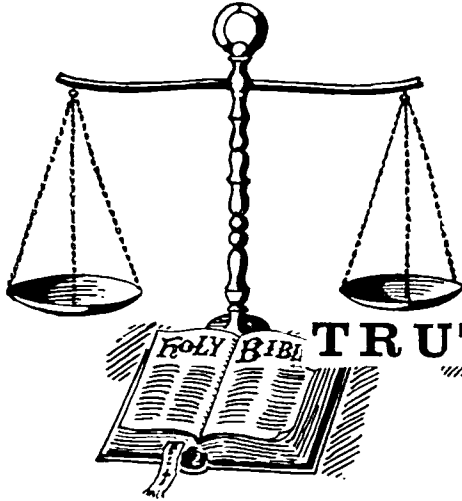
merits of a project which would put a few of our young people with our missionaries on the Jamaican mission field. In the first place, I can visualize no problem at all in obtaining good, qualified young people. Those who have expressed such a desire are also those young people who are the best qualified. They are very sincere. In the second place I cannot foresee any problem concerning the use and position of the young people. Those who would be privileged to go, after meeting all the requirements, both spiritual and practical, and participating in a preparation program, would definitely not be the type of person who would disobey a minister and elder. Nor would they be the type who would take authority upon himself or make himself out to be a minister. Rather, it can be said that those who would go to Jamaica would receive much instruction in doctrine and walk. Also, I believe that they would receive much of value because of participating in this project. First, they would receive much instruction in doctrine and walk. Too, they would learn much humility, both spiritual and practical. Spiritual humility would be gained from just watching the ministers and elders work and seeing their tremendous wisdom. Practical humility would also be gained by seeing the

very low living conditions of the Jamaicans and comparing it with that of us in the United States and thereby seeing how blessed we really are. Thirdly, this would be an experience which they would not forget for the rest of their lives. They, also, would serve to unify our churches more closely with those in Jamaica. In conclusion it can be said that this program would give much spiritual edification and Christian fellowship to all who would have the privilege to participate in such. Finally, I agree that the expense would be high; however, I also believe that all the experience gained would greatly out-weigh the costs. Too, I believe that our young people could raise most of the money needed. The fact that they can raise money has been seen by their efforts in obtaining the funds needed for the 1969 convention in Redlands.

I can say that after very carefully weighing both the pros and the cons I am greatly in favor of a program of this nature. The reasons I favor it were specifically the experience gained and the physical assistance given to the missionaries. I hope that you also, after carefully weighing both sides, will agree with me and favor sending young people with our missionaries to Jamaica.

The Federation Board would like to welcome two new members to the public relations staff of **Beacon Lights**. It is our prayer that Judy Ondersma and Ken Kuiper may be blessed in their new duties. It is also our prayer that God will bless Karen Reitsma, who is retiring from the public relations staff, as she enters into married life. Also Karen, thank you for the wonderful work you have done in God's service.

Our gratitude also goes to Randy Meyer for his labors in designing the new cover for the **Beacon Lights** as appears on this issue. Thanks, Randy, for a tremendous job!



TRUTH vs. ERROR

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

PLIABLE

PLIABLE: The hearing of this is enough to ravish one's heart. Glad I am to hear of these things. Come on! Let us mend our pace!

— THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

EMMANUEL: These have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the Word's sake, immediately they are offended.

— MARK 4:17

Our friend, Christian, had other interesting acquaintances besides Obstinate, among them Temporary, Talkative and Pliable. We meet the latter now. As to appearance, in one respect, there was no difference between him and Obstinate: both wore the same style of mustache. But in another respect, Pliable was slender, refined, pensive and somewhat withdrawn, while Obstinate stood towering over you in your path like a wet haystack. Pliable was a gentleman compared to Obstinate. His sense of good manners led him to side with Christian. "Don't revile!" are his first recorded words. We immediately take to Pliable for this. So abusive and reviling is Obstinate that Pliable is ashamed to be caught in his presence. The contrast between the two seems almost enough to make Pliable a Christian. He is a man of common sense, common decency and common civility. Where too many are vile-mouthed and violent, and becoming increasingly so with respect to the old faith of the Reformers, a man of common compassion and sympathy would easily be taken as one having an interest in true religion. "Don't revile" would be put down, even by the world, as an evidence of common grace. He was a civil

man, and civil men, though they may never have part or lot in the next world, are this world's saints. The world points to the so called activists, agrarian reformers, the empire builders, and says, "These Are the Saints!" Pliable had the world's canonization. But the country in which Christian dwelt was ruled by Prince Emmanuel. He had issued proclamations to the effect that true religion was a matter of the heart, not merely of distinctions between virtue and vice, good order in society and anarchy, or civility and injustice. What Christian soon learned about his new companion was that he was as pliable to evil as to good — either influence, whichever happened, could impress him.

But Pliable withdrew from people of brutish behavior and bad manners. "Don't revile" separated him from them and allied him with Christian. As for setting out to seek that inheritance laid up in heaven, he was all for it. "My heart inclines to go. I begin to come to a point." He had reached a parting of the ways. "I intend to go along with this good man. Come, then, good neighbor, let us be going." Now then, hasn't this man made as good a beginning as that man who formerly had been known

as Graceless? Be careful in expressing an opinion in this regard. So far we have taken little more than a glance at the appearance of the man Pliable. But "judge not according to the appearance" (John 7:24). The man himself, unintentionally, indicates the depth to which we must penetrate when he says, "my heart inclines to go." We must search for roots in the depths of the heart. There were none in Pliable. The Lord of the land who knew him best said, "He hath not root in himself." This is getting, in one thrust, to rock bottom. For we are interested in Pliable, not as to appearance, but "in himself." Having no root in himself his religion was no more than a surface affair. It was as shallow as veneer. Christian is familiar with Mr. Heidelberg (not the pre-historic sub-human creature) who says that true religion is rooted in a personal knowledge of one's own heart-plague and in the practical knowledge of deliverance from that misery. Pliable had no such self-knowledge.

"Tell me now further," was Pliable's eager request, "what the things are and how to be enjoyed whither we are going." He could enquire of the good things of the Christian life, but not of the way of salvation, nor of the difficulties to be encountered along the way, nor of the danger of falling short of it. Because of this, he could not really understand the doctrines of the Christian faith. The truth cannot be understood by any mere outward connection. When the truth really gets to a man, God speaks in his heart, an honest and good heart.

Children love illustrated Bible story books, and will spend hours familiarizing themselves with all the Bible characters by means of pictures. Our Sunday schools sometimes make an effective use of flannel-graph pictures in teaching Bible history. Some people have no more root in the truth than such an interest in pictures of heaven as when children look and say, "Well said; and what else? This is very pleasant; and what else?" You cannot show them or tell them fast enough about the New Jerusalem, its pearly gates, jasper walls and golden streets. "There we shall see the elders with their golden crowns; there we shall see the holy virgins with their golden harps; there we shall see men that by the world were cut in pieces, burnt in flames, eaten of beasts, drowned in the seas, for the love

they bear to the Lord of the place, all well, and clothed with immortality as with a garment." Pliable responds, "The hearing of this is enough to ravish one's heart." But if, instead, Christian had shown Pliable the biblical portraits of the natural man, or of the deceitful heart, or of the flesh present in the child of God, he would have made no sense out of any of them. Pliable experienced nothing of a desperately wicked heart, and would have taken it as ultra-pious rhetorical extreme for anyone to speak of possessing the vilest heart in the world that a sinner could have. Christian had the worst opinion of himself. Pliable had worries (he fell into the slough, too), but no such burden as Christian's.

Pliable was a stony-ground hearer. Such hearers are like a flat rock covered with a thin layer of dust upon which a seed falling, springs up, but soon withers away scorched, because (a) it had no deepness of earth, (b) it lacked moisture, (c) it had no root. Pliable at once receives the Word of God with joy (although not with the joy of Matt. 13:44). He for a while believes, but because he has no root in himself, when trials or persecution come because of the Word, he becomes offended and apostatizes. Most men today are Obstinate, not Pliable, but the Pliables, if they have any religion at all, are shallow, superficial, rootless. What they have that passes for religion is rooted, if at all, *outside* of themselves. "These have no root in themselves" (Mark 4:16f). Their roots are in the company of Christians, perhaps, or in the emotional pleas and "invitations" of a preacher, or in the influence of the crowds and masses visibly "accepting Christ," or in the sensationalism of mass evangelism, or in the sentimental lies sung by male and female vocalists. Or perhaps a Pliable will insist that his roots are in the best preaching, in Calvinistic preaching, and in the Bible. But still he has no root in himself. He may be rooted in these things, but they are not rooted in him.

Christian knew Pliable "from way back." He knew all his roots were external. Pliable was rooted in his church, not in his church as a part of the body of Christ, nor even in his church as flying under a Calvinistic flag, but as a religious institution which happens to provide the circle in which his social set moves. Pliable believes in his

church. He worships his church. Because family, relatives and friends are there, his church is dear to his heart. It is known, however, that something later happened that caused Pliable to become disappointed with his church, which he left to take up with another church that pleased him better for a time. But then he became disillusioned with that church, and so took the stand that to avoid the Slough of Despond (which Christian dreaded not nearly as much as the doom of his city) he would have no church at all. But don't say, then, that Pliable has no roots. He has many. He has family roots. He is deeply involved in family traditions. He loves house and home. He loves his earthly home as much as Christian loves his heavenly home. If his home were spoiled or lost, his religion would be spoiled or lost. For Pliable gave a desperate lunge or two and got out of the slough on that side nearest to his own house, while Christian struggled to that side of the slough farthest from his own house and toward the narrow gate. In another city, City of Nations (Rev. 16:10), there was another man of the same name. He was rooted in his business.

As long as business was thriving and prosperous, his religion was enthusiastic and strong.

There is no telling what sort of person Pliable would have been if he had met Obstinate alone, without the impressive presence of Christian. Since he met the godly man, he, too, would be godly, and "for a while believe." But when back with his old companions (were they not, since we are thinking Bunyan-style, Diabolonians?) he could be just as indifferent and hostile to the cause of God and truth as they. What about those students from godly families studying at P.-U. U., perhaps preparing for the ministry, with no personal religion nor root in themselves? Even if they show as much promise as Pliable did with his polite caution, "Don't revile," will not an atheistical book, or an anarchistical class, or a socialist professor, or merely a sophisticated sneer wither the roots of whatever trace of religion remains in them? As the local, converted tax collector recorded, having no root in himself, he endures for a while, but by and by he is offended (Matt. 13:21). Then Christian sees him no more.

FEATURE

PRYP IN MISSIONS

BEN WIGGER

Have you ever thought about our churches' mission program, and what part we as young people have in it? I think that it would be safe for me to say that Protestant Reformed young people have never been too active in our churches' mission program. In fact if you wanted to write a history of our efforts, there wouldn't be much to put down.

As Christians, we automatically have an interest in missions, not only in our own church, but in other churches as well. But as Christians in the Protestant Reformed churches, we have been condemned for not advocating a mission program. This was not true in the past nor is it true today. Although this does not mean that our mission program is above criticism.

It is true that we as a church never have been able to do much in the field of missions. It is also true that we could and would do much more than we are now

doing if we had the facilities. But it can also be said that we should be doing much more than we are now doing with our present facilities. No church can ever be satisfied that she has done enough in the area of missions, and our church is no exception to this.

So we have a problem. We are members of a church which has a limited amount of funds with which to carry out a mission program. This church is at the present time without the aid of a missionary and the general feeling among the members, both young and old, seems to be one of a lack of interest. With these factors seemingly against us and our own weakness of the flesh, it is not surprising that we have not done anything.

The time has come to do something about changing this lack of activity in our mission program. The opportunity in the mission field has never been greater. We have the

truth of God's Word and we should be doing more to promote that truth. This is a part of our calling which we should not overlook. This is what Christ tells us in John 9 verse 4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day ere the night cometh when no man can work."

But where does one begin, especially a young person who has not had much experience? The answer very simply is that each of us must begin the change with our own individual efforts. I do not mean that we must each go around with the idea that we are out to save souls. This is simply not something that a man can do. It is the Lord that works in the heart of the sinner and it is through the power of the Spirit that men are brought to salvation. But this does not give us an excuse, we are still responsible to let our light shine.

A very good place to begin to let your light shine would be in your own church. For an example how many times hasn't this happened in your church: Sometime during the service, on Sunday, you notice someone new in your church. As far as you know this person has never been in your church before, perhaps this is his first contact with the Protestant Reformed Churches. But after the service no one, including yourself, makes any effort to make the stranger feel welcome. This has got to give that person a very bad impression of us as Christians. If each of us would make an effort to say at least, "Good morning," to a stranger in our churches it would make quite an impression.

Another area in which our churches have not done enough work is its extension program. This is something that we as young people could look into. Perhaps your young people's society could look into the possibility of starting a Bible School in the summer. This program would need the approval of the consistory, but it is an idea

which has merit and one I feel should be tried.

There is one more area in which we as young people should become more active, and this is an increased contact with the young people of Jamaica. At the present time we have no contact with these believers and since we are the church of the future it is important that we develop a spirit of unity with these young people. This could be a very worthwhile experience for all involved. We could act as a Christian witness to these young people, and by writing letters to them and their writing to us, we would build each other up in the faith. If you are interested enough you could talk the possibility of writing to a young person in Jamaica over with your minister or an elder.

Now all these ideas may sound good to you, at least I would hope that they would. But these are only a very few of the possible things that we as young people can and should do. But there is no sense in coming up with a long list if we have no intention of going any further than that. An idea may look good on paper but if it doesn't get any further than that it really doesn't do anyone any good.

This is where we need the help of our Lord. Without Him we can not accomplish a thing. We are only means by which He can carry out His purpose. We can be sure that He will gather His church.

I Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Tonight when you pray to God ask Him for grace so that you and the rest of us young people can meet this challenge of missions with an increased desire to be as active as the Lord would want us to be.

On behalf of all the young people, we would like to thank the resigning Rev. Moore for his contributions as associate editor of **Beacon Lights** and wish him our Lord's blessing in his ministry.



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. LUBBERS

"LIVING AS POSSESSING NOTHING"

"... And they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." 1 CORINTHIANS 7:30b-31

There are two kinds of sinners in regard to this world's goods: money, possessions. It is the miser on the one hand and it is the spend-thrift on the other hand. They both sin in relation to God. They have a wrong practical life-and-world view. It is to forget that the fashion of this world is passing away, and, therefore, a setting of our affections upon the things below and not upon the things above where Christ is at the right hand of glory.

It is not an easy task, my young Christian friend, to buy as though not possessing. It is not for nought that the Psalmist says "when riches increase set not your affections upon them" (Psalm 62:10). And Agur's prayer may well be written on the posts of our door, "Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full and deny thee and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Prov. 30:8, 9).

Right now if you are of a family with limited means this does not bother you so much; but when we have parents with a little more than average, even in our affluent society, it is a different question. We sport that nice sports-car, we have our horses and our ponies, we compete in the horse-show and in the fairs. In a word: we set our heart on all these things. And we buy as though possessing, and forget that the fashion of this world passes away. All these things are merely the "scheme" of the earthly. It is the earthly, transitory form. It has no abiding and eternal value in itself. It belongs to the pride of life where we do a bit of boasting!

Yes, you like to have that new car so that you can go and court that girl, or perhaps simply have a date or two; a nice car may not add to the worth of your person, but it is a status-symbol. And so one, finally, "finds" a wife. And then he gets married. And now Paul writes to the Corinthians that this "wife" too belongs to

the fashion of this world. In the days of Noah men bought and sold, married and were given in marriage (Matt. 24:38, 39). Says Jesus, "For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away. . . ."

Living as possessing nothing!

For the sole possessor of all things is God. He is the Creator of all things, and He preserves all things as by His Almighty power. Such is the Lord's prerogative. Such is His ordinance and He never abdicated His throne. This means that the stewardship is ours only by God's bequest. He grants such stewardship to whom He wills, and He has but to remove His hand and all is taken away from unjust and unfaithful stewards. Such is the teaching of Jesus in Luke 16 in the parable of the unjust steward.

It is the conflict in the world today between Capitalism and Communism of who shall possess the world. Right now Communism is seriously challenging Capitalism as a way of life. The revolutionaries (Communism) in all their "fronts" will be "possessors" of the world without "buying" it; the Capitalist wills to "buy it" and then as *possessing* it. And many young people are swept along with the age of the world, with this nihilism! Meanwhile the child of God walks another road. His is the role of stewardship under God. He buys as not possessing it, but rather labors with his hands that he may have to give to the poor. In a word: he loves his neighbor as himself.

It ought to be clear that our young people do not have a calling to work in this scheme of "buying" or "not-buying" to possess this world's goods. Ours is another calling. It is to use whatever we have in the service of the Lord. To buy as not possessing. To constantly keep in mind that ours is the calling of stewardship; that we will have to give account to the Lord of our stewardship. But our stewardship is, that we do all in our power to relieve the need of those of the household of faith. Stewardship is serious business, and it requires sober reflection. Such sober reflection implies

that the brethren in Jamaica be helped, prospective students be given aid in Jamaica, the ministers be given some aid in paying for their traveling to preach the Word to God's children; our own schools be supported and paid for!

Good budgeting of funds too belongs to stewardship. We live in a day of "credit-buying." This means: buy today, and possibly possess tomorrow! The credit bureaus team with people who borrow money to go traveling. People work an entire year to pay for last year's vacation. And sometimes Young People overspend too in their planning on the Conventions, and pay tomorrow. That is not good stewardship. That is the sin of the spend-thrift! A good medicine in my youthful days to learning the value of a dollar was to earn one! When dollars come with the toil of honest sweat one does not dole them out easily. He becomes a budgeting man. He sits down and estimates the cost!

Yet, this man must beware that he does not think that miserliness is the same as stewardship. He will give liberally. He will remember the poor and needy, and will feel it an obligation of a good steward to contribute to the causes of church, school and state.

Living as possessing nothing!

This is only possible when we by God's grace ourselves are God's property. Only then can we confess that all things which we possess are God's property. Then we ask: Lord this money, which thou hast intrusted to my stewardship, how wouldst thou have me budget it and place it upon the altar of sanctification?

This is the narrow way and the straight gate which few find. Yes, seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.



THE ECSTASY OF LIFE: *The following was originally given as a speech during a singspiration in memorial to Ronald Yonkers. Because of the emotions which all of us felt upon that occasion, the speech is printed just as it was given.*

The Ecstasy of Life

ROSALYNN REITSMA

NOTE: *This reading was written before Ron's sudden passing to glory this week. I at first wished to discard the speech and write another, but upon reflection, I decided to use it as written, for who knows more about the ecstasy of life right now than Ron?*

A baby's hand: More beautiful than the roses' bud opening to the dawn. A baby's hand: The Church of God.

A child is born, a covenant child, and through his hands moves the Church.

A mystery is this child, with his flawless body, with his matchless heart, a mystery. In his mind may be the brilliance of a Hoeksema, the wisdom of a Calvin, the insight of a Luther. In his hands may be the artistry of a Rembrandt, the vision of a Greco, the skill of a Rubenstein.

In His hands may be the skills of a carpenter, the comprehension of a farmer, the talent of a salesman. In his mind may be the artistry of a gardener, the perseverance of a janitor, the ability of a plumber.

A mystery, this child. But one thing he is: He is the Church.

For some crisis yet unthought, he may have been created. For unknown terrors, for unimagined glories, he is the Church.

Be he brilliant leader, be he common pillar, he is the Church of tomorrow.

Yet, what is the force that moves him? What sustains him in life and makes him scoff at death? What is his ecstasy of life?

There was a time in the early mists of history that man was a perfection. He knew no sin. Then woman was tempted by a serpent. Woman, tempted, fell. Man, tempted, Humanity fell.

For this, the mothers of the Church (and of the world too) travail in their birthings. For this — and let no man deceive you! — a soul is in sin at conception. For this the Son of God went through the agonies of

deepest Hell on the accursed tree of the cross.

For this, this Church of God, this new life is sin. Each day of his life will be blotted with the stain of sin. There can never be perfection in anything he does. Where is his ecstasy of life?

This beautiful body, this flawless creation, will become scarred. It will sicken. The smooth skin will become spotted and wrinkled. The lovely eyes will dim, the tender hands will err and tremble. And he will die. His body will moulder and corrupt in the grave until it is dust. Where is his ecstasy of life?

But, wait, the Church was born in this child — a soul was created! A soul was created, and as the child uttered his first cry he was shadowed, not by sin alone, but by the cross! For every sin committed there was already atonement; for the sin of his being — his soul-sin there was atonement.

Through his hands moves the Church. He is the Church, and he is marching to glory!

Though his body will weaken and crumble, though he is very really mortal, still he is eternal. At this conception the temporal was touched by the heavenly, the temporary by the eternal, and never can he walk except toward glory. He is the Church of God the diadem of Christ. He is marching to heaven.

For this is the ecstasy of life: That in death more than birth, that in faith more than hope, that in reality more than dream, he is eternal. And, yes, that it is not mere eternity only, but glory.

This is the ecstasy of life: That though we walk in darkness we have light; though we are imperfect yet we have perfection;

though we are temporal, yet we have eternity.

A child is born, a covenant child, and in his hands he holds the Church.

His is the ecstasy of life — yours is the

ecstasy of life. You are the Church of God, and sinful you are. But you are marching — marching to glory. In death more than in life, this is your ecstasy of life.

NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

by JUDY HENSON

Miscellaneous

On July 11 the Young People's Federation Board Outing was held at North Shore Park. Supper was served at 6:30 and games followed.

On June 29 a Singspiration was held in Hope Church sponsored by the Federation Board.

Mrs. Jacob Mantel, the oldest member of the Doon congregation, celebrated her 85th birthday on June 9.

Hudsonville held its annual church picnic on Wednesday, June 25, in Inges Park.

Doon Park was the scene of the School Picnic of Doon School on June 4. A ballgame was held followed by a potluck lunch.

Marriages

Chet Haveman from Hudsonville and Sharon Prince from First on June 19.

On June 14, Ted Pipe and Jane Brummel from Southeast.

Births

Rev. and Mrs. Decker from Doon, a son, Timothy Robert.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Lenting from South Holland, a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Blankespoor of Doon, a daughter.

Membership

Doon Church received as members in full communion Mrs. Kenneth Post and Mrs. Jerry VanDenTop.

Mr. and Mrs. G. Vanden Berg have transferred from Hope to Holland.

Servicemen

The address of Jerry VanDenTop from Doon is:

Spec. 4 Jerry VanDenTop

N G 26819941

Co. B, 2nd Bn.

S O 1st Inf., 101st Airborne Div.

A.P.O. San Francisco, Cal. 96383

At present Jerry is in a combat zone in Vietnam.

Larry Koole from Hope returned home for a few weeks furlough before leaving for Vietnam. Don Jonker also was home on furlough before leaving for duty at the Panama.



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