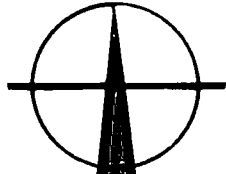


BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH*



January, 1974

Mr. Brisk

*Christian
Stewardship*



BEACON LIGHTS

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In This Issue

EDITORIAL	1
Christian Stewardship — Tom De Vries	1
WHAT KIND OF FRIEND A MEMBER OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCH SHOULD CHOOSE	2
Marlene Fisher	2
FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY	3
Repent! — Rev. Kamps	3
TRUTH OR ERROR	5
Mr. Brisk — Rev. Harbach	5
CRITIQUE	8
"Whatsoever Things are Pure" — Vi Van Der Top	8
WHERE WERE YOU?	9
Dave Kregel	9
PRAYER OF THE SINEWEARY CHRISTIAN	10
Vi Van Der Top	10
CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS	11
Recapture — Rachel Lubbers	11
DIALOGUE? SOMEONE'S OUT THERE	12
Peter A. Hoekstra	12

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

The basic premise of Christian stewardship is that God is the Creator, Possessor, and Upholder of all. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," confesses David in Psalm 24. "For He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." Stewardship presupposes God's absolute ownership of all. Existence of anything apart from God is impossible. If God were to but forget a tiny portion of His Creation, the very idea of that thing would cease to exist. God may use His Creation as He alone sees fit, holding Himself accountable to no one.

There can be no question that God has placed man in the position of steward over Creation. Most men, of course, do not admit to that stewardship. They will never understand that God has called them and all Creation into being for the sole purpose of the glorification of His name. Only the Christian will confess that God owns all, and that man must use all for that purpose.

I would ask you to spend a few minutes with me on the subject of a parable which is familiar to all of us, the parable of the talents found in Matthew 25. A man took a journey and left his possessions in the hands of three stewards, who were to have charge over them until his return. The man knew his servants well, giving each care over his estate to the extent that he knew their abilities. The two with the greater abilities and responsibilities did well, gaining more for their master. He with the least ability didn't even use it, gaining nothing. When the master returned, each servant was rewarded accordingly, not for his ability but for his faithfulness.

Notice that the master in giving charge of his possessions to his three servants said nothing about reward or recompense. He merely gave charge to them over these things and left. So also is the relationship of God, the Master, and man, the steward. God has no agreement with man allowing him to use His Creation in order for man to earn a certain reward. God has said,

"Take all I have given you. Honor and glorify my Name therewith."

What, then, are these talents which God has given us as stewards? We often think of a talent as the ability to sing or perform a task well. A talent might be material possessions. If they are but these, we may readily conclude that God has given us the position of the steward with one talent.

One can hardly make an all-inclusive list of all our talents. The reader can add many more to this list. To most of us God has given Christian homes and schools. We have our church and its doctrine. We have God-fearing friends and mates. God has blessed us materially far more than in other nations of the world. He has given us strong bodies and keen minds. To all has been given that much under-rated gift of time. We have the abilities to love and worship God. We have our salvation.

The point of the parable is not how much money the two stewards earned by the return of the master, but the fact that they were faithful in what the master had set them over. They used the master's possessions for his welfare and not for their own. Note the disproportion between the work and the reward. Each earned little more for the master, but were made rulers over many things. So also God rewards His faithful stewards on this earth. Those who are faithful in what God has given, however little it may be, are rewarded in the end with eternal life.

Our human hearts, ready to make excuses, sympathize with the last servant. His reasoning seemed not so bad, "I knew you were a hard man, but see, I took good care to hide your talent, and I now return it unharmed." We see him taken aback when accused of being wicked and slothful. There is no middle point between faithful and unfaithful. He was unfaithful in his omission. His position was taken from him; he was cast into outer darkness. He used the master's talent to fulfill his own laziness.

Mankind is the slothful servant. He ev-

idences this today in his selfish use of the God-given Creation. He destroys and pollutes a world that is not his own and is not to be used for his end. Already he begins to reap his reward in environmental problems and international conflicts over natural resources. He will continue in the

way of the slothful servant until he receives his final reward at the end of time.

Only God's children are those good and faithful servants. As covenant young people, count your talents. Whether you have five, two, or one is no matter; be faithful in the use of them.

FEATURE

What Kind of Friend a Member of the Protestant Reformed Church Should Choose?

MARLENE FISHER

I'm lost somewhere between the evils of the world and the comfort of God's Holy Church. There doesn't seem to be anyone to talk to. Where are my Friends?

Right now I really don't understand God's reasoning in limiting the number of young people of my age in our church. But I must realize that everything works out for the good for those who love God. But it's hard.

This subject has always crossed my mind and when I was asked to write about it I realized this was my chance to express my opinions.

Yes, this church is small, my Christian schools were small, and now my college is rather small. So where do you look for friends? How do you know who is a good friend?

A friend is a person you can trust, you can share your likes and dislikes with. A friend is one with whom you are allied in a struggle or cause, a comrade, one who supports, sympathizes or patronizes with your cause or movement. As Deuteronomy 13:6 states, ". . . or Thine friend, which is as thine own soul." Friends are at your side when the times are rough and when you have needs. As in Job 2:11, "Now when Job's three friends heard all this evil that was come upon him, they came everyone from his own place . . . ; for they had made an appointment to-

gether to mourn with him and to comfort him."

It's a wonderful thing to be able to sit down and talk openly with a friend about God. Friends like that are hard to find because you are looking for someone with whom you can share the communion of Christ. All your life is for the honor and glory of God's Name. This includes your relationship with friends.

While in college people have asked me why I never go away with them on a Sunday afternoon or why I didn't take that great job offered to me just because they wanted me to work on Sundays. Why is Sunday so special? Can you really call people like these friends? I can't really see that I share all my feelings with them. I'm not saying you can not be acquainted with them but they can't seem like friends. As James 4:4 states, ". . . whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." We can not judge who is a child of God but we can watch their way of life and compare it to the way Jesus has taught us to lead. In Matthew 7:20. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

In turn, you have to be a true friend and an example of what you expect your friends to be.

It's hard and it's lonely but with God's grace and mercy you must understand that the reward comes in the end.



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. M. KAMPS

Repent!

At first when considering what to write, I thought that I would write on the subject "Repent and Believe," which is the demand of God to all that hear the preaching of the gospel. But I have decided to limit the scope of this article and the following to the subject of repentance, even though I am well aware of the fact that in a sense repentance and faith stand in an inseparable relationship. It is hoped that in the future the opportunity will be given in which we can discuss the matter of the demand of God that all that hear the gospel believe that which is declared. But let us now consider the concept of repentance in the light of God's Word.

A few questions come to mind concerning the matter of repentance. First, is repentance obligatory upon all men? Secondly, does God through the gospel confront every man who ever lived with the demand to repent? In the third place, is the demand of God that the sinner repent just, when the demand confronts one who is dead in sin and under the power of the prince of the air? (We ask this last question, of course, in faith acknowledging that God is

just in all His works and righteous in all His ways. We may not in pride set ourselves up as the judges of God applying our standards of conduct. But we ask this question re the justice of this demand in order that we may lead ourselves into the givens of Scripture on this point.) In the fourth place we ask, is the demand of God that all men everywhere repent expressive of His will? And finally, how is it to be explained that some repent and others do not?

We have set for ourselves, young reader, an interesting though admittedly a difficult task. Especially the third and fourth questions we have raised can prove to be a bit troublesome. We must, therefore, labor in faith looking into the givens of Scripture for answers to the questions we have raised. Scripture alone can rightly be authoritative.

Repentance, what is it? What is its content? Scripture uses more than one term to express the idea of repentance. Repentance means, "to turn about." Repentance is to turn from following after heathen gods to the keeping of the law of the one true God. In Zachariah 1:3-4 we read of

the word of God to the prophet, "Therefore say unto them, thus saith the Lord of hosts: Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. Be not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Turn ye now from your evil ways and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord." In Matthew 18:3 we find the word "convert" which means also "to turn about," Christ is speaking, ". . . Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The term "convert" or "conversion" must be understood as denoting a complete turning about. Also in the New Testament we have the terms "repent" and "repentance." We find the verb "repent" in Mark 1:14-15. "And after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the gospel." The noun "repentance" is found in Acts 11:18: "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

In the light of Scripture we can now answer the preliminary question, what is repentance? Repentance is a complete about face, a radical and complete change of mind and heart. This turning about or changing of the mind must be understood in the spiritual sense of the word. Repentance is not to be equated with a mere change of outward conduct or morality. As if a man of the world has repented who has given up his beer bottle and life of drunkenness to live soberly. Many persons will give up excessive drinking because they know what damage liquor or beer can do to the mind and body, and the consequences it will have in their relationship to members of their family in particular and society in general. Repentance does not describe one who under the threat of imprisonment turns from a life of theft to labor with his hands. You understand, don't you, that many unrepentant persons live a life of outward conformity to the laws of the land and even of Scripture

merely for the sake of social respectability and to avoid the unpleasant consequences of violating the law of the land. Repentance is a matter of the heart. Outward conduct that does not proceed, though it be in harmony with the law of God externally, from a repentant heart and mind is not pleasing unto God. That which is not done in faith is sin. God searches the inward parts and demands truth within!

But true repentance is to turn from sin as sin. Repentance is to turn from sin not merely the consequences of sin. Sin is the trampling under foot of the law of the Holy and Majestic God. Sin is to deny God, who is the fountain of all good and who must be loved and served. Sin is the lifting up of the creature in pride over against the demands of God. Now, one who repents is truly sorrowful of heart for his sin against the majesty and holiness of God. Repentance is heartfelt sorrow for sin and sorrow which manifests itself in a complete and radical turning about from sin to God. Repentance is to turn from the hatred of God and His law to the love of God and the day and night meditating in His law; from the desire to revel in sin to the desire to promote the cause of the kingdom of God in the midst of the world. To repent is to flee from the works of darkness to walk in the marvelous light of God. It consists of putting off the old man and his deeds and the putting on of the new man which is made after the image of God.

We should note briefly that repentance can be viewed as "initial" repentance and daily or continual repentance. Repentance is not a once in a life time thing. Rather it is a once decisive turning from sin to God and a continual repentance of the sins committed after our initial conversion or repentance. Matthew 18:3 is speaking of continual, daily repentance. Rev. 2:5 is also speaking of daily repentance, "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen and repent and do the first works or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." In both of these passages the Word of God is directed to those who had been converted and who had repented and believed, but who now had made themselves, as we do every day,

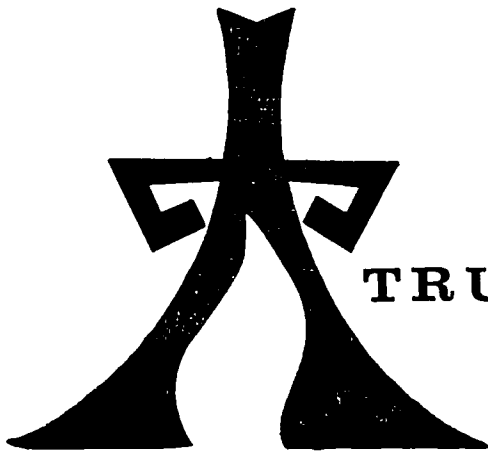
guilty of other sins, of which they must again repent. Repentance is therefore both original and daily repentance.

We now address ourselves to the first question which I raised at the beginning of this article: Is it obligatory upon every man that he repent of his sin and walk in the way of repentance? We answer, of course! Every man must repent for his sin. Every man is born dead in sin. Every man by nature is the wilful servant of sin and has made himself guilty before God. If we look to Scripture we see that John the Baptist, who while preaching in the wilderness of Judea, cried out to all: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). As we saw earlier Christ, The Preacher, came into Galilee early in His ministry preaching and saying: "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand repent ye and believe the gos-

pel" (Mark 1:15). In Acts 17 we read the words of Paul as he declared the will of God to the heathen of the city of human wisdom, Athens. Paul had made known to these Athenians the will of Him who was unknown in Athens. Paul declared God's will to be, "but now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30b).

We see then, in the first place, that repentance, a turning from sin as sin unto God in love, is demanded by God. Secondly, we note that Acts 17 teaches us that all men everywhere are called to repentance. It is true then that none who hear the demand of God in the gospel to repent can ignore that demand with impunity. They that do ignore the demand of God that they repent will be cast into Hell. God does not beg, plead, wish or hope that the sinner repent — He is God, who demands it of all.
"to be continued"

Young People, read this very good article — Ed.



TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. ROBT. C. HARBACH

Mr. Brisk

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord. House and riches are an inheritance from fathers; but a prudent wife is from Jehovah (Prov. 18:22, KJV; 19:14, ASV).

Mercy, like Rebekah, "was very fair to look upon," or was of "extremely beautiful appearance," and so the "more alluring." Attracted to her was a handsome, dark-haired man, with fine features, black, close-cropped, pointed goatee and Prussian-style mustache. His name was Brisk. He was

a man of the world, solidly, down to his marrow, a man of business, of some breeding, but a total stranger to philanthropy and the power of good. He made suit to Mercy. He pretended both religion and love to her. She amazed him with her always being busy in doing, either for

herself or others, making garments, and never wasting time in frivolous amusements. Not knowing that her labors were purely of a benevolent nature, Mr. Brisk once blundered embarrassedly in asking her what by her talents she could earn in a day! Her reply that it was her aim to "be rich in good works, to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that I may hold on eternal life." really threw him. He never called on her again. Mercy in name he liked, but Mercy in practice he rejected.

Was she disappointed in being too dull for Brisk? Not in the least; it was not for her to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever. Her sister, Bountiful, had fallen for an unbeliever who professed faith in God, but he became a clog to her soul. Eventually he turned her out of the house. Mercy determined to learn from that. She waited God's time until He brought her and Matthew, a son of Christiana's, together.

Young people will be wise not to rely entirely on their own judgment in the matter of finding a life's mate. They will do wisely and well to avail themselves of the good counselling of parents, pastors, elders and Christian school teachers. It is very dangerous to have recourse to improper counsellors. What kind of counsellors ought to be consulted? Not the modern psychologists, but spiritual men (Gal. 6:1) who will guide with the sound counselling principles of Moses (see Gen. 24), Solomon (see Proverbs and Song of Songs), Jesus (see Matt. 5:27-32; 19:3-12) and Paul (see 1 Cor. 7 and Rom. 7:1-4). In matters of love, courtship, and marriage, don't neglect or refuse to take counsel, and always be guided by the absolute rule, "only in the Lord."

On these important matters, learn to search out the counsel of all Scripture. Genesis 24, according to custom, relates a marriage and arrangement for it by proxy. Trusting in God, relying on His providence. Isaac and Rebekah are a simple example of a successful and happy marriage. But their wooing and wedding, from the scant report, seem to have occurred on the same day. The narrative of Adam and Eve shows that their courtship was simultaneous with their married life, and may be considered in detail only by a sanctified

imagination. The wedded lives of Abraham and Sarah, and Jacob and Rachel have their disappointing features, in view of the fact that God's covenant calls for a life of pure monogamy. From this high standard David and Solomon both departed. The story of Ruth and Boaz shows evidence of a true love, but, in the midst of the commonplace, seems, on the face of it, to have been brought about by unconventional scheming, economic motives, and a merely legal union. It seems that the Word of God, exhibiting so graphically the nobler and the baser aspects of life, almost nowhere satisfactorily treats the betrothal period. One must take and study all the related accounts of Scripture together, including the applicable parts of the Book of Proverbs. The much neglected, and almost deliberately avoided Song of Songs must also be consulted, as it ideally treats the purest covenant love.

Young people must both be prepared and prepare themselves for marriage to a Christian of their own intellectual and spiritual development. Choose friends not according to outward appearance, handsome build, or beautiful figure only, but according to whether there is truth in the inward parts. Training for marriage must begin in childhood, with increasingly and progressively more consideration given the matter as youth and marriageable age are attained. Not every church is able to provide the best family-centered social life for its young people so that they may form wholesome friendships and enjoy happy fellowship with "members of the opposite sex." Then plans probably ought to be made to eventually leave home for life in another Protestant Reformed Church where opportunities of Christian fellowship in the young people's societies may be had. When old enough to be "keeping company," or when it is proper to be "going steady," there must be always kept in mind the high, God-honoring purposes outlined in the Book of the Covenant. Your aim will not be to see how many "love affairs" you can chalk up to experience. That is somewhat "tinhornish," like filing notches in a gun. Where you see "danger" signs on the highway, you wisely avoid such places. Isn't it a "danger" sign when you see an engagement ring on a young

woman's right hand? Flee youthful lusts. Be not motivated by the lust of the flesh (mere sexual desire), nor the lust of the eye (mere physical beauty), nor the pride of life so called social standing, blood-lines, wealth, economic security, etc.). The finding of the right mate is primarily not a matter of your personal choice, but of discovering the one of God's choice, and of marrying only in the Lord.

Our young people, I should think, are instructed in God's covenant, that they may early learn the true, covenant, family-centered conception of married life. Many of the so-called Christian high schools reveal that their student bodies have not much, if any, conception of covenant life. Very little of this is seen, as a carry-over from the home and church, in the school. The whole thing has to be oriented to eventually getting a good paying job, but while preparing for that, one must have a hilarious time of it. History and life are not studied from the point of view of God's covenant, but from a commercial point of view, that is, with a view to entering upon the most profitable business. Why shouldn't the Christian school be a counselling center, in the best sense of the idea, where covenant youth, to a degree, are prepared for happy marriage in the Lord? So often it is that upon graduation, marriage is taken as the escape-hatch from the monotony of the parental home, or as the opportunity to join a new and perhaps long-coveted social set, and not to reflect Christ and His church and to build up His church with covenant families.

What do I learn from the story of Mercy and her Brisk suitor? She was more than a virtuous woman. She was also a worthy woman. Not every woman is both virtuous and worthy. Every worthy woman is also virtuous, but not every virtuous woman is worthy. Many women are natural virgins, but are so proud of their virginity as to make it a self-righteousness. They feel they ought to be given a medal when they finally reach the marriage altar. They forget that when they "have done all those things which are commanded," they must say, "We are unprofitable servants; we have (only) done that which was our duty to do!" (Luke 17:10). But "humble wedlock is far better than proud virginity"

(Augustine). "A proud wife is without discretion, and is a shame to her husband; but a worthy wife is a crown to her husband" (Prov. 11:22; 12:4).

Mercy could not yet find a man who liked her conditions or qualifications for herself and her proposed mate. She was industrious, "laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come." She was lovely and pure. She was unsuspecting, oblivious to the women who linger to gossip. She was well-mannered and gracious, cheerful and generous, self-sacrificing, yet lively. Soon enough she met Matthew, a man who liked her conditions, and who loved her Lord and her.

But when a young man proposes marriage, doesn't it seem like an amazing presumption? He promises her he will navigate her on the sea of matrimony through all the storms, fogs and hurricanes of life, to sail clear of rocks, shoals and icebergs, to do this with no experience, often with no port in sight, and in spite of thousands of shipwrecks along the way. Isn't she, too, a wonder of presumption? She "practically says, 'I have but one life to live, and I entrust it all to you. My arm is weak, but I will depend on the strength of yours. I don't know much of the world, but I rely on your wisdom. I put my body, my mind, my soul, my time . . . in your keeping. I make no reserve. Even my name I resign and take yours, though mine is a name that suggests all that was honorable in my father, all that was good in my mother . . . I start with you on a journey which shall not part except on the edge of your grave or mine. Ruth, the Moabitess, made no more thorough self-abnegation than I make, when I take her tremendous words, . . . 'Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.' Side by side in life, side by side in death, side by side in heaven. Before God and man, and with my immortal soul in the oath, I swear eternal fidelity!" Rev. T. DeWitt Talmadge, D.D., "The Marriage Ring," 1886).



CRITIQUE

VI VAN DEN TOP

"Whatsoever Things are Pure"

"Did you hear the latest?"

"No, what?"

"Well, Joe and Sherri got engaged last week and they are getting married next week; draw your own conclusion."

"O well, it happens to a lot of kids."

. . . .

Does that little gossiping conversation make you laugh or maybe smile? Or maybe you think that it is an exaggeration. This sort of conversation is neither cute nor an exaggeration. Besides being gossip, the above quote demonstrates a wrong view of the sin of adultery. The situation nor the comments are unreal, both are common place in the world today.

Any Christian who pays any attention to the world about him cannot help but be struck and nauseated by the constant heavy emphasis on sex. Young people today are told that the new morality is the thing to follow, situation ethics will guide you to do the right thing. Absolute values do not exist; you must do whatever is right in that particular situation. So it naturally follows that if you love each other very much and you intend to get married anyway, then fornication is not wrong—in fact it is something to be enjoyed.

Sound familiar, young people? From every side we are bombarded with the sex ideal, with the "go all the way" philosophy. Virginity is a thing of the past as is "thou shalt not commit adultery." After all, it is a real big thing to come in after a date and "brag" about how aggressive you or your date was.

Christian young people, we are called to tow a very different, antithetical line in this regard. God's Word says, "Whatsoever things are pure . . . think on these things"

(Phil. 4:8). This means that we do not uproariously laugh at "shady jokes," neither do we flaunt the idea of sex as a primary factor in dates and marriage. We are commanded to be pure.

Purity is a most beautiful attribute of God. The idea of purity includes holiness, something undefiled and perfectly clean. Silver is tried by fire; the impurities are all burned away and all that is left is *pure* silver. The perfect purity of God we are called to reflect.

Purity of thought, purity of life, purity of action are all intertwined with our dating life. We are so much bombarded with the world's philosophy of sex that we are beguiled by it. God demands that we as young people *refrain* from fornication and adultery. This means more than not getting pregnant (for with the modern contraceptives of today that is no longer the problem); it means to be *pure*—to refrain from the act of fornication completely. In order to do this young people must be very wise to keep out of situations which may lead to impurity of action. For to go in this direction is not in line with "whatsoever things are pure."

For girls, this very concretely means that we do not attract young guys by exposing our bodies or by making up as a seducing girl of the world. Guys no longer then will use sexiness as a grading factor in looking for a girl to date. For our

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bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and not mere sex magnets. God created male and female and the true meaning of this beautiful wonder will find rightful expression — *after marriage*. To commit the sin of fornication is a desecration of the body created for us.

Purity is an inner beauty which we pray that God may increase within us so that we may reflect it more in our dating and everyday life. In sincerity, we ask our God, "Help me to present my body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Thee" (Romans 12:1).

CONTRIBUTIONS

Where were you?

When I arrived at Hope Church on December 2 for the singspiration, I was really disturbed. I had hoped to see a church filled with Christians who love to sing praises to their Maker.

I saw thankful Christians — but not nearly enough of them. I saw a church barely three quarters full. This article is not directed at those of you who were there. It seems that the same faithful ones attend each singspiration. Rather, this article is directed at those of you who were *not* there, both young *and* old.

One of the standard excuses among the older people of our churches for not attending our singspirations is this: "The singspirations are only for the young." Bluntly speaking, that is hogwash. The singspirations are for *everybody*, regardless of age.

Or again, among older people, I have heard this statement: I have company "coming after church," or "I have to go away on company." To this I say: "What better way is there to spend Sunday evening with your friends than to praise God in song? I might add that there is plenty of time for "socializing" afterwards.

But in all this let us not forget our youth. They stay home because "my friend isn't going." To me, that's a flimsy excuse. We shouldn't go because our friend is going, but rather because we feel that *we* should be there.

One stock excuse that everybody can use is this "old faithful": There won't be any room; that church is too small." Well, I'm to the point where I'd almost like to see people turned away, just to see a full church.

Let's face it, people of God, singspiration attendance has fallen off drastically in the last three years, and it is time for each and every one of us to take a long hard look

at the reasons *we* had for missing the last singspiration.

As a recently appointed member to the Public Relations Committee of the BEACON LIGHTS, I am just beginning to become aware of the problems in scheduling our singspirations. The main problem is conflicting dates with the monthly discussion groups which many of our churches have begun. However, it seems that we have avoided all such conflicts for 1974 singspirations.

As a committee, we have tried everything from eye-catching bulletin announcements to schedule posters for the back of our churches, trying to get people to attend, but nothing seems to work. We've done just about all we can; now it's up to you to come.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that *everybody* should make it a point to try to attend the next singspiration. Maybe, in some small way, this article will help. I hope so.

The Federation Board and Beacon Lights Staff welcomes our new editor-in-chief, Mr. Jim VanOverloop to the Beacon Lights Staff. We are grateful that he is willing to undertake these important duties on behalf of the young people represented by our magazine.

We also express our appreciation to Mr. Cal Reitsma for all the time and effort he has expended as the past editor of the Beacon Lights.

To both of you we wish God's blessing.

The Beacon Lights Staff
The Federation Board



Prayer of the Sin-Weary Christian

VI VAN DEN TOP

*If I have wounded any soul today,
If I have caused one foot to go astray,
If I have walked in my own sinful way,
Dear Lord, forgive.*

*If my marks of discipleship were not true
If I longed not Thy will to do
And I envied the world with their fair
 skies of blue,
Dear Lord, forgive.*

*If one could not tell by meeting me
That I was an elect: chosen by Thee
But rather appeared as every other to be,
Dear Lord, forgive.*

*If I was not proud to bear Thy name
When I or others took it in vain,
But rather kept still for fear of shame,
Dear Lord, forgive.*

*If I fed my soul with passion and lust,
If I considered all pleasures a "must,"
If I forgot in God is my trust,
Dear Lord, forgive.*

*If my faith was weak when temptations
 were strong,
If I wavered and doubted and thought
 all was wrong
If I gave in and quietly went along,
Dear Lord, forgive.*

*If I neglected the avenue of prayer
And went all day without meeting Thee
 there,
Trying alone my burdens to bear,
Dear Lord, forgive.*

*And now if I have asked amiss,
I have just one prayer
And that is this:
FORGIVE, DEAR LORD, FORGIVE.*



CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS

Recapture

RACHEL LUBBERS

Laughter mingles with the continuing hum of chit-chat of people who fill many rooms. Cards have been dealt for another hand of game playing and it seems that no matter where you look you see food. Small children are heard everywhere laughing and squealing in play. Everyone seems to be feeling a bit of happiness and contentment and smiles seem to appear more frequently on the faces of many. A spirit of happiness prevails where you look or listen. Joy is now more easily found than it will be in a week or two when the world again steps to its own kind of music. But now a new year is just opening up, requiring us to give it a good start. It is time to create excitement and to have plenty of greetings for all those we come into contact with. It is time to get together and celebrate for today is 1974!

Although in days to come the spirit will leave and everything will fall into the routine attitude once again, still we cannot allow ourselves to flip-flop through this year unalert. We cannot move into this year with a lazy attitude or show indifference to time. As Christians, time is becoming of more and more value and of more and more importance to us. Time does not slow down for us and neither is each resounding second being spaced further apart. Rather, if we are not keeping pace with the ticking clock it is time for us to speed up a little. Constantly, we must keep up with the duties of the Christians: never putting off those duties to squeeze and cram them in at another hour or even forgetting them all together. We have to take the time we have now and use it for God's purpose of having us here.

To view this even more clearly right now let us lift the shade and take one last quick peek back to the year we have just left and see what major history lies outside our window. First we see the long turning and tangling struggle of the Vietnam war finally come to some kind of finish and

weary, tired, and wounded soldiers returning to their home country. The men who for years have been held captive by enemies now are coming back to a family and a world they could hardly manage to visualize anymore. Viewing elsewhere, we find worldwide strikes taking place out of selfishness so that man can meet his greedy demands and wishes. We also find the power of the Supreme Court over against the majorities vote pass the cruel injustice of abortions. In the background abortions clinics are being set up legally so hundreds of lives can be sacrificed by appointment day after day after day. No matter where you go, you find hundreds of unbelievable murders being committed daily. Along with those are mass murderers which one can hardly believe have actually taken place and which years ago were unheard of. Always there are riots which flare up time and time again over issues that cause one man to fight against another. In the foreground we see another rising war in the Middle East. We see Watergate interfering tragically with the government of this country, leading to the loss of respect for authority, government, and the confidence of the people. Then there is also the energy crisis which today yet strikes against us and which presses people everywhere into a state of fear.

And so it continues — the ever-turning picture. Yes, of course, the entire picture is not one of disorder, sadness, and fright; however, these past events are ones that should shake us to consciousness, drive us to our calling, and enable us to live better than ever as watchful Christians.

The shade is now pulled and the picture has disappeared, but the events have not escaped. Cautiously we step into 1974 unaware of how this year's picture may be painted. But we do know that however it may be we must stand prepared. God must be our guide and our faith must be in prayer.

Dialogue? Someone's Out There

"Those men in Skylab sure are finding out a lot about our solar system," he said.

"Oh," I said.

"But you know, they are just scratching the surface when it comes to finding out how we got here and how things are interrelated," he said.

"Oh," I said.

"You know, we've been trying for years to figure that out; and personally I think that there is some intelligent life out there in space somewhere. Men have been trying for years to correspond with anyone that may be out there," he said.

"Oh," I said.

"Sure, we send out radio waves and we scan the heavens with our finest electronic equipment, trying to pick up any communication we can from others out there," he said.

"Oh."

"Back in 1908, Swedish chemist Svante Arrhenius proposed a theory that the earth was seeded with living cells by someone. Now Leslie Orgel of the Salk Institute believes that the seeding was deliberate; it could also explain why we have only one genetic code here," he said.

"Oh."

"We have zoos, wildlife sanctuaries, bird preserves, tribal reservations, etc. We put creatures in isolated circumstances so we can study them," he said.

"Oh."

"I think there is someone watching us, maybe like an experiment or something. This earth is like a huge laboratory and they are watching and controlling what happens here. A lot of U.F.O.s have been seen by reliable men throughout history," he said.

"Oh," I said.

"I just read 'Chariots of the Gods' the other day. I'm convinced that ancient

people saw rockets, saucers, and space capsules hundreds of thousands of years ago. All the facts indicate it."

"Oh."

"With all our intelligence, we can answer almost any question that comes up; however, there must be someone out there laughing at us in our efforts to determine our origin. They must be super-brains of some sort to remain undetected for so long."

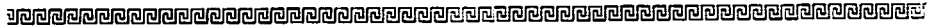
"Oh."

"You don't seem to be very excited about what I'm talking about; aren't you interested in things like this?" he asked.

"I am interested in the heavens and the earth. In fact I am interested in the entire universe. I also believe that there is intelligent life apart from this earth. I believe people were put on this earth for a specific purpose. I believe we can and do communicate with that other being, but we don't need sophisticated electronic equipment to do so. I think that this Being is so intelligent that there is nothing that He does not know. I believe He is so powerful that there is nothing that He cannot do. I believe that men cannot begin to fathom His knowledge, power, and glory. I call Him God," I said.

"Oh," he said.





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