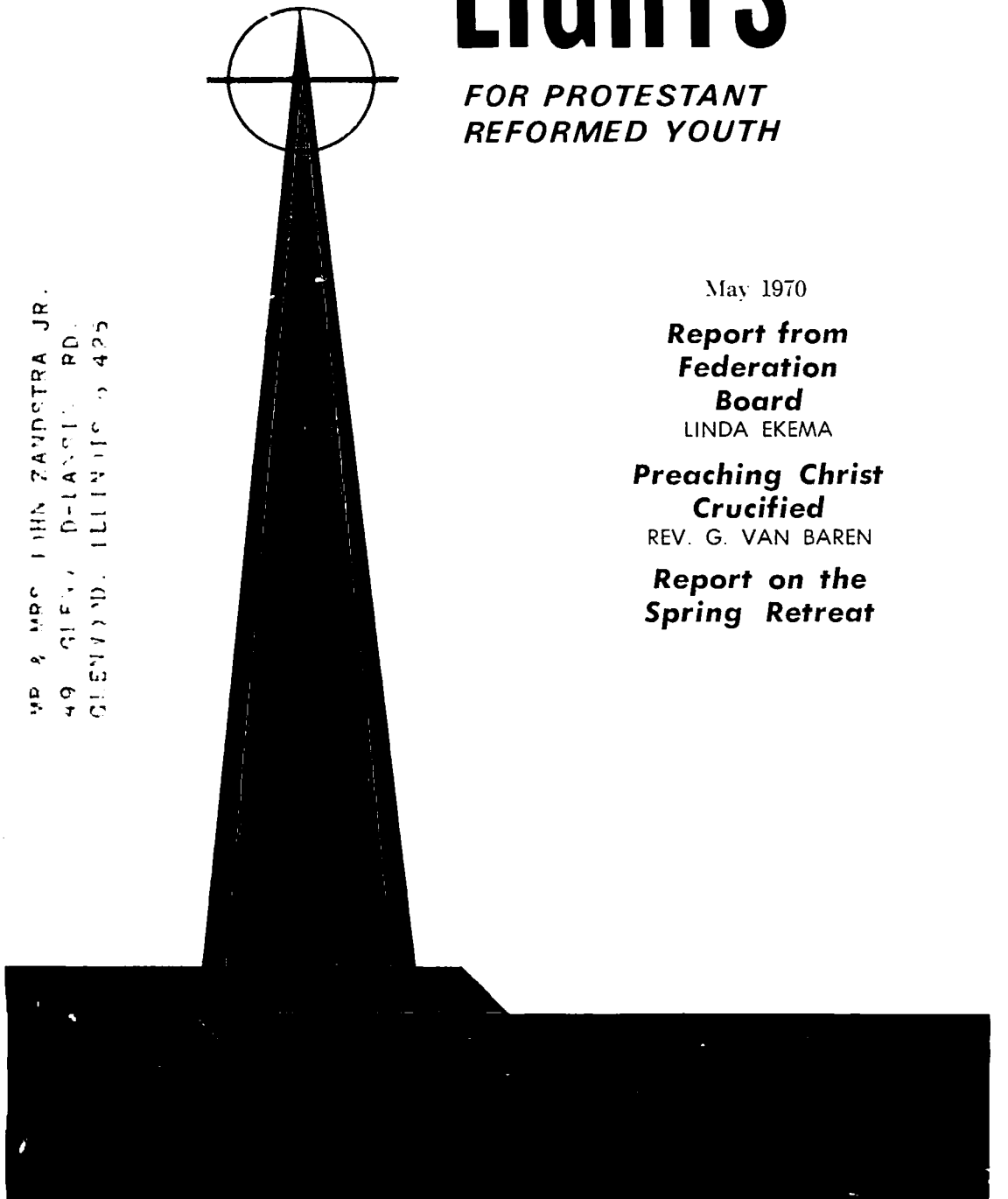
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



May 1970

Report from Federation Board
LINDA EKEMA

Preaching Christ Crucified
REV. G. VAN BAREN

Report on the Spring Retreat

BEACON LIGHTS

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In This Issue

EDITORIAL 1
One Man — Calvin Reitsma
THE ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE FEDERATION BOARD 2
Linda Ekema
FEATURES
There is Room for the Arts in the Church — Randy Meyer 3
A Christian Attitude Toward Organ Transplantation and Willing our Bodies for Scientific Research 4
R. L. Kreuzer, M.D.
CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS 6
Inescapable Facts — Jim Lanting
THE GENERATION GAP 7
Ruth Ann Marang
CRITIQUE 8
Arnold J. Toynbee: An Introduction, Analysis and Evaluation (2) — Agatha Lubbers
TRUTH vs. ERROR 10
Patience — Rev. Robt. C. Harbach
FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY 13
Preaching Christ Crucified — Rev. G. Van Baren
SPRING BANQUET IN IOWA 15
SPRING RETREAT 17
Ben Wigger
BOOK REVIEW 17
Three Letters from Prison — Lois Hoeksema
NEWS, FROM, FOR, AND ABOUT OUR CHURCHES 18
Karen Lubbers

Editorial

ONE MAN

In the distance can be seen a hazily verdant belt following the path of an invisible water course, but here there is nothing but desert. The mellow golds and indistinct browns of rock and earth meld into a muddy blur under the ceaseless heat of a malevolent sun. Barren outcropings of rock erupt carelessly over the land, as though a playful child had tossed his blocks about. Only in the shadow of the rocks, and in the deepest part of the ravines is there any hint of escape from the heat of afternoon.

So it is that here a man walks, intent on an invisible purpose. To say that the man is an individual of vague qualities is an understatement. He is of average height, with a long, sandy, uncombed, vermin-filled beard. His body is totally covered, to all appearances perpetually covered, with the grime of the desert; and it would be difficult indeed to say if he had ever bathed. The man is preceded and followed by the offensive odor of unwashed body and rotting teeth, mingled with the stench of lice-filled skins with which he is negligently clothed.

Such is the man, and so he walks, muttering almost constantly to himself, with periodic ejaculations (whether of surprise, anger, or joy cannot be said, for his expression is one of outward detachment). His purpose is quite obviously the water course in the distance, for at periodic intervals he raises his eyes, straining for sight of the distant verdure. That his journey is vital to him is also obvious, for he journeys with only brief intervals of rest, and with no stopping for food or water through the chill of desert night.

Arriving finally at the water's edge in the early hours of the morning, he is gradually surrounded by a crowd of the curious. Some — the poor, the forsaken, the despised, the lepers — look at him with a sense of camaraderie, mingled with awe, for he has joined their ranks voluntarily. Others — the well-dressed, the "correct," the socially prominent — look at him with a sense of amused tolerance, laughing one to another deprecatingly, as if to say, "I'm only here to see the curiosity!" as indeed they are. There is yet a third class of people: "The poor in spirit," some physically poor and beaten, some physically wealthy and successful; all searching for the Messiah.

The crowd waits expectantly for the nazarene — for such he is — to speak. He does not disappoint them. "O, generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Many in the crowd look angrily one toward the other, with faces sanguinely suffused in anger. "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance." Many in the crowd leave in disgust, they came not here for rebuke, not they, who were used to being praised for their good deeds. But as many as left, stayed; their hearts truly touched by the hand of the Lord. And staying, they saw the Messiah. Seeing, they believed, unto life everlasting.

This filthy Nazarene was John the Baptist. He was but one man, coming out of the wilderness with the two-edged sword of the Lord. He was the herald of a new age: the age of the Messiah. Many listened, many repented, many were saved. Yet many could not see past the lice crawling in his beard, many could not understand through the odor surrounding his body. Many hearts would not be touched by a creature so lowly.

If John the Baptist came out of the desert today, could you see the hand of God through the filth of His servant? Would your heart be touched? Can you, right now, see the Child of God in those of His servants less physically appealing — be that by nature or by life condition? Remember John the Baptist when you are repulsed by a fellow Christian. Remember the Pharisees, whose well-bred noses could not tolerate the smell of a servant of God.

It is not an easy task for us to see a person's soul. Our senses corrupt the judgment of our hearts, crowding out reality. To see with the eyes of a Christian, is to have a sense of truth beyond factual reality.

Before you judge your fellow Christian, stop, and look at his soul. God is there.

C.R.

THE ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE FEDERATION BOARD

The Federation Board began its new season with a few rearrangements and additions: Randy Meyer replaced Ron Van Overloop as President; Ken Kuiper became Vice-President for Randy Meyer; Linda Ekema replaced Sue Swart Van Overloop as Assistant Secretary; Jim Van Overloop became Treasurer in place of Tim Heemstra; Dave Lanting became Assistant Treasurer for Ken Kuiper; and Mr. Nort Brower became our Youth Co-ordinator.

Since the beginning of the season, the Board has appointed new members to the Beacon Lights Staff: Bern Wigger has become the Managing Editor in place of Ben Wigger; Tim Heemstra has replaced Randy Meyer as Chairman of the Public Relations Staff; and Donna Van Uffelen has become a Contributing Editor to Critique in place of Shirley Gritters.

The 1969 Convention in Redlands was certainly a dream come true! And every member of every society had to work hard, to become involved, to make that dream become reality. The Board is especially interested in emphasizing this same enthusiasm, and eagerness, and involvement within all our societies this year.

Many changes in the Constitution of our Young People's Societies were approved by the Delegate Board at the Redlands Convention. The Federation Board is now in the process of having a new booklet printed, containing the revised Constitution of our societies and the Constitution of the Scholarship Fund.

Young People's Retreats have become a recent tradition in our church, and the Fall Retreat proved to be as successful as those in the past. On October 10 one hundred young people invaded Camp Roger with eagerness and enthusiasm. Besides enjoying periods of recreation, singing, and eating, everyone participated in three interesting discussion groups. Before each discussion a different speaker gave a brief introduction to the topic. Mr. Jim Slopsema spoke on the "Involvement of Young People in Nation-wide Mission Work;" Mr. Ed Lotterman introduced the topic of "Racial Integration in Our Church;" and Mr. Wayne Beckering spoke on "Drama." The chaperones, Mr. and Mrs. Rod Miersma and Mr. and Mrs. Ron Van Overloop, also joined in the discussions and activities.

Our first All-Sports Night was held in Calvin Christian's gym on December 16. About seventy young people came and enjoyed participating in games of basketball, volleyball, ping pong, and hotdog eating.

Unity Christian's gym was the scene of the unforgettable Double-header Basketball Game on February 3. The many fans who braved the cold, snowy night witnessed two exciting games as the men from Hope, Holland, and Hudsonville defeated the team from First, Southeast, and Southwest, followed by the loss of the Adams Street Athletic Association to the men from Hope, Holland, and Hudsonville. (Watch for a rematch in the near future!)

The All-Choir Program sponsored by the Beacon Lights Public Relations Staff was held in First Church on March 8. The participating choirs were the Hope Heralds, the Hope Choral Society, the Hudsonville Choral Society, and the Covenant Christian Choir. The program was a wonderful experience for the audience as well as for those who sang, and reminded us again of the joy we receive by singing together the praises of our God.

Various individual societies again sponsored special combined society meetings this year. First Jr. Society sponsored the Christmas Mass Meeting at First Church, and Southeast Society sponsored the Easter Mass Meeting at First Church. These mass meetings give our young people the opportunity to meet together and to hear special speakers and special numbers from other societies.

At this writing, we are especially looking forward to three coming events. Our Spring Retreat is scheduled for April 10 and 11 at Camp Roger. Two discussion topics are planned and will again be introduced by different speakers. Mr. Marvin Kamps will introduce the question, "Is the Beacon Lights Serving Its Purpose?"; and Mr. Rod Miersma will speak on "Changing Liturgy in Our Church." It looks to be another happy occasion of Christian fellowship for all our young people.

Our annual Spring Banquet is being planned for the night of May 1 at the Mayflower Congregational Church. The theme of

the banquet will be "Long Before Creation," and Mr. Ron Van Overloop is scheduled to be the speaker.

And, finally, we are all looking forward to the 1970 Convention in Hudsonville on August 19-24. The host society is busy making plans centered around its theme of "Strangers in a Strange Land." This coming convention is a common goal of all our societies. Let's all keep working together with enthusiasm, eagerness, and involvement!

The Federation Board
LINDA EKEMA, *Assistant Secretary*

FEATURES

There Is Room for the Arts in the Church

RANDY MEYER

The arts. Just what are the arts and how do they apply to our every day living habits? The arts include a large number of skills and efforts. The arts include painting, drawing or sculpture – these are the fine arts because they are creative. Then there are the other arts such as are found in academic learning. These can be things such as literature, music and mathematics. Playwriting and acting are also classified many times within the arts.

I believe as a Christian, that the church certainly has room for the arts. The arts, after all, are given to us by God, just as all the things of this earth are given to us. We have an obligation to use the arts as they are presented to us by God. The arts are presented to us in quite a variety of ways, as we know. In our everyday walk in life we are saturated by the arts. We are looking at one facet of the arts when we look at a building, or a car or an airplane or even a piece of clothing. Everything man-made about us took a great deal of thinking, figuring and designing to be produced. The pictures we see in books and magazines are also part of the arts. If we admire a great painting or a sculpture in a museum, we are admiring the result of God-given talents. Our radios and television sets overflow with the abundance of the productions of the arts. Even when we see a crayon-scrawled paper of a first grader we are looking at part of the arts.

But we must remember that we ourselves do not create the arts, nor are they evolved by man's deep thought and efforts. God gives talent, and God also gives the result and realization of that talent.

If, for a moment, we go back in time to the period before the flood, we can see the development of the arts by sinful man. Jubal and Tubalcain being sons of Lamech were both very talented and skilful men. Jubal was one of the first men to develop more fully the art of music using the primitive harp and organ. He was a musician, and a developer of one facet of the fine arts. Tubalcain, on the other hand, was a technical man, working with iron and brass. The Bible says he was an instructor in this field, which is also an area of the arts. Throughout history, then, the arts have been more and more expanded and enlarged. As various men contribute their talents and discoveries to the arts they have come to be what they are today. This, of course, is no accident. God, in His decree for man, both reprobate and saved, has brought civilization, including the arts, to this point.

The real question, as we see it then, is the relationship between the arts and the church. Can we as church accept the arts, and following from that, indulge in them? We as Christians first of all live in the world. We have jobs and responsibilities, and these jobs inevitably include part of the arts. From a practical point of view, then, we must engage in generally working with the arts as a means of support.

Since we have already established that we can and should involve ourselves generally in the arts, what can be said about the fine arts more specifically? As mentioned, they are things such as drawing, painting, writing, music, acting, and can include studies such as mathematics. I think we must remember again one important fact – that these things have been given to us by God. God has given us talents and skills to be used to the good of His kingdom. Many of us have talents in one or more of the fine arts listed above, or in some other

fine art. Positively, I believe that we as Christians must use whatever talents we have in everyday life to God's glory. If we have a talent for music or writing, for example, I think we should explore these fields and contribute whatever we can to these areas. We should be willing to explore these fields through education, experience or whatever means we have at our disposal.

Sometimes it has been said that too close a pursuit of the fine arts brings a Christian into an unhealthy contact with the world. It is true that many times in order to study in a certain field a person comes to see all facets of his art, and this always includes the "bad" sides. However, in order to fully study any certain subject, all sides are and should be studied in depth. The fine arts are no exception, because they are really just as important as any other field.

In summation, then, I think it can be said that there certainly is room for the arts, both general and fine arts, in the church. We as Christians must also exercise our talents and skills in the areas of the arts as God has given us the opportunities. Christ Himself has given us the command to use our talents to His Kingdom's good. As members of the Church of Christ, we also must be involved in the arts as much as our abilities allow us as we strive to honor God's name.

A Christian Attitude Toward Organ Transplantation and Willing Our Bodies for Scientific Research

R. L. KREUZER, M.D.

Although to the best of my knowledge the first human whole organ transplant was performed over thirty years ago, it is only in the last decade, in particular in the last half decade, that tremendous advances have been made in this field of medical endeavor. We have been reading about kidney transplants for so long that it has become, in a sense, "old hat." When the first human heart transplant was performed a few years ago, however, this rather bold maneuver caused no little commotion in the medical community and in the general public alike. I suppose this results from the well-engrained notion that the heart is truly a central and vital organ. When the heart ceases totally to function, the whole body dies within minutes unless circulation is artificially maintained. Although the initial fervor for heart transplantation has abated somewhat for the time being, largely because of the rejection problem, intense research continues. In the coming years organ transplantation will become more and more common and will include more and more organs. Therefore the topic of the attitude of the Christian toward organ transplantation and, on the surface seemingly unrelated but nevertheless involving the same basic principles, toward the willing of our bodies for scientific research is a timely one.

When we consider organ transplantation we must do so both from the viewpoint of a recipient and from that of a donor. We must ask, "Could I, a Christian, accept an organ from another individual, living or dead?" We must also ask, "May I will that, after I die, various organs be removed from my body to be transplanted into another individual?" Regarding the willing of our bodies for scientific research and, I might add, for medical education, for this is the use to which many cadavers are put, we must ask whether we as Christians are permitted before God to do this. I believe you can sense that there is a basic principle involved both in willing that organs from our bodies be made available for transplantation and in willing our bodies for scientific research and medical education. In both cases we are willing that our bodies or, more specifically, our corpses be used in such a way that living individuals physically benefit from them either directly or indirectly.

In all fairness I believe that physicians involved in organ transplantation will have to admit that there is still a large element of research and experimentation involved in their work. Yes, the surgical techniques have been worked out quite precisely. The techniques for each organ were well developed in work on animals before they were performed on humans. Thus the mechanics of transplantation present little problem.

The problem is one of rejection of transplanted organs and tissues. Tissues from one individual when incorporated surgically into the body of another are recognized by the immune mechanisms of the body of the recipient as being "foreign," just as are invasions of the body by bacteria or viruses. The natural response of the body to such invasion is to form antibodies against the foreign material which then attack that material to destroy it. There are currently two methods being utilized to prevent or at least minimize rejection. The first is to attempt to match the tissues of donor and recipient as closely as possible. Techniques for "tissue typing" are being developed, but thus far research in this area has been quite disappointing. The second method is to suppress medically the immune mechanisms of the recipient's body. The problem here is that immunosuppression is not selective. That is, in suppressing the immune mechanisms to foreign tissues the immune protective response to invasion by disease-causing microorganisms is also inhibited. Thus it is that many organ transplant recipients die not from rejection of that organ but from severe infection, primarily bacterial and fungal. The rejection phenomenon points up the unique genetic constitution of the individual.

In answer to the above posed questions, I would deal first of all with willing that our bodies be used for medical purposes after we die. As is true of so many situations we face in our daily living, Scripture gives us no specific dictums in this matter. Let us consider, however, our physical earthly bodies and what God has told us about them in His Word. We read in Genesis 2:7 that "God formed man of the dust of the ground." We read further that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." The human body then has its origin through the creative work of God in the "dust of the ground." Man did not become "a living soul" until God breathed into his nostrils "the breath of life." This tells me that the body is the dwelling place of man, his "earthly abode" as it has been called. The essence of man is his soul. Without the soul there is no life. What happens at death is that "the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). It is common knowledge, is it not, that after death our bodies decay and ultimately crumble into dust. Oh, yes, we embalm them and place them in caskets in burial vaults, but the end result is the same. But the Christian knows that the grave is not the ultimate end of man. We know that in the Day of our Lord we shall be bodily resurrected (Ezekiel 37; Job 19). In our flesh we shall see God. It is primarily because of this knowledge, I assume, that we carefully bury our dead. Not that we believe our bodies must necessarily be kept protected and preserved until the Day of Judgment. All dead will be raised wherever their remains lie (Rev. 20), no matter how far scattered component parts may be. We do nevertheless believe our bodies should be treated with respect.

What can we conclude from the above discussion? First of all, I would say that we must not feel that our bodies must necessarily be buried intact and all in one place. If this were so, a Christian might never consent to an autopsy on a loved one, since in this procedure certain organs and tissues are removed for microscopic study and sometimes for preservation for educational purposes. I believe we may consent to the performance of autopsies when there is good reason for their being done. Autopsy findings have contributed much to medical knowledge, which knowledge has benefited Christian and non-Christian alike. Granting then that giving authorization for a physician to perform an autopsy on a Christian deceased loved one is permissible, why would it not also be permissible to, before death, will our bodies for medical uses – organ and tissue removal for transplantation, medical education (this involves primarily cadaver dissection in anatomy courses) and research? I believe it is – if for some reason one should feel so inclined. As a matter for practical consideration, I believe you should know that as a rule medical centers have no difficulty filling their requirements for cadavers – in fact, there is often a surplus. I would also add that you may be assured that human cadavers are treated with proper respect by medical personnel.

I would also add a note of admonition concerning organ transplantation. We

should never will our own organs or the organs of a deceased loved one for transplantation with the notion that in so doing a small part of us or our loved one "lives on." This may sound absurd, as indeed it is. Nevertheless, this is the ridiculous plea that certain transplant surgeons use when they seek to convince individuals of the merit of granting authorization for organ removal for transplantation. I am certain no intelligent Christian would fall for such a line. On the positive ledger, however, it *is* conceivable that a transplant recipient might, in the period that is added to his life by a successful organ transplant, come to a saving knowledge of Christ. If this should occur, it would certainly not be because the sinner was thereby given a "second chance" to "accept Christ," but solely because it was the will of God from all eternity to save that elect sinner at that point in time. God does work in wondrous ways. This would, for me at least, be one valid consideration in reaching a decision regarding organ donation.

As far as the first question we posed is concerned, namely, whether it is permissible for the Christian to accept an organ from another individual, living or dead, I would say the following. First, about the only organ being transplanted from living donors today is the kidney. The reason for this is that each normal individual has two functioning kidneys and is not adversely affected if one of them is removed. Not so with the heart and liver and, for technical reasons, the lung. All of these organs are, on the other hand, being transplanted from deceased individuals. As I see it, the overwhelming consideration for the Christian contemplating the above proposition is whether a reasonable possibility exists that in receiving the transplanted organ a prolongation of his earthly pilgrimage will be gained in which he can function well enough to render profitable service to his Creator and Redeemer. Currently that possibility varies with the organ involved. It is subject to considerable further variation as research continues.

There may be those who will argue that medical science is seeking through organ transplantation to usurp the power of God to determine the time of death of an individual. This is, of course, impossible. Moreover, the same argument could be applied to the use of medications which are literally life-saving or life-sustaining. How true it is that "for everything there is a season . . . a time to be born, and a time to die" (Eccl. 3:1-2) — and "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it . . ." (Eccl. 3:14). Our sovereign God is on the throne. Comforting thought. Praise His Holy Name.

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS

INESCAPABLE FACTS

JIM LANTING

The Mai Lai incident of last spring and recent atrocities and mass murders along with the recent assassinations in the U.S. have elicited a kind of national self-examination. Our society is now considered "sick" and people wonder how representative of the American people are Oswald and Lt. Calley.

Illustrative of this is a recent essay in *Time* magazine entitled "On Evil: the Inescapable Fact" (*Time*, Dec. 5, 1969). The author asserts that America as a people have too readily ignored the ubiquitous and haunting presence of evil in the world. The U.S. lacks a "tragic sense of life." Moreover, it troubles the author how the "basically pessimistic theology" of Puritanism could turn into the underpinning of a cavalier and optimistic society. Part of the answer, he contends, lies in the fact that the Puritan ethos depicted not only the fall of man but also the reality of an Elect of God, and America has since then assumed that it was God's Chosen, "almost to the point of Pelagianism." Americans think that American intentions are always virtuous, that America never started or lost a war, and that America is always on the side of justice and liberty; in short, on God's side.

The particular heresy of Americans, the

essay continues, is that Americans see themselves as "potential saints rather than real-life sinners." The Puritan ethos was a stimulus to striving and hard work; no wonder, the essayist says, it gave away to its secular descendent, pragmatism, the rational humanism articulated by Dewey and William James. Pragmatism does not deny the existance of evil, but optimistically assumes that it exists in institutions rather than men and can therefore be legislated away. Thus, the American ethos — part pragmatic, part Puritan, part Pelagian — has had the effect of masking the popular consciousness of evil. In conclusion, the essay states that only the nation that has faced up to its own failings and acknowledged its capacities for evil has any real claim for greatness.

Much can be said, I think, for the author's sagacity and astute analysis of the contemporary American ethos. Rational humanism and Pelagianism have saturated the American way of life, and for that matter, that of the whole Western World. Evil is always defined as concrete problems that can be dissected and analyzed and can be done away with if the will is there to do so. And above all, evil is thought to be exorcised by education. The author comments on all this with surprising insight. (I say surprising because the essay appears ostensibly to be Christianly oriented.)

But on the other hand, if the reader is impressed with the documentation of the fact that evil is inescapable, he is commensurately frustrated with the author's failure to say what that evil really is, and more importantly, what to do about it. The essayist tragically resigns himself to the fact that evil is inescapable and unreconcilable — and seems to think that the mere acknowledgement of evil some how dissolves the dilemma. Moreover, in his abortive attempt to talk about evil, the essayist quotes Rousseau, Jean Genet, Dostoversky, and W. H. Auden.

Confronted with this attempt to explicate evil, the Christian shakes his head knowingly. The faint hope that at last men are beginning to examine themselves with honesty and candor is destroyed by their obvious rejection of any attempt at a Biblical analysis and solution. A Christian doesn't need a Mai Lai to see what man is; but so much more importantly, he knows what comfort and escape are. He realizes that the diagnosis of a disease is never a remedy.

THE GENERATION GAP

RUTH ANN MARING

The generation gap is a term which originated in the world and has been adopted by the church. It refers to a gap which supposedly exists between parents and children or between the older generation (Establishment) and youth. The general meaning of generation gap is the lack of communication or understanding between the two parties involved. When this definition is given, however, the immediate question that comes to mind is, what is meant by the lack of communication or understanding?

The youth today say that their parents and the entire Establishment do not understand the problems they face as teenagers. They cannot discuss these problems with their parents because they are too old-fashioned and close-minded. The real problem is that they do not use God as the basis for their discussion or problems and therefore they cannot find solutions. As a result they revolt and lose all respect for authority.

I think that as Christian young people we should be able to discuss our problems with our parents. I am sure that they will be happy to try to help us.

When we discuss our problems with our parents several things should be kept in mind. On the one hand, parents should recognize the fact that we are not little children anymore and we should be allowed

to express our opinions. When they tell us we may not do something we should have the right to ask why and receive an answer. On the other hand we must recognize our parents as our elders, placed in authority by God and therefore we must obey and respect them.

If this type of communication is exercised in our Christian family circles I do not think a generation gap can exist.

AGATHA LUBBERS

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE: AN INTRODUCTION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION

(2)

In the previous article on this topic we began to discuss the rise and breakdown of civilizations. This is an exceedingly important aspect of the philosophy of history developed by Toynbee and it is my intention to develop this aspect of Toynbee's philosophy more thoroughly before going on to other elements of the theory under consideration.

The Rise of Civilizations

Civilizations emerge, according to Toynbee, out of a primitive society. This emergence is caused by "challenge and response," and is initiated by a creative minority which responds to an initial challenge and a series of successive challenges. The nature of these challenges can be natural, physical, or human. The success of the creative minority in calling forth responses depends upon the ability of the creative minority to call forth the willing cooperation of the uncreative majority. The challenges must not be too strong but they must be able to call forth a momentum which is strong enough to carry the society from one achievement to a fresh struggle and from the solution of one problem to the confrontation of another.

Toynbee relies heavily on the *elan vital* of Henri Bergson° at this point in *A Study of History* to account for repetitive successful responses to a series of meaningful challenges. *Elan vital* works through what Toynbee calls a series of overbalances. One overbalance sets up the necessary conditions for the next overbalance. This system has in it the potentiality for an "infinite process." Growth and decay are the underlying assumptions of this approach to the interpretation of history.

The dominant role is played by the creative minority who are a very small part of the total members of any given society. Their influence is not dependent upon their numerical strength but is dependent upon the mystical relationship the members achieve over the passive majority. The individuals in the creative minority create civilizations out of primitive societies; creative minority members are "Superhuman Mystics." Creative personalities transfigure their fellow-men into fellow creatures by recreating them in their own image. "Transfiguration" is the process which is the essence of the rise of civilizations out of primitive societies.

Because the uncreative majority is left far behind and does not understand nor appreciate the work of the creative minority Toynbee must find a solution to bridge the gap between the uncreative and the creative. The solution is *mimesis*. It is social drill which leads the majority to the acquisition of certain social assets, aptitudes, emotions, or ideas. The uncreative majority

imitates the creative minority, mimesis is a short cut in the development of a civilization in any society.

If the creative minority can cope with the challenges that confront it, the civilization will continue to develop. The creative minority must secure the willing allegiance of the uncreative majority to offer successful responses. When the allegiance disappears the civilization is in serious danger of breakdown.

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The Breakdown of Civilizations

Volumes 4-10 of *A Study of History* by Toynbee are devoted to the breakdown of civilizations. The breakdown of civilizations is more obvious than the growth of civilizations. Toynbee includes twenty-six civilizations in his study. Sixteen of these twenty-six are dead and buried. The ten survivors are: (1) our own Western society, (2) the main body of orthodox Christendom in the Near East, (3) Russian orthodoxy, (4) Islamic society, (5) Hindu society, (6) the main body of Far Eastern society in China, (7) the offshoot in Japan of Far Eastern society, (8) the arrested civilization of the Eskimos, (10) the arrested civilization of the Nomads. According to Toynbee the Ploynesians and the Nomads are in the last agonies; seven of the remaining eight are in varying degrees of annihiliation or assimilation by our own Western society. Six of the seven show signs of having broken down and of having entered into a state of disintergration. The Eskimo civilization was arrested in its infancy.

According to Toynbee one of the most conspicuous marks of the breakdown of a civilization is a phenomenon which takes place in the last stage of decline and fall. This phenomenon is the forcible unification of a civilization into a universal state.

All living civilizations but the Western civilization have broken down internally and are in a process of disintegration. Western civilization has not entered upon the era of a universal state but we can undoubtedly conclude that the "time of troubles" has descended upon the West.

Why do civilizations disintegrate? Is this disintegration an *inevitable* aspect of the historical process? Are their forces at work in human affairs which bring about this disintegration?

The major factors in the disintegration of civilizations is the loss of creative power in the creative minority. This seems to be an inescapable and inevitable disintegration. It seems that all civilizations must run down. This brings Toynbee uncomfortably close to the determinism which he explicitly wishes to avoid.

Toynbee expressly rejects the idea of determinism. In Volume 4 of *A Study of History* Toynbee explores and explains the problem of philosophical determinism. Toynbee rejects the determinism of forces beyond our control; this determinism is also rejected by modern physical science in its attitude toward the miraculous. Toynbee also rejects the determinism of Spengler and the biologists who say that every society has a predestined time span. Toynbee refuses to accept the determinism which asserts the *inevitable process* of the deterioration of the qualities of individuals which causes a civilization to break down. Toynbee sees the cyclical view of history as unacceptable; he cannot adopt the idea of the endless repetition of the same pattern.

Toynbee does not believe that Western civilization is doomed by necessity to join the majority of disintegrated and fallen civilizations. He says:

> "Though sixteen civilizations may have perished already to our knowledge, and nine others may now be at the point of death, we – the twenty-sixth – are not compelled to the riddle of fate to the blind arbitrament of statistics."
>
> (*Somervell*, I, p. 254)

Greg Singer paraphrases and describes the attitude of Toynbee as follows:

> The Divine Spark of creative power is still alive in Western society – if we have grace to kindle it into a flame, the stars in their courses cannot defeat our efforts to attain the goal of human endeavor." (Singer, p. 21.)

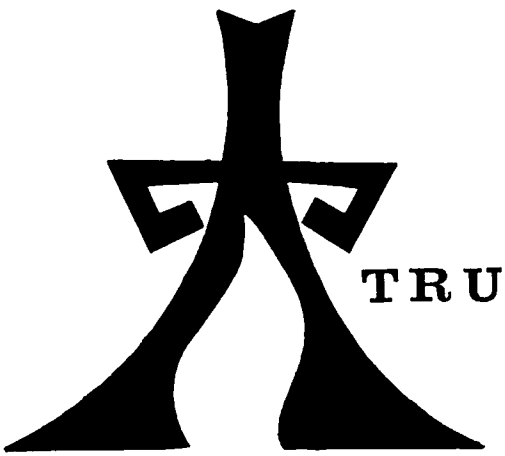
Although Toynbee explicitly denies determinism he may espouse an implicit kind of determinism which becomes responsible for the breakdown of civilizations. Toynbee's reliance on the Bergsonian *elan vital* which calls forth a series of overbalances is ultimately no less deterministic than those forms of determinism which are most obviously deterministic.

Having discussed determinism and having denied its validity in Volume 4 Toynbee examines in Volumes 5-10 of *A Study of*

History the possible explanations he will accept for the disintegration and breakdown of civilizations. Toynbee rejects cosmic forces beyond human manipulation, as the ultimate reasons for the breakdown of civilizations. He insists that civilizations breakdown because of factors for which man is responsible or can control. The factors which cause the breakdown of civilizations are essentially human factors, according to Toynbee, and this opens the door to a multiplicity of possible causes for this important phenomenon in history.

(to be continued)

°Bergson was a French philosopher and winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1927, and was one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century.



TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. ROBT. C. HARBACH

Patience

Ye have need of Patience. Follow after Patience. Run with Patience.

In that little room of Interpreter's house there sat *two* little children, each on his own chair, the eldest, Passion, and the other, Patience. Passion was the one who would have his good things now in this world. Patience was willing to have his evil things now and wait for the world to come to have his good things. These children you see as twins, but about as much alike as Esau and Jacob. They come from the same natural origin, the same parent-stock. Their names come from the same Latin root, *patior, suffer.* Passion can be both active and passive suffering. Think of the suffering of Christ. Patience is also passive and active in suffering. "Patience is the passive *endurance* of the evils to which man is liable." The word has "an active force denoting uncomplaining steadiness in doing."

Rarely one comes across a really good dictionary. In the Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary, 1913 edition, there is a rare work, indeed, of somewhat encyclopedic proportions. How do you acquire such a treasure? The easiest way, I suppose, is to inherit it from grand- or great grandfather's generation. In our volume of this dictionary there is a special page describing it as a special copy dedicated to a certain member of our "family tree." In this volume there is also this smiling inscription: "If you don't know where you can find *sympathy*, turn to page 2,445." Patience, says this dictionary, is "the exercise of unfaltering *endurance* and perseverance in pursuit of a desired end." For example, "patience in study is constancy and perseverance at the task." The meaning is then pointedly illustrated by a quotation from none other than Darwin's

Descent of Man, "He may be said to possess genius – for genius has been declared by a great authority to be patience, and patience, in this sense, means *unflinching*, undaunted *perseverance*." Then, as though the lexicographer had read Bunyan, he writes, "Patience is the ability to await events without perturbation or discontent."

It is said that Samson was the strongest man that ever lived, that Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived, that Moses was the meekest man that ever lived, that Abraham was the most faithful man that ever lived, and that Job was the most patient man that ever lived. But what does this mean? The Apostle James reminds us, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job." But he was not thinking of patience according to the common, colloquial usage of the term. For there were a number of times when Job in that sense was not patient. James really uses two different words, both translated *patience*. He says, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of (the) suffering affliction (what is bad), and of (the) *patience* (longsuffering). Behold, we count them happy who *endure*. Ye have heard of the *patience* (endurance) of Job" (Jas. 5:10-11). James, urging patience, spoke of the patience of prophets, and of the endurance of Job. Patience in verse 10 for the most part refers to persons, and means longsuffering. In verse 11 patience refers to a person's attitude toward unfavorable circumstances, and means endurance, with the idea, literally, of ability to stay under longer. The university *Phys. Ed.* swimming instructor has his pupils swim prescribed lengths of the pool under water, or he has them to learn to sink, down to the 12-foot bottom. These pupils know something of what it means "to stay under." So, carrying over the idea from the physical to the spiritual, enduring means staying under, and so enduring the ordeal of life. Job is not so particularly noted for his patience in the sense of longsuffering, for there were times when he made rash statements and spoke ill-advisedly. But he did endure; he held out under the most trying circumstances. The precious truth that we find in the book bearing his name is the patience of *God* and the *endurance* of Job! You could say that the relation between the two is that of cause and effect. The patience of God will result in the endurance of man. The divine preservation of the saints is the cause, the perfect, perpetual and personal perseverance of the saints, the effect. Peter said, "the longsuffering (patience) of our Lord is salvation" (II Peter 3:15).

Patience, then, in the light of the Scripture examined, is not so much a kind sufference of others, as a discipline of self. Patience is usually taken to mean the bearing and forebearing of family strifes, imperfections and annoyances, or the gracious toleration of the slow, stupid and less gifted; whereas, it is a kind of self-discipline. "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32). There you have a man of patience, endurance. He knows how to be patient with *himself*, how to endure. It was not that Patience had to be able to stand the gloating scorn of Passion that made him Patience. It was that he was able to "stay under" the evil things. Some of those evil things he found in himself. Many of those evil things in himself he found in themselves overwhelming enough. But he was in the business of ruling his own spirit. He was not only flesh. He was spirit. John 3:6. Galatians 5:17. True, he saw in his flesh no good thing. But in his spirit he saw no bad thing (I John 3:9). With the mere natural man, there is nothing but the flesh – sinful flesh. There is no battle between flesh and spirit, there is no conflict between the old man and the renewed man, there is no antithesis between a wicked and perverse generation and regeneration. The natural man, catching a sight of that horror that is himself, and, unable to endure either himself or the things he has brought upon himself, oftentimes rushes into the jaws of death. Plunging into a Christless eternity is no escape from self. Hell is hell because of unending remorse. But there are moral weaklings, moral cowards and moral suicides who throw overboard the faith, the hope, the patience and the endurance of a Christian. Why do they do this? It is because they are evil and have lived an evil life. They never learned to overcome evil with good. They never knew how to pray, "deliver us from evil," not knowing that in part that means, "deliver us from

ourselves," help us rule our own spirits. Look around and see how many enemies there are to endure. But look within. Can you endure the enemy within? What enemy is so bad, so treacherous, as that within ourselves? Enduring the enemy does not mean tolerating him. It means outlasting the enemy, persevering beyond the enemy. He who endures to the end shall be saved.

With James "we count them happy who endure." Patience is one of those we must count happy. Not so, Passion. In the end he had nothing but rags. Patience, like Christian, is to be seen, when we first meet him, a man clothed in rags. With his rags and his burden he runs from the town of Depravity with his fingers in his ears crying, Life! life! eternal life! That's the way he kept on, enduring, to the heavenly city which hath foundations. Therefore his end is not in rags, but in that robe which he received and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Ye have need of endurance. Follow after endurance. Run with endurance. Look! we count them blest who endure! Who endure what? Temptation! that is, trial! Do we agree with James, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation" (trial)? Why is this man blest? "because when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them who love Him." Endure what? Chastening! "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons." Your persevering endurance is over against chastisement. What is chastisement? It is our Father's painful disciplining of us, and so painful it may be called scourging. "Despise not the chastening of the Lord" is the negative way of saying the positive, "appreciate the Lord's chastening," which you cannot do if you desire to be rid of the chastisement. Therefore, endure chastening. It is a proof-mark of your sonship. Enduring what? Afflictions! "Watch! endure afflictions!" (II Tim. 4:5), that is, as in the James passage, suffer the bad. The meaning is that you endure the hand of God upon you — very really, and strikingly enough — you learn to be patient with God. As Job put it, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?" Endure what? "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Tim. 2:3). The expression here, "endure hardness," literally means "suffer the bad together with" the good. This is enduring the hand of God upon you. This is the endurance and the faith of the saints. This is keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Endure what? "Sound doctrine!" (4:3). This is the day "when they will not stand up for healthy teaching," but they rather swallow and swill teaching which is the opposite — diseased, deformed, sick. Here the word endure means "will not have up for themselves," that is, as to sound, healthy teaching, they will not have it up in the place of authority, in office, in the pulpit, in the ministry. They are church-killers, and *they* are sick! Quite a bit to endure, then, in this biblical sense of "patience"! Anything else? Yes, endure all things! "Love endures all things." That is, it takes love to have patience. That is the secret of Patience — love! Love sustains every attack of the enemy, bears up under every stormy wave, holds out against all sufferings and persecutions. That's what made Patience sit there so "very quiet" and calmly upright — love!

Extra copies of this and other issues are available from the editor at 30¢ a copy while supply lasts.

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. VAN BAREN

"PREACHING CHRIST CRUCIFIED"

1 Cor. 1:23-24 – *"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."*

There is that strong desire today to change the traditional forms of worship to God. Nor is change as such wrong. However, attempts are made to change the very means which God has given to strengthen and comfort His saints. Many would enliven the preaching of the Word by adding variety to it. Others would replace it by that which is more entertaining: movies, drama, or something similar. Much of this drive for innovations strikes a responsive chord in the heart of the young. Therefore, it is proper that we consider what the Word of God teaches in this respect – for this must be our infallible guide.

The apostle Paul addressed the church of Corinth – a church which had many and serious problems. He points out to them that he himself (and this is true for every faithful minister of God's Word) preached only Christ crucified to them. Such preaching was not popular with men, but it was required by God. Let us never forget that demand today as well: preaching must be preaching of the cross.

What is involved in preaching Christ crucified? First of all, such preaching emphasizes the total depravity of man. If man is not a dead sinner, there is no need of a cross; no need of atonement. But because man is dead in sin, unable to deliver himself, therefore the cross is necessary unto the salvation of sinners.

Secondly, this preaching emphasizes what seems to be an awful way of deliverance. One, the Son of God Himself, must bear the vials of the wrath of God in order to deliver His people from their sins. The cross represents atonement. It suggests that the righteous God requires perfect and complete payment – and that payment He required was offered up on the cross.

Thirdly, preaching Christ crucified necessarily emphasizes that salvation is wholly of God. One can not in honesty preach

Christ crucified and emphasize the "free will" of man. He can not preach Christ crucified, and yet insist that it is up to man first to "accept Christ" in order that he might be born again. He who preaches Christ crucified insists thereby that salvation is wholly of the Lord.

That must be the content of the preaching. That preaching is necessary as a means of grace is evident from Romans 10 and other passages. But also the content of such preaching is clearly spelled out in this Word of God. This must be the whole of the preaching – the cross is always the center. Young people: do not be swayed by any of the "modern" innovations; always insist on hearing preaching of Christ crucified.

That such preaching is unpopular is understandable. The apostle points out that this is for the Jews a stumbling block and for the Greeks it is foolishness. A "stumbling block" is more literally a "scandal" or a trigger to a trap. Even as the mouse bites at the trigger which contains the cheese – to his own destruction, so too did the Jews with Christ. In seeking to destroy Him, they destroy themselves. For them, Christ represented weakness – when they wanted strength. The Jews sought a king who would lead their armies against Rome. They wanted one who would establish them as a mighty nation on earth again. But Christ was not such in their estimation. Christ hung on the cross. Such an One can not lead armies. He did not even take Himself down from the cross – He did not prove His strength to the Jews as they wanted this proved.

The Greeks considered the crucified Christ as foolishness. The Greeks insisted on their own brand of logic; on their own philosophies. These wanted to draw conclusions, to find answers to the problems of the age. But the cross appeared in no wise as the source of any answer. A crucified One could not, apparently, solve the philosophical problems of man. He can not lead this world, apparently, to peace and prosperity. To the Greek, the cross was nothing but foolishness.

This two-fold reaction to the cross is evident today as well. Basically, all men regard the cross either to be weakness or foolishness – or both. No other response could be expected of the dead sinner. He hates God – and hates any way which God devises to deliver His people from sin and death.

But to the called ones, the cross is both wisdom and power. Those who are called are the elect of God – chosen from before the foundation of the earth. They have been regenerated by the Spirit of the Son – a regeneration in which the life of Christ is planted within their hearts. And under the preaching of the Word, these have been called to a conscious spiritual life. These can see and know what natural man refuses to confess. These, because they are born again, can see the kingdom of God indeed (John 3:3).

What do these see in the cross? They see there first of all: power of God. It is, of course, power *of God*, and must be judged according to God's standards. That cross represents God's power whereby He lifts dead sinners into newness of life. It represents that power of God whereby He will now direct all things unto the salvation of His elect. It is the power which preserves His people through all their weary way on this earth, till finally He powerfully brings them to heaven. No earthly power can compare to that Power. That power of the cross overcomes the power of evil men, of the devil, nay, even directs these "powers" to serve His sovereign purpose. That is power indeed!

But also in that cross is seen true wisdom. This too is the wisdom *of God*, not a wisdom of man's devising. Wisdom is seen in that through this cross God has revealed in the highest possible degree the love which is within Himself. The cross represents the amazing love which gives God's own Son to deliver a corrupt and undeserving people from sin and death. In no other conceivable way could the love of God be revealed to such a degree. The same can be said concerning the manifestation of God's mercy, of His grace, of His righteousness and justice. The cross represents the highest possible revelation of these within creation. Whenever one beholds the cross, he can not help but be amazed at that which God has done. The cross does not satisfy man's wisdom, but the child of God knows differently.

Such preaching gives comfort and assurance to the saints of God. Such preaching is used as the means of bringing sinners to the foot of the cross. True, it does not "entertain" in ways which please man. True, it will not attract the "hippies" nor does it come down to their level. The preaching does not become a "doing one's own thing." It is rather the proclamation of the pure Word of God given to us infallibly in Scripture. We want nothing else; we need nothing more. For such emphasizes properly that the glory for our salvation is God's both now and forevermore.

Spring Banquet in Northwest Iowa

"Unity and Fellowship Among Covenant Youth" was the theme for the spring banquet sponsored by the Doon's Young People's Society on March 10. The banquet was well attended by both the Young People's Societies of Hull and Edgerton. The spirit among the crowd was lively and gay, with a touch of anticipation for the coming meal and program.

The guests were first served punch, then they were seated for the menu of brosted chicken.

A special number from each society was presented for part of the following program. Rev. Lanting delivered a message on the chosen theme and a few psalter numbers were also sung.

"It was great," "I liked it," "Neat" and "Let's do it again," were some of the comments about the success about the banquet.

Student Aid

Eligible students planning to attend the Protestant Reformed Seminary in the fall of 1970 are reminded to contact the Student Aid Committee as soon as possible concerning financial assistance.

G. PIPE, *Secretary*
1463 Ardmore St., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

The Beacon Lights Staff wishes to thank the following:

Lynden Protestant Reformed Church	$20.39
Hope Protestant Reformed Church (Walker)	73.75
Hope Protestant Reformed Church (Redlands)	50.70
South-East Protestant Reformed Church	26.54

SPRING RETREAT

SPRING BANQUET

Spring Retreat

This year's annual Spring Retreat was held April 10 and 11 at Camp Roger on Little Bostwick Lake. No one ever seems to know why the weather on these retreats always seems so cold and gloomy but it always is, and this retreat was no exception.

But the bad weather did nothing to discourage the 95 young people and their chaperons from having a good time. There is a certain amount of satisfaction from knowing that you have spent a night in an unheated, drafty cabin with the temperature in the low 20's and somehow managed to survive. By Saturday morning the one fireplace in the camp had become the most popular place.

Any retreat's success depends on how the discussion groups go over with the young people, and Saturday's two discussions were just great. This was a result of very interesting topics and very good introductions. The first topic, introduced by Marv Kamps, was on "Is the Beacon Lights Serving Its Purpose?" and the second, introduced by Rod Miersma, was on "Changing Liturgy in Our Churches." Everyone seemed willing to talk and some fine ideas and thoughts came out.

Between the discussions the young people were on their own, and could do whatever they wanted. Most entertained themselves by playing volley ball, football, or just staying warm by the fire. For some strange reason most volley ball games usually ended with the score 10 to 4.

By Saturday night the lack of sleep the night before was beginning to tell on everyone. And after the last of our great meals was served, the retreat came to a very nice close with Nort Browers talk on young people, the drug problem, and its connection to shoplifting. Then he led the group in a very moving singspiration, which no one seemed willing to end.

This retreat is now history. But a very special thanks should go to both the Federation Board for making such a thing possible, and to the chaperons for giving up a nice warm weekend to be with us.

BEN WIGGER

BOOK REVIEW

Three Letters From Prison

by JOHN H. SCHAAL
Baker Book House, 149 pages, $2.95

Three Letters From Prison by John H. Schaal is a book written about three of the letters which Paul wrote while in prison, Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon. The book is divided into sixteen lessons, each of which is followed by a series of questions for study. The author in his writing again portrays the modern gospel. He speaks of the brotherhood of all men and also of Arminianism. He presents the modern double talk of the human responsibility of accepting Christ of which we hear so much today. However, our young people would find many of the thoughts of this book helpful in their Bible discussions in society.

LOIS HOEKSEMA

NEWS from, for, and about our churches

KAREN LUBBERS

Our Young People

An Easter Mass Meeting was held in First Church in Grand Rapids for all the area young people on Easter Day at 2:00 p. m. There were many special numbers provided and Rev. Veldman gave a short speech. Christ is risen!!

On April 10 and 11 a Spring Retreat was held at Camp Rogers for the Grand Rapids area young people. There were many fine discussion groups on "Does the *Beacon Lights* serve its purpose?" and also on "Changes in the Church Liturgy." As one "retreater" said, "It was great! It gave us a chance to really share how we feel towards different things in the church and the world."

The annual Young People's Spring Banquet was held on May 1 in the Mayflower Church in Grand Rapids.

An Easter Singspiration was sponsored by the *Beacon Lights* on Easter evening in the South East church in Grand Rapids.

Our Pastors

Rev. Schipper has submitted to surgery and is at present recovering. For some weeks the Southeast Church was without their pastor. We hope that he may soon be able to lead his congregation again.

Rev. Heys is home from Jamaica! On April 26 the Holland young people sponsored a "welcome home" singspiration for him in their church.

On April 16 Rev. Lubbers, who was recently also in Jamaica, gave a lecture in the Oak Lawn Church on "The purpose of Missions in the Prot. Ref. Churches."

Our Membership

Confession of faith was made by Miss Jan Van Baren of South Holland.

Births

A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. E. Cammenga of Holland.

Marriages

Miss Joan Lubbers of Hudsonville and Mr. John Bouma on April 3.

Mr. Harold Miedema of Hope and Mrs. Wilma Sterk on March 26.

Our Servicemen

These are the new addresses of some of our servicemen.

From Hudsonville:

PVT. Doug Miedema 378-60-0221
Co. B 1st Bn. 5th B.D.E.
Platoon No. 3
Fort Polk, Louisiana 71456

From Hope in Walker:

PVT. Richard Huizinga 380-54-2614
F.S. Co.
A.P.O. New York 09221

From Hope in Walker:

PVT. Robert Velthouse 366-52-6180
602 C. Maintenance Co.
Fort Hood, Texas 76544

Miscellaneous

Rev. Van Baren made his audience deeply aware of the Church's duty in these days of relativism and change when he spoke on "The Return of the Glorified Christ" on April 9. The lecture was held in the First Church in Grand Rapids.

The consistory of the Loveland Church has decided to have the congregation recite aloud the Apostles' Creed on Sunday evenings. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

The consistory of the Hudsonville Church also decided to institute a change. Instead of having the Communion Service twice on Communion Sunday, it will now be held only in the morning.

Do you value the Reformed confessions and faith enough to tell others about them? There is still time to submit names to your consistories for the distribution of Prot. Ref. literature.

"The end of all things is upon us, so you must lead an ordered and sober life, given to prayer" (I Peter 4:7).