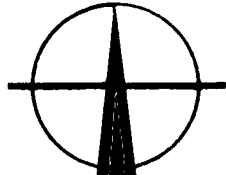


# BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT  
REFORMED YOUTH*



November 1969

**HARVEST OF LIFE**  
CALVIN REITSMA

**UNION MEMBERSHIP**  
REV. G. VAN BAREN

**HELP**  
REV. ROBT. C. HARBACH



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- From the Pastor's Study

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## HARVEST OF LIFE

*"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest . . . shall not cease."* Gen. 8:22

Now is the time of harvest. Dried corn stalks stand row upon row at forlorn attention in dying fields. Heaps of brilliant orange pumpkins and vari-colored gourds are mounded, ready for market.

By day the city streets are shrouded in the pungent blue-grey smoke of burning leaves, while nighttime brings the chill illumination of the fabled harvest moon.

It is harvesttime. It is also thanksgiving time; for now, with the promise of seedtime fulfilled, grateful hearts turn again to a bountiful Lord. The seed planted has grown and borne fruit. Food has been gathered in for the winter. We shall not go hungry. The harvest has given us a promise of security through the wind-swept, barren months ahead.

Yet the promise of the dying earth is not the desolation of winter, but the quickening of spring. The earth dies in a hallelujah-blaze of glory. The rapidly aging trees spread oriental carpets of color on the earth's floor. Sumac studs the diadem of the hills with rubies in a setting of maple gold, while the valleys are gowned in iridescence webbed with black lace.

The earth is dying in glory, the glory of praise. It is a picture of death, and a promise of life.

The promise of life. This is how the death of a Christian always is: The hallelujah chorus of life. For death is not a destruction, it is not the end, but it is, rather, a gentle passing from life unto Life. We do not die as those desolated ones, mired in the clay of eternal destruction, we do not die as though this were the end of life. No, the Christian dies in the promise of life, in the hope of glory. It is for this promise he was born, for this hope that he has lived. Death, for the Christian, is the

beginning of life, not the end. It is the beginning of glory, for the veil is torn from his eyes, and he beholds . . . Life! It is though the colors of the earth's autumn were washed over and over until the brilliance were gone. Thus is the earth's glory compared to heaven's!

Still, if the Christian must die in the glory of the promise, how much more must he walk in that glory. To walk in the knowledge of death is not to walk under the constant gloom of night's shadow, but to walk in the noon-glare of reality. And this reality is the promise of glory eternal. It is to walk with an awareness of one's destiny, with a responsibility to one's self. Today, when so many are searching for some nebulous entity called "Identity," the Child of God knows who he is, why he is and whereunto he must go. It is though he were given a road map of life which says: This is why you are here, this is where you are going, and this is your reward.

Death is never an easy experience. The bonds which hold us to this earth are not easily broken, nor should they be, for, until the last step is made across Jordan, we are of the earth, earthy. Still, the death of a Christian is a chorus of praise, for we are *crossing*, not stopping. It is as though we blinked an eye and were in glory.

A leaf falls rhythmically from an aging tree. Gently it wends its way earthward, silently joining its brothers below. It is the last leaf, and the tree is bare. Bitter winds sweep past the tree, bending it with their fury. Branches break, and fall into the drifts of bitter snow. But the winds stop, and the sun shines. Rain falls, and the barren black bark hints of yellow. Death has been overcome with life. It is the season of quickening.

C.R.

## Letters to the Editor

6th. August, 1969

Dear Mr. Reitsma

For several years now I have been receiving appreciatively BEACON LIGHTS. I was interested to read of the proposal to introduce hymns in addition to the psalms. I would like to know how this question was resolved.

The Free Church of Scotland, to which I belong, is characterized by strict adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith and maintenance of the traditional form of Scottish Presbyterian worship, the congregation standing for prayer and sitting for praise.

The Scots Metrical Psalter 1650 and the Gaelic Metrical Psalter 1690-1783 are exclusively used for praise. Services are in either the English or the Gaelic languages.

Among the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and here in Australia the denominations which have abandoned the exclusive use of the psalms have also eventually departed from Reformed doctrine: hence my present enquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. J. LOCKER CLUGSTON

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

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We wish to thank our Oaklawn Church for its gift of \$17.47.



# FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. VAN BAREN

## UNION MEMBERSHIP

EPHESIANS 6:5 — *"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. . . ."*

A young man stops by to chat with his minister. He has finished his schooling; now he goes forth to find a job. Several places where he would like to work require membership in the union. What is he to do? Good jobs are hard to come by. What objections does the church have against union membership?

That young man's situation is not unique. Today, and repeatedly, one faces the alter-

native of submitting to the union or losing one's job. That problem especially faces the Christian youth. What must he do?

Our churches are opposed to union membership — in fact, we regard this as incompatible with church membership. Why? We ought to understand what our objections really are. We do NOT object to union membership because we are opposed to organizations of employees. It is not wrong

to belong to organizations; nor is it wrong to have an employees' organization or union. We do NOT object to union membership because they, en masse, would quit their jobs if higher wages were not paid. Nor do we object that workers may not seek fair wages and proper working conditions. We do NOT object to union membership because we favor employers or countenance any of their selfish or evil practices.

I would suggest for your consideration several reasons why we believe that union membership and church membership are incompatible.

First, unions, as these operate in our land, force its members to walk in violation of the fifth commandment. The fifth commandment requires proper obedience to those in authority. An employee voluntarily places himself under the authority of the employer for a specified time for specified wages. Under these arrangements, the employee has the right to quit—even in conjunction with other employees. But the union seeks to dictate to the employer what shall be the conditions of employment—and if necessary will use force to compel the employer to submit to the demands. Children may reason with parents. Citizens may make overtures to government. Employees may make requests of employers. But in no instance may those under authority use force to compel those in authority to bow before their demands. To do so is to walk in violation of the fifth commandment. The union uses the strike as a club to compel the employer to submit. Its membership, therefore, violates the fifth commandment.

Secondly, unions, as these operate within our land, walk in violation of the eighth commandment: "Thou shalt not steal." By means of the strike, the union is in the position in which it can shut down the factories of the employer. The union members themselves will not work—but also, they will not allow others to work in their place. These take effective control over the possessions of another. They will cause the employer to go bankrupt, or at least will cause him to lose considerable income—unless and until he submits to the demands made by the union. This is stealing that which belongs to another. The union may no more use the strike with its threat of physical or material harm to

take what it desires from another, than I can use the gun with its threat of physical or material harm to take something from another. This is a violation of the eighth commandment.

Thirdly, unions, as these presently operate, are obviously walking contrary to the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet." Now one can indeed covet in many different ways. Nor does one have to belong to a union to covet. But the fact remains, the union exists chiefly because of the covetousness of man. It sets its heart on the abundance of the employer. The union is quick to show that the employer earns too much. The union wants to share that abundance—often even when it has not earned it. Matt. 6:33 is violated, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Fourthly, the union member assumes a certain corporate responsibility for the actions and goals of the union. One may claim that belonging to the union, for him, involves only paying of his dues. He does not attend union meetings; he will not picket; he will not participate in any violence. But such a person deceives himself. To assume willingly ties with such a godless union, does involve one in a measure of guilt for all its actions. Our calling is to walk in separation.

In the fifth place, for a Christian to belong to the union represents a plain violation of II Cor. 6:14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" In joining a union, the Christian is not joining a "neutral" organization. A union is not, and can not be, neutral.

In the sixth place, in some instances membership in a union implies a promise to submit to the decisions of that union—even when these are in conflict with other organizations such as the church. Yet no child of God could make such promise to worldly unions.

You, young people, are going to face the problem of unionism more and more. There will be the temptation of leaving our churches and joining such a church which does allow its members to belong to the union. The Christian Reformed Church allows this.

Their synodical decisions allow membership ONLY in "neutral" unions. But the term "neutral" has been so stretched that now it covers every existing union. What will you do when it comes to a choice between church and job?

Recent civil rights legislation forbids discrimination because of race or of creed. If that means anything, it should mean that no one ought to lose his job because of the decisions of the church on union membership. But I doubt if such legislation will ever be used to assist us. The church rather

stands alone. It need not look to the world for assistance or mercy. It has its citizenship in a higher and better country. It must be separate in this world of sin and evil. And our God, Who is our Guide even unto death, will provide. He has done this in the past; He will do this in the future.

For a more detailed study of this question, I would strongly urge you to read (if you have not already) the articles of the Rev. J. A. Heys in recent issues of the *Standard Bearer*.



# CRITIQUE

## TEACHING AMERICAN LITERATURE ANTITHETICALLY

AGATHA LUBBERS

American literature is one of the required courses for all students who will graduate from high school. U.S. students, who want to know and should know the history of their country, must study the literature of their country. Dr. H. Zylstra said in his *Testament of Vision*:

If you really want to get at the spirit of an age and the soul of a time you can hardly do better than to consult the literature of that time and that age. In the novels and stories and poems and plays of a period you have a good indication of what, deep down, that period was about. I am thinking now, of course, of the real literature, the valid and undissimulating literature. I am not thinking of the quantities of drug store fiction, sure-fire Broadway hits, "slick" magazine stories, or of the tons of synthetic entertainment and pastime books in which people in our time seem determined to hide from themselves and their problems.

It is true that many of the students who must satisfy the English requirement to graduate from high school do not enjoy reading the literature included in the American literature course. Many students have to learn that reading is work; reading "good"

literature is very hard work. Many students wish to read only that literature which is pleasant; or read that literature which excites their fancy and their lust; or only read that literature which is geared in sentence structure and vocabulary for the person with a sixth grade reading ability.

One morning in October I walked into my American literature classroom and asked my students why they were studying American literature. I certainly did not want the usual answer, "I am taking this course because it is required so that I can graduate." In order to provoke the students to think about the most basic issue which would cause them to give a meaningful, Scripturally-oriented answer, I asked them another question. "Why do you do anything in this sin-cursed world?" The existentialist would say, "I do it because I exist." What is the Christian student going to say? Will the Christian say, "I do it to make this world a better place in which to live." Will the Christian say, "I do it because I am curious about the world in which I live." I didn't receive an answer from every student to this question.

A few days later I was approached by a minister. He was not from the Protestant Reformed Church. When I told him that I teach literature in Covenant Christian High School, he asked me: "Can you teach the Antithesis in your literature courses?" That was quite a question. I believe it deserves an answer just as certainly as the question to my students deserves an answer. I am convinced every teacher should ask himself the question asked by this minister. How am I making my course a living testimony to the truth that I am Christ's and He is mine? How do I testify in my instruction that I have died unto this world and live unto God?

Have you ever heard the statement: "We have all things in common with the world except grace." That has a familiar Reformed, specifically Protestant Reformed sound doesn't it! That's the way our courses should be taught in our high school and the grade schools.

We have in common with the world the literature of the country in which we live. We read the same newspapers, we read the same short stories, we read the same poetry, we read the same novels, we look at the same art work. How are we different? How do we live antithetically?

We have been changed! We have died unto the world and we live with Christ. We are new creatures in Christ. We are new creatures who are reading, playing, working, and studying in the midst of this world of sin and error. Because we are new creatures we do all things differently. Grace has made all the difference. Formally there is no difference; the change is a spiritual ethical change and this will affect our basic attitude toward and interpretation of life, and products of the men of this age.

We believe the students at Covenant Christian High School are new creatures in Christ. They are such because of the work of God. These new creatures are required to study the literature of America so that they may graduate from Covenant Christian High School. To have studied American literature means that one knows something about the craft of the writers of American literature. Permit me to illustrate. These students must be able to identify such poetic qualities as alliteration, consonance, assonance, and onomatopoeia. Students of Amer-

ican literature must also know the philosophic bias of the writers in America. The writers were Calvinists, Transcendentalists, Deists, Pantheists, Romanticists, Realists, or Naturalists. Just because we study the craft of literature and the philosophy of the writers, are we teaching antithetically? Certainly not! This the student can do in any public high school which commits itself in its instructional program to a sound system of teaching the facts. We have the bare facts in common with the world.

That question of antithetical teaching still bothers me. Doesn't it bother you? It bothers me because I have to be able to demonstrate what it means to teach antithetically. It is easy to say what antithetical teaching is; its harder to show how it is done. I will try.

Not long ago we were studying the poetry of that implied pantheist, William Cullen Bryant. What a student of nature he was and how he loved "Nature"! That can be dangerous, you know. He deified "Nature" to the extent that "Nature" with its "everlasting smile" became his god. In his later life he may have believed in a being or "god" that transcended the creature but really he worshipped the creature and not the Creator. (Cf. Romans 1.) He made of creeping and four-footed beasts his god. This is idolatry. That's terrible! That's heathenism and paganism!

To teach antithetically is to teach so that covenant youth are told the truth, bathed in the truth. However, covenant youth in their interpretation of life must also begin to use the Scriptures and the Reformed confessions to evaluate life and the products of men. This is serious, hard work! Because of its seriousness, covenant youth must be given an opportunity to manifest that they are not of this world but belong to the new creaturehood with Christ at the head of this new creaturehood. They must be able to show in their attitude toward and in their interpretation of life that they belong to the party of the living God.

One of Bryant's poems is entitled "Thanatopsis." This meditation on death was written by Bryant when he was nineteen years old. After the class had uncovered the meaning and intent of William Cullen Bryant these juniors (eleventh graders) at Covenant Christian High were asked to

read Psalm 16 and Psalm 49. What a contrast! Both Bryant and the Psalmist exhibit tremendous poetic skill, but the message of "Thanatopsis" and the message of the Scriptures stand antithetically opposed to each other. These sixteen-year-old students were told to evaluate the poem of Bryant in terms of the Psalms and all other pertinent passages of Scripture. I quote several products of these American literature students. I am humbly proud of our Covenant youth.

• • • •

William Cullen Bryant in his poem "Thanatopsis" speaks about his fear of death and the comfort he found in the hold of "Nature." That comfort was the thought that he would share his destiny with all men in that one great sepulcher of "Nature," the earth. After reading Psalm 49 I realize that the peace after death for which Bryant sought was really corruption. The Bible teaches that a man that does not understand is like the beasts that perish. Death will feed upon him. If Bryant's confidence had been in the salvation of his body and soul through Christ, he would have had true peace. The ransomed of the Lord will never see corruption because God redeems

body and soul of the upright from the power of the grave.

• • • • by Priscilla Bol

"But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave" (Psalm 49:15) is a great comfort to God's children. In "Thanatopsis" Bryant has no comfort. He believes that every man dies since it is natural, but he sees it as a passage into the "silent halls of death." As God's children we say with David in the Psalms, "Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil," because we believe God is with us.

Bryant says, "To mix forever with the elements." This contradicts Psalm 16:10: "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (grave)."

Bryant's attitude is wrong. We see the grave as a passage from death unto life while he sees it as a passage from life unto death or "eternal sleep."

by Kathy Koole

God grant that our students may continue to study antithetically, that our teachers may teach antithetically, and that living the antithesis our lives may be pacans of praise to God.

• • • •

Note: I am sorry that I have not continued my series in the field of history. I have not had time to work on this series. I will try to continue this series in my next article.

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## BRIDGING THE GAP

MARY KREGEL

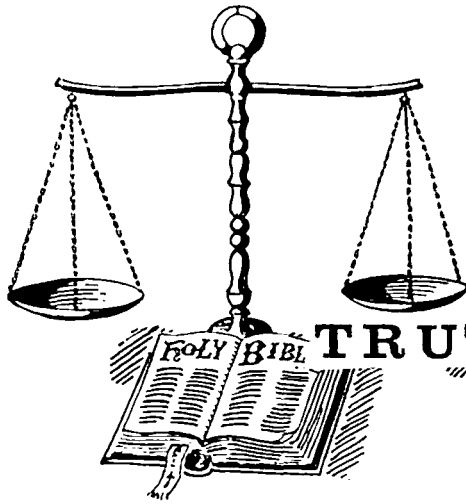
There is much talk nowadays about a "generation gap" between the young people of today and their parents, or the "establishment," as the older generation is more frequently called. Many psychologists and social workers blame the problems of today's youth on the difficulty or lack of communication between parent and child. Problems with drugs, robberies, and juvenile delinquency in general, they say, can be traced to a lack of understanding between the two age groups.

Is there truly a "gap" of this nature in the world? If so, is this also evidenced in the church and in our own Protestant Reformed circles? The BEACON LIGHTS staff decided to put these questions to you, our readers, in the form of a new rubric, entitled *Bridging the Gap*. The goal of this new rubric would be better communication be-

tween parents and children in our churches. First, however, we must answer the question, Does this gap actually exist in our circles? We would like both adults and teenagers to write their opinions to the BEACON LIGHTS staff, and these will be printed in the next issues. Then, if it is the concensus of opinion that such a gap exists, we will proceed to discuss pertinent problems between parents and teenagers caused by the generation gap. These problems would be suggested by our readers.

Therefore, the responsibility of the success of this new rubric rests upon YOUR shoulders. We would strongly urge all of you to contribute. Since it is in the middle teenage years where many problems apparently exist, we would especially enjoy hearing from high school students and their parents. May we hear from YOU?





## TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. ROBT. C. HARBACH

### HELP

*"A man came to him whose name was Help."*

— THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

*"Thou art my Help and my Deliverer, O Lord."*

— DAVID

Like the question that came to Elijah when he was in the exact same spot, "What doest thou hear?" were the words that came to Christian while wallowing and foundering on the far edge of the Slough of Despond. They were uttered by the man called Help. Humiliatingly the answer came, "I fell in here." "But why did you not look for the steps?" Then he gave him a hand, pulled him out, set him on sound ground and sent him on The Way again. Steps there were, dotting the way across the slough. But almost no one who went to the Celestial City arrived there without falling and wallowing a bit in that slough. Those steps are often missed, even by those with surest tread. They are the promises of forgiveness and God's ready acceptance of the forgiven ones through faith in Christ. Help is one of the servants of Prince Emmanuel. Evangelist was one of those servants. Goodwill is another; Interpreter another, Greatheart also, and many more. The apostle tells us that "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, after that . . . helps" (1 Cor. 12:28). "There are diversities of gifts," and "helps" among them. No one need be nominated, elected or ordained to be a help. For helps are to be found of

every age, sex and class in the church. "I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, who is a deaconess of the church which is at Cenchrea . . . for she hath been a helper of many, and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 16:1-3). Help is a name and a gift which belongs to many children of the King. The first occurrence of the word in Scripture is in connection with the first woman, whom the Lord made a help, not a helpmeet, nor a helpmate (slang), but a help, a companion meet, i.e., fit, suitable for man. That man is blessed who has in his wife a help suitable for him. That young man will be blessed who seeks his future wife from God and prays that she may bear woman's first divine name.

That notorious Slough of Despond is a Dead Sea of sin, constantly fed from the sewers of the City of Destruction and of the Town of Depravity, and from the filth and defilements brought up at self-examination before every communion. "This miry slough," explained Mr. Help, "is such a place as cannot be mended." It is the depression where "the scum and filth" which continually oozes from conviction of sin, "and therefore it is called the Slough of

Despond, for still, as the sinner is awakened by his lost condition, there arise in his soul many fears and doubts and discouraging apprehensions, all which flow together and settle in this place." This accounts for the badness of the ground. Such is the allegory. But a clearer explanation is to be found in the autobiography, *Grace Abounding*, by a man who not only met with that slough in his path, but had a Slough of Despond which he always carried about with him in his own mind. "But my original and inward pollution," he recorded in his autobiography, "that, *that* was my plague and affliction, *that* I saw at a dreadful rate, always putting forth itself within me! that I had the guilt of — to amazement! By reason of that, I was more loathsome in mine own eyes than a toad, and I thought I was so in God's eyes too. Sin and corruption, I said, would as naturally bubble out of my heart, as water would bubble out of a fountain. I thought now that every one had a better heart than I had. I could have changed hearts with anybody. I thought none but the devil himself could equal . . . me for inward wickedness and pollution of mind. I fell, therefore, at the sight of my own vileness, deeply into despair; for I concluded that this condition I was in could not stand with a state of grace. Sure, thought I, I am forsaken of God. Sure I am given up to the devil and to a reprobate mind . . . and now I was sorry that God had made me, for I feared I was a reprobate." Thus the Slough of Despond was the man's own personal experience. As he wrote in his preface to *The Holy War*:

*Let no man, then, count me a fable maker,  
Nor make my name and credit a partaker  
Of their derision: what is here in view,  
Of mine own knowledge I dare say is true.*

Not only Christian, but his wife, Christiana, knew that slough. It was much worse a place when she went through it. The reason was that though the King's surveyors and laborers did all they could to make the place good, the project was sabotaged by infiltrators pretending to be the King's laborers who added dirt and dung instead of stones, so that no amount of drainage or fill ever worked. Here it was that the beautiful young woman, Mercy, helped Christiana with her boys to get staggeringly over the slough.

*Eight*

Then there was chicken-hearted Mr. Fearing, a good man, for the root of the matter was in him, and he had given up his favorite, Canadian, brand of cigarettes, *Craven*. Still, he was always shaking, shrinking, wringing his hands and afraid he would never get to where he desired to go. He was not like Mr. Sloth who never ventured out of bed because, as he would say, "there's a lion in the streets." But rather, although Mr. Fearing felt there *was* a lion behind every bush, he pressed on, albeit exclaiming, "I'll never make it." Still, as we said, he had the root of the matter in him. That puts him in the right church and the right pew, doesn't it? This recommendation is true, coming from none other than one who knew him best, Old Honest. When he came to that slough, he lay by it for about a month, making no attempt to enter and cross, even when offered many a helping hand. Then, too, *he* would not attempt the way of the steps: they made him feel like a trespasser. He actually lay there that long? That's what we said, and how he came to do so is interesting. He fell. It's true. He fell and just lay where he fell roaring in fear. Someone tossed a straw in his way; he stumbled over it and — you guessed it — flat on his face! That's the story of his life. He also made it rough for other pilgrim's, for his horrified yelling made their skin crawl as they made it through the slough. But then one sunshiny morning when slough-tide was low and the steps dry and sharply outlined all across, Mr. Fearing got over, no one knows how, and he himself could hardly believe it.

Now of course Pliable and Christian were soon both in the bog. They wallowed there for a time, but the one man sank deeper because of the burden on his back, while the other, having no such burden, scrambled out on that side closest to his own house. His only worry was, If I ever "get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave Country alone for me!" You see, it is not enough to be pliable. One must also be firm, assiduous, persevering.

Pliable came to a rather humiliating end. He got safely enough to his house, and his neighbors came to visit him. Some called him a wise man for turning back. The lord mayor of the city had warned him in the first place, "Ye shall not go very far away!"

BEACON LIGHTS

Some called him a fool for jeopardizing himself with Christian. Others mocked him, calling him coward. "Here," they said, "is a man who began, but fizzled out for a few difficulties." But Pliable was with the "in-crowd" once and wanted back "in" again. So he "sat sneaking among them." Gradually, he accumulated more confidence, until he was again one of them. Only one thing more remained to complete the penance imposed for full acceptance among them. He had criticized Obstinate for giving Christian the back. Now he does the same, and exchanging tales with his sophisticated cronies, they all together, began to deride Christian behind his back. In this way, Pliable paid for acceptance once more with God-despising

companions by joining their reviling, and despising the people of God whom he had forsaken. Pliable's end is more to be dreaded than any Slough of Despond.

It was not the fault of Evangelist that any of these mentioned fell into the slough. Yet some preachers are not only always in the slough themselves, but continually push others in, while they never help them out. Better the preacher like Help who enables the pilgrim to sing, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

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## CONTRIBUTION

# WHY?

PETER VANDER SCHAAF

When one examines the trouble in the nation's campuses, the trouble with draft dodgers, hippies, yuppies, etc., one can only feel disgust for these rebellious youth. They ask themselves, "Why must things be this way?" Because they do not like the way things are, they decide to change them. This is not so bad in itself, but the way they try to change things is wrong.

We, as Christian youth, are also coming to the age when we must ask ourselves, "Why must things be this way?" When we were younger, we were told by our elders, "Because I say they must be this way," or simply, "Because they must be this way." These answers were good enough then, but now we must know why we must do some things and may not do others. We must know why we believe the way we do. As Christian young people coming to the age of discretion we must ask ourselves these questions. We must wonder "Why?" in

order that we can give a good answer when asked by the world, "Why don't you do the things that we do?" and "Why do you believe the way you do?"

When the Protestant Reformed young person looks at the world around him, he will see, that by the world's standards, he has been brought up in a strict environment. For this, he may be thankful. He may thank God that he was brought up to believe the Word of God as it is taught in the Apostles' Creed, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordt. With this kind of bringing up, the Christian, Protestant Reformed young person can answer, with the grace of God, the questions, "Why?" with the answers, "I believe the way I do because I have faith given me by God," and, "I do the things I do because I have been redeemed and regenerated. I can no longer desire to walk in sin as I did before."

# Christianity Enters the Space Age

DAN KOERNER

Space travel is a going thing. It's what's happening today. With the recent Apollo expeditions, man is about ready to explore the moon. After the moon, sooner or later the planets will be reached.

I truly believe that man will travel to other planets. This seems to be contrary to the expectations of most adult Reformed people to whom I have talked. There are several different opinions, but the general consensus seems to be that God will either strike men dead at the moment that they touch down on another planet, or blast them out of space on the way. I believe that people who think this way are deceiving themselves.

When God created all things, he placed man on the earth and gave him the command we call the cultural mandate: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). It is this cultural mandate that has driven man to settle and explore vast unknown regions of the earth. It is this mandate which has driven man to learn so much about creation. When the whole earth has been explored, the cultural mandate does not cease to command. No, man is driven on to penetrate that immense new frontier, space.

God created the Universe to glorify Himself. He placed man in a special place in that Universe, a unique place. Only man of all the creatures was able to understand the glory of God in it all. Now, of course, in natural depraved man, this understanding has been perverted to a mere wondering

at the amazing amount of order "Nature" gives to the Universe; but the Christian through Christ still sees God's glory. I think that as we travel out into space we shall become more and more aware of God's greatness. God's glory will be revealed to us unendingly in new and fascinating ways.

This brings us to a very important question. What will be the effect of the exploration of space upon Christianity? Perhaps it is too soon to tell for sure. Undoubtedly, there will be much godlessness, if we can judge from the history of other frontiers. Undoubtedly, also, there will be "missionaries" who travel out to "convert" the godless. Eventually, though, I can conceive that there will be true Christian churches somewhere out in space.

Perhaps the reader has noticed that until now I have not considered one very crucial point. Suppose God in His Divine Providence ends the universe before man has the ability to travel far into space? I don't know when God will destroy this earth, nor does any other human being. If the destruction does take place before man can travel to other planets, well and good. God has His eternal purpose, and nothing that man does will change it. However, since man does not know God's purpose and will in everything, he must continue to obey God's cultural mandate until the end. The Christian is not exempt from this. Hence, I write this paper. To me, the prospects for the exploration of space and the uncovering of new wonders of God's creation are very, very exciting.

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## NEWS

### from, for, and about our churches

KAREN LUBBERS

#### Miscellaneous

A singspiration was held Friday, October 10, at our Loveland church. Refreshments were served after the program.

Rev. Lubbers from our Southwest church has left us to preach the gospel in Jamaica for 3-5 months.

A Family Nite was held on October 17 at Adams School. Supper was served and there were many activities for all.

A singspiration, sponsored by the young people, was held in our Doon church on October 19. John Kalsbeek led the singing.

On October 10 and 11 a Fall Retreat was held at Camp Roger for the Grand Rapids area young people. It was a very spiritually rewarding experience.

A Federation Board sponsored singspiration was held September 28 in the Hope Church and Mr. Harry Langerak led the song service.

On October 29 a Reformation Day Rally was held in our First Church in Grand Rapids. Prof. Hoeksema spoke on "The Word of God and the Reformation."

### **Births**

Mr. and Mrs. Max Moore from Loveland, a son.

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Hoogendorn from Doon, a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Ken Post from Doon, a son.

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Van Den Top, from Doon, a son.

Mr. and Mrs. Andy Brummel from Hope, a daughter.

Prof. and Mrs. H. Hanko, a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Dave Hop from Hope, a son.

Mr. and Mrs. Jon Huisken from Hope, a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Ondersma from Hope, a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Kuiper from Hope, a son.

### **Membership**

Profession of faith was made by Mr. Art Van Baren and Mr. Ray Poortinga of South Holland.

Mrs. H. Kuiper and Hulda Kuiper have transferred from Loveland to Southwest.

Mr. and Mrs. Vern Huber and four baptized children have transferred from Hope to Hudsonville.

Mr. and Mrs. John Kalsbeek and their one baptized child have transferred from South Holland to Doon.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hanko and their six baptized children have transferred from Doon to Hope.

Miss DaVonna Miersma has transferred her baptismal papers to Redlands from Doon.

### **Marriage**

Mr. Leon Griess from Loveland and Miss Vicki Clark on Sept. 18.

Miss Karen Reitsma and Mr. Gary Bylsma, both from first on August 29.

### **Birthdays**

Mrs. T. Kievit from Hope celebrated her 80th birthday on Sept. 26.

Mrs. Richard Newhouse from Hope celebrated her 82nd birthday on October 19.

### **Servicemen**

The address of Richard Huizinga from Hope is:

Pvt. Richard Huizinga 380-54-2614  
Co. C 16th B.N. 4 Ing. B.B.E.  
Fort Knox, Kentucky 40121

The address of Larry Koole from Hope is:

Pfc. Larry Koole 380-52-3836  
Co. C. 1/20 11th L.I.B.  
A.P.O. San Francisco, California 96217

The address of George Bodbyl from Hudsonville is:

Pvt. George Bodbyl 386-52-9238  
HHC No. 1  
Fort Stewart, Georgia 31313

### **Welcome Home:**

Jerry Van Den Top has been discharged from the Army and is now home in Doon from Vietnam.

Robert Blankespoor from Doon has also been discharged from the Army and is now home from Fort Carson, Colorado.

### **Our Pastors**

Rev. R. Decker has accepted the call extended to him from South Holland and declined the call to Hull.



MR. & MRS. E. B. MALONEY, JR.,  
491 GLENVIEW DRIVE, 1951  
GLENVIEW, ILLINOIS 60425

