

BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH*

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REMEMBER THE
SABBATH





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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial

THE VIRTUE OF OBEDIENCE

by Harry Langerak

We live in an age of lawlessness. It pervades the whole of our society. This lawlessness has especially made its impact on the home. It is a well-known fact that the home, which is the foundation of any society, is in deep trouble. Children openly flaunt the authority of their parents and superiors. The sad fact is that lawlessness is becoming a way of life which is to be expected in our society. This should not be surprising to us who know the Scriptures. It is a sign of the impending wrath of God on the wicked for their sin of disobedience to Him. II Timothy 3:3 tells us the last days will be characterized by those who are disobedient to parents. This is the generation of which Solomon spoke of in Proverbs 30:11: "There is a generation that curseth their father and doth not bless their mother."

In this age of lawlessness and disrespect the one true radiant example of the virtue of obedience must be the covenant child of God. You and I who have covenant parents, who have been given covenant instruction, who have the sanctifying Spirit are alone capable of being obedient. Obedience in an age of disobedience. Love in the midst of hate. What a contrast! What a refreshing light in darkness!

Obedience is a virtue which only the child of God can have because he alone knows what it means to love the Lord his God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength. We must see obedience to parents as an act of love whereby we willingly submit to them because God wills to put them over us. God not only gave us to our parents, but he gave our

parents to us to be over us. We do not obey because we are afraid of the consequences, but we willingly obey because we love those whom God has placed over us. As children of God, we have been freely given the new life of Christ in regeneration and by it we see all authority, including that of our parents, as coming from God in Christ. Christ by His perfect obedience was given all power in heaven and on earth. It is by this work of Christ that our parents receive their authority. God works through this authority. He has given our parents to discipline us in the way of the Lord. Then obedience is not some abstract idea of our grudging submission to authority, but it becomes a living, vibrant part of our being as we willingly serve our beloved parents. We willingly obey for the Lord's sake!

Obedience is not a natural reaction we have to authority. Our natural reaction to authority is rebellion. Obedience is a constant struggle against this natural inclination of disobedience to God-given authority. When we rebel, the command of God in the fifth commandment comes thundering in our spiritual ears, "Honor thy father and thy mother." This commandment is our God-given instructor, continually reminding us what obedience involves. We must honor and respect our parents. They are the precious instruments God has used to bring us into this world. They must instruct us in the ways of God. They did not receive this position of honor because of some physical strength they possess in themselves, even though this might be the case, but because they are representatives of God. Teenagers often have the mistaken notion

that authority comes from the physical strength whereby one can impose his will on others. Now, although this may be true in the wicked world, it is not true in the realm of a covenant home. No, we honor our parents because they are God's servants by which He passes His covenant blessing to the next generation. Then parents' strength and authority is in the godly wisdom they impart to us in their instruction and correction, as they seek to make us disciples of Christ.

The fifth commandment commands us to obey out of the motive of love. This commandment begins the second table of the law. In the first table we are commanded to love God, and the implication is that in loving God we will love our parents. This love is deeply rooted in our regenerated hearts. Obedience, then, is not a mere external conformity to some rule, but it is a spiritual virtue which proceeds from our very soul. With such a deep inner feeling of love, we will show an obedience that is cheerful, willing and prompt. By such a display of obedience we will show we are children of God as well as children of our parents.

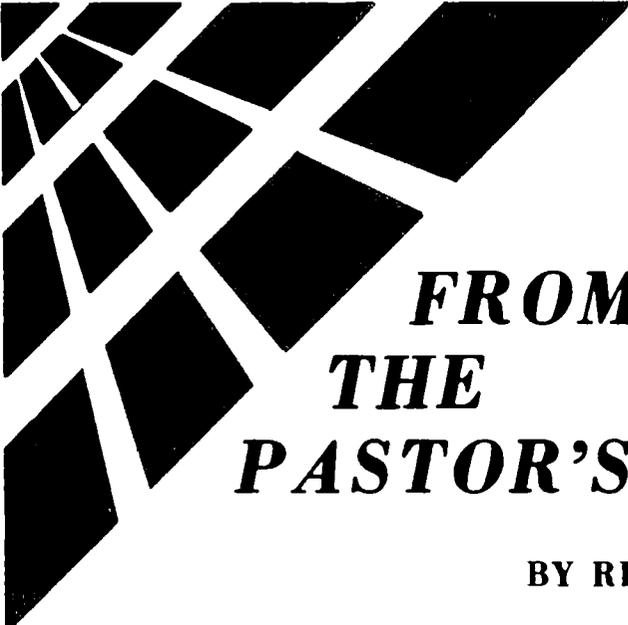
Another implication of the fifth commandment is that we must obey in all things. As teenagers, we have the mistaken notion that we have rights over against our parents. I suspect the democracy in which we live, with its emphasis on civil rights, has done more to foster this idea than we would care to admit. Regardless, it has been my experience, both as parent and teacher, that the very first indignant reaction by some to a simple request has been, "You have no right to expect that!" or, "That is not fair!" or some variation on this theme. Those who react in this manner have a very perverted sense of authority and their relationship to it. We must be obedient in all things. This is the commandment of Paul in Colossians 3:20: "Children obey

your parents in all things for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Our parents have the awesome responsibility before God to care for us, to instruct us, to discipline us, to equip us spiritually for the place God has prepared for us in His Church and Kingdom. No covenant parent may neglect this responsibility.

Finally, the Heidelberg Catechism in Question and Answer 104 of Lord's Day 39 reminds us that our parents are not perfect, but are weak and sinful, and must struggle to fight the battle of faith against sin. This is no excuse for disobedience; rather we are told to bear with their weaknesses and infirmities. We may not ridicule or disobey them, but must pray for them that they be godly parents, instructing and disciplining us in love as those who will be joint heirs together with them of eternal life.

Obedience is extremely difficult. No one will ever deny it. But to be true disciples of Christ, who was obedient even unto death, we must be obedient. Christ, who became death for us who were disobedient, merited salvation for us by His perfect sacrifice. This should be reason enough for obedience to our parents and superiors.

The fruit of obedience is manifold, just as disobedience has its fruit. By obedience, we will shine as true lights of the obedience of Christ. The obedient child of God will experience true fellowship with his heavenly Father. This is the beauty and virtue of obedience. How can we be disobedient and still have this blessed friendship with God? It is an impossibility. Our parents, given us by God, instruct and discipline us in the way of God's precepts. When we heed, listen, and obey them, we manifest the covenant promise God gives in His Word. We show we are joint heirs with our parents of the manifold blessings of God.



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. M. KAMPS

THE INSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH

In the last article, we discussed the Church of Christ as it is an organism, the body of Christ, holy in Him. But now we have to come down from those lofty heights of faith wherein we saw the Church as inexpressibly beautiful, radiating with the beauty of God's grace as a clear brilliant diamond. We behold the Church as organism by faith alone. She is what Scripture declares her to be in Christ — holy, obedient, and faithful, enduring all things in the hope of glory. But as such, the Church is the object of faith.

The church we see with our physical eyes is not always so beautiful. We see the organism of the Church as she becomes manifest as the instituted church in a rebellious world. Do not misunderstand, the institutional church is beautiful, necessary and wondrously beneficial. But the institutional church in Grand Rapids, Philidelphia and Doon has many ugly warts. Sin often reigns in her midst. At times she appears anything but holy.

Sinful believers constitute part of her membership. Lying, deceit, fornication and every sin known to mankind mars her complexion. The church in a sinful world is not always so beautiful to our physical eyes. Repentance ever remains an unfinished task because sin cleaves to us.

But this sinful, not-always-so-beautiful church is Christ's Church nonetheless. The institutional church is the local manifestation of the one organic Church of Christ. There are not two separate churches, but one Church with two aspects. The instituted church is the manifestation of the organism which is visible only to faith.

What is meant by the Church as an institution? We have discussed the idea of the Church as an organism in the December 1976 issue of **Beacon Lights**. But what is the nature of the instituted church? The church as institute is the gathering of believers in any one locality under the office of Christ, that is, under the ministry of the Word, the rule of

elders, and the office of mercy vested in deacons. If believers do not gather under the office of Christ, they do not in such gatherings manifest the Church. Only when believers gather under the threefold office of Christ do they constitute the institution of the Church. Believers gathered where Christ feeds, rules, and bestows His mercy are the instituted church of Christ.

We must not overlook the meaning of the term **under** in this connection. By **under** is meant spiritual, willing, and thankful submission to the threefold office of Christ. Willingly, not by constraint, believers submit to Christ's rule, answering with a resounding "Yes" the question: "Will you submit to church government, and in case you should become delinquent (which may God graciously forbid) to church discipline?" This "yes" must be daily uttered. Also, thankfully and humbly believers gather under the office of Christ. Thankful because every believer rejoices in the loving care and guiding light of the Word which Christ sheds (Acts 2:33) through His threefold office. Once again, wherever believers are gathered under the threefold office of Christ, there is to be found the Church as instituted in the world...whether or not she be gathered in a barn, house, or beautiful church edifice.

The **purpose** for this threefold office in the church is that through it Christ feeds and strengthens the life He has imparted to His own. The believer's life is the life of Christ given in regeneration, and Christ feeds and strengthens this life by irresistibly distributing the Word as the bread of life. Secondly, Christ rules and cares for the physical needs of the poor through this threefold office in the church. This work, performed by officebearers in Christ's name, is the means by which God causes the church to prosper and blossom in grateful worship and thankful obedience.

The Church is instituted by God

through Christ. The offices of elder, deacon and minister are only and always **alone Christ's office**. To be an officebearer is to **represent or speak** and act in Christ's name. Christ gives to the church officebearers. Christ calls, sends, and ordains men through whom He performs His work as the Almighty Shepherd. Officebearers are **only instruments**.

The only authority of officebearers is the authority of the Word.

The Church is the body of Christ. The one threefold office is Christ's. The Word is His. The work is His. The authority is His. All the blessings of heaven unto salvation are of Him, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. But Christ is pleased to exercise His Lordship through men whom He calls to occupy the office of minister of the Word, elder, and deacon. Thus the office is instituted by Christ. To hold this office one must be called of God in Christ.

In the instituted church are to be found not only sinful repentant believers, but also unbelieving impenitent reprobate persons. (II Peter 2:1, Galatians 1:7, Jude 4). This is simply the testimony of Scripture, which is forcibly confirmed by the testimony of experience. In the **organism** of the Church, there are no reprobate persons. But there are reprobate members in the instituted church. Of course, the reprobate hide under cloaks of hypocrisy. These persons who are devoid of God's grace struggle to gain a reputation for piety. They often achieve this reputation among men. The impenitent never see their own sin, but only that of others. They hold their heads and names high in self-righteousness. These are a source of unending grief and sorrow, and strife for the church. Among the members of the instituted church, i.e., believers gathered under the office of Christ, are the reprobated wicked whose damnation slumbereth not (II Peter 2:3).

How is that instituted church formed?

How does she come into existence?

As we said earlier, the institution of the Church arises out of the organism of the Church. Regenerated and called believers seek one another and love each other as those who have a common hope, faith, and life, the life of Christ. Principally, the instituted church is always called into existence by God through His Son. Thus, in the Old Dispensation Abraham is called directly and personally by God to be the church of the Old Dispensation in the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1). Already in the Old Dispensation the church, Israel, was **under** the typical office of Christ as typified in king, prophet, and priest. Through these offices Christ spoke, was heard and obeyed. At the beginning of the New Dispensation, the Son of God in our flesh personally called men to follow Him and to unite **under** Him as the church over against the Jews. In Matthew 16:18 and 18:17 Christ himself refers to His disciples as **the church**. They were elect sinners, called out from among the apostate Jews, separated unto Christ and, thus, called the church, which literally means in the New Testament "the called out ones."

It can also easily be demonstrated from the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Paul that persons who have been regenerated, called, and upon whom the gifts of repentance and faith in Christ have been bestowed...seek one another and in obedience to Christ organize as the instituted church, where before no church institution had been. Paul preached in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey for possibly not much longer than three weeks and, after having been forced to flee from Thessalonica, wrote the first epistle to the church of Thessalonica from Corinth. In this letter Paul mentions the fact that the Thessalonians were under officebearers (5:13). This is what happened there — the word was faithfully preached, blessed by God and a congregation was formed in a heathen city. The

instituted church of Christ was established, submissive to Him in contrast to the Jews of Thessalonica and all heathendom. So also the churches of Ephesus, Philippi and the seven churches of Asia Minor were formed (Rev. 1:20-3:22). In all these instances the Scriptures use the term "church" to signify the institutional church.

Why do believers always and everywhere unite in the exclusive institution of the church? Why this separation from the world? Why occasion hostility, scorn and ridicule? Why do believers subject themselves to hour long (years ago to two and three hours long) sermons? Why do they subject themselves to the discipline and rigor of regular church attendance? Why this ubiquitous institution...found among all peoples and in all ages? The church instituted in the world ...why? How do you explain this phenomenon?

There are several obvious reasons. First and ultimately, to worship God, our covenant God. Secondly, to be fed by the living Christ through the preaching of His Word. Thirdly, for the fellowship of believers, to promote the cause of missions, to be ruled by Christ, etc.

But the all inclusive reason is to worship God! God's children always have and always will desire to stand in the same spiritual relation that the only begotten Son has ever stood. John tells us that the eternal Son of God personally, as the Word, "was with God." (John 1:1). The expression "with God" could be better translated "toward God," or "face to face with God." Thus, the only begotten Son eternally stood face to face with the Father, as the ever blessed covenant God, in perfect knowledge, love, and fellowship. So also God's children desire to behold with the eye of faith God's face. These are children who have been regenerated, who have been restored to the image of God, and who have been conformed unto the image of the Son of God in principle. (Romans 8:29) "For

whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed unto the image of His Son...." That work of God whereby the elect are "to be conformed..." is principally accomplished in regeneration and calling.

Scripture uses the expression "face of God" figuratively. As such, the expression serves to portray the expression of God's love and grace and goodness to His own in Christ. Through one's face the attitude of one's heart towards another is revealed. The face and especially the eyes reveal what lives in one's soul. Consequently, Scripture speaks of God's face and eyes as the manifestation of His attitude of love and grace towards His people.

The Son of God stood face to face with the Father eternally in covenant fellowship (John 1:1). In the Christ, the Son of God in our flesh, the words of Psalm 42:1 are fulfilled: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so my soul panteth after thee." Or again, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." (Psalm 27:9). In God's face is to be found the expression of God's love, grace, and goodness towards His people. Thus, Noah found grace in God's eyes (Genesis 6:9). Saints in all ages, who are in principle conformed unto the image of Christ, seek God's face!

Now the question is, in concrete terms how is this seeking of God's face accomplished? By holing up in some darkened room to attempt mentally and

mystically to reach out to God? No. By gathering with fellow believers in your home in preference to maintaining membership in the instituted church? No. How then, concretely do we come to stand face to face with our covenant God?

We behold God face to face only through the preaching of the gospel by one who stands in the service of Christ in the instituted church. **There Christ speaks God's Word of self-revelation to us through the ministry of the Word (Acts 3:26), through the instrumentality, therefore, of the instituted church. Believers in humble, thankful, submission to the one threefold office of Christ of elder, deacon, and minister behold with the eye of faith God! Where the gospel is preached, there God's children behold Him face to face. Why organize? The answer is to praise God for the gracious blessings of Him, who causes His face to shine upon us!**

The existence, perpetuity, and resilience of the wondrous institution of the church is inevitably a resultant reality wherever God raises the dead to life and calls them irresistably into the fellowship of His dear Son (I Cor. 1:9). All the scorn and ridicule of the world, all the wicked persecution suffered, all the loss of property, all the bloodshed and death which believers have had to bear throughout the ages notwithstanding; God's people ever have and ever will joyfully place themselves under the office of Christ as represented in minister, elder and deacon!

CORRECTIONS

in **Truth Versus Error**, December 1976

1. The title should read, **WEYMOUTH'S NEW TESTAMENT**
2. on p. 7, 1st col., 14th line, for "American" read "Authorized"
3. on p. 7, 2nd col., 14th line, for "HampdenCook," read "Hampden-Cook,"
4. on p. 8, 1st col., 16th line, for

"Revelations" read "Revelation"

5. on p. 8, 2nd col., 9th line, for "verses" read "versions"
6. on p. 8, 2nd col., 10th line, for "verse" read "version"
7. on p. 8, 2nd col., 12th line, for "know" read "known"

Poems which appeared in recent issues by Mrs. H. Brands, were from a collection of poems gathered by her and were submitted by her daughter for publication.

Feature

REMEMBER THE SABBATH

by Barry Gritters

Barry is now a member of Hope, Walker, Church. He originally is from Redlands.

“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all the work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

The above text is found in Genesis 2 and is familiar to all of us. Since our youth we have been instructed that “...the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God...” (Exodus 20:10). For God, the sabbath was a day of rest from the six days of creation. It is also a day of rest for us, but not in the sense that we ordinarily rest. We part from the activities of the world for one day and consecrate this time to God. This is the Lord’s Day and not our own.

We observe the sabbath by going to church in the morning to glorify God. Young People’s Society is also held on Sunday to glorify God. Choral Society is sometimes held on the sabbath, in order to sing praise to His Name. We go to church again at night to hear the servant of God proclaim God’s Word to us. After church some of us go to discussion groups for communion of the saints and to study further the truths of Scripture. This is the sabbath day as we know it and as it always should be.

“Well,” you might say, “we all know that, so what’s new?”

What I’m saying is that the sabbath is becoming more and more a day of our own and less a day consecrated to God. This fact we sometimes fail to realize because we are becoming insensitive to the

command of God to keep His day holy. In Exodus 20 it can’t be made clearer: “Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.” We hear this commandment each week, yet some of us continue to use the sabbath to our own avail.

We use it to catch up on sleep lost during the week. We sleep late on Sunday morning and walk in church seconds before or after the consistory. The afternoon is an “ideal” time to take a nice peaceful nap, a rest “so important” that we would even skip Young People’s meetings, choral society, and studying catechism because of it. The afternoon is also a “perfect” time to take care of homework from school. One may say, “Well, studying for school isn’t work. I can leave my homework for Sunday and get it done then when there’s nothing better to do.” We have six days of the week to study, and we would rather put it off until Sunday? We seem to turn a deaf ear to God’s command. Doing school work on Sunday is the same as taking any other job home.

Another thing is that some of our people, even though the command of God is so clear **not** to labor on Sunday, still hold jobs which require them to do just that. Maybe it isn’t every Sunday, or both services, but can we, or **may** we even try to rationalize consistently missing worship

services in order to work? Is there even a **question** of whether we should skip Young People's or any church function on Sunday in order to work. I would say no. I would say we should watch that we don't become insensitive to God's commandment, or nonchalantly disregard the sabbath and regard it as merely the day to go to

church.

May we know God's will and heed His command to keep the sabbath day holy. We will be blessed when we observe the sabbath and do all things to **His** honor and glory. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy!



Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

Modern Speech Versions of the Bible **THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MODERN ENGLISH**

This translation was formerly called the Centenary Translation of the New Testament, by Helen Barrett Montgomery. It was a commemorative of "the first hundred years of work of the American Baptist Publication Society," Philadelphia, second edition, 1924, cloth bound, \$1.00. Now it is called **The New Testament in Modern English**, Judson Press, copyright 1952, 17th printing, cloth bound, \$6.00. (Note: This same title had also been used by what is now the Simplified New Testament. Other titles are similar, e.g., the Twentieth Century New Testament, A Translation into Modern English, and the New Berkeley Version in Modern English, also called the Modern Language Bible or MLB.)

Among the aims of the author was the

purpose to provide a translation at a low price and in such compact form as may be carried in the pocket or hand-bag, to stimulate daily reading, and "to offer a translation in the language of every day life that does not depart too much from the translations already familiar and beloved." The book is much on the market today and may, at least, be obtained from a Baptist Book Store.

Naturally, the work shows certain Baptist traits, especially in connection with the New Testament cases of baptism. Still, it is for the most part a good translation, and the writer enjoys frequent reading in it and consultation of it. The forms of **thee**, **thou** and **thy** are preserved in quotations from the Old Testament and in prayer to God (cp. John 17; ct. NIV),

but not in conversations back and forth between Christ and His disciples.

Some readings are not to be preferred, as in Matthew 3:15, "so it is fitting for us to fulfill every religious duty." Why this, when the word "righteousness" already appears so frequently in the translation? Matthew 19:9 has, "any man who divorces his wife for any cause except her unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." Period! The remainder of the verse is omitted without explanation. Also omitted is, "and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" (Matthew 20:22,23). We should not so easily drop these omitted verses from our treasured King James Bibles (cp. other omissions at Mark 7:1-4, 8bdc; Luke 1:29, 35, ASV), as the reasons for them, if not textual critical parody, are in almost every instance, insufficiently evaluative. That also goes for certain changes, as "his father" for "Joseph" (Luke 2:33).

Matthew 26:76 is as in the King James Version, "immediately the cock crew." The MLB is better: "a rooster crowed." "Before the cock crow" (v. 75; see John 18:27) is not "language of every day life." John 12:32 should omit the word "men" in "I...will draw all men unto myself." The work is marred by a footnote on I Corinthians 14:34, which text reads, "let the women keep silence in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak. On the contrary let them be subordinate, as also says the Law." The footnote states, "This can only refer to the oral law of the Jews, as no such prohibition is found in the Law. Paul is probably quoting a sentence from the Judaizers." This is an astounding statement! It really claims that Paul appealed to the commandments of men; even worse, that he based his apostolic injunction on the hypocritical tradition of legalistic Pharisees. Then as an authority on the Bible to say, "no such prohibition is found in the Law!" This also loses

sight of the fact that Paul not only lays that prohibition on the church, but also the command that women be subordinate, as also says the Law. On this Hodge puts it succinctly, and we have to agree, "...in the Old Testament...as well as in the New Testament, the doctrine that women should be in subjection is clearly revealed." Too long to quote here is R. C. H. Lenski's remarks and footnote on this text in his Interpretation of I & II Corinthians. (Grand Rapids, Michigan area residents may check this out in our seminary library.) Lenski sets forth clearly the biblical position on the place of women in the church.

Where Matthew 16:4 has "an evil and adulterous generation" this translation has "a wicked and faithless generation," which is, of course, not strict literal translation, but, as with most modern translations, the idea being to avoid a meaning which denotes a generation characterized by merely sexual sin, and rather to indicate one that has apostatized from God. However, the Holy Spirit in His work of infallible inspiration chose the word **adulterous**, which spiritually does mean faithless to the point of being apostate. So nothing is gained by using a different word from the perfectly good and expressive word of the original, which, by the way, is a word still well understood in terms of "the language of every day life."

In Matthew 16:18 the reading is, "I say to you that you are Petros (a rock), and on this petra (rock) I will build my church." Not much distinction is made here between "a rock" and "rock," so that the translation practically makes Peter the rock. At Mark 15:39, the centurion (army captain according to HBM) expresses his humanistic heathen superstitious ignorance in, "In truth this man was a Son of God."

The work is fully interspersed with paragraph headings which are excellent and most useful in finding one's way in the book. Some of these headings are very

striking, as "The 'Terrible Meek' " (Matthew 12:15-21; II Corinthians 10:1-6), "Salome's Dance of Death," "Out of Work! An Old Evil," Lamps Are for Lampstands (Luke 8:16-18), Hogs Mean More Than Men (Luke 8:34-37), and this in a modern version is somewhat surprising, "The Sin Which Hath Never Forgiveness" (Matthew 12:30-32). Some of the paragraph headings are taken from well know hymns: "The Winds and the Waves Obey His Will," "She Only Touched the Hem of His Garment," and "My Richest Gain I Count But Loss" (Phil. 3:7-11). Other catchy headings are, The Heart Follows the Hoard, God's Free-will of Purpose, "Grace Unstinted, Growth Unstunted" and Contagious Goodness (Ephesians 5:18-20).

This is interesting (Mark 16:8): and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid of—

At Luke 3:23, there is an improvement over the King James Version: "He was the son (as it was supposed) of Joseph, (the son) of Heli." So in Luke 5:5,6, "I will let down the nets," and "a great multitude of fish; and their nets began to break;" and "boats" instead of "ships." This, too, is good, (Luke 10:21), "he thrilled with joy in the Holy Spirit." So at John 1:1, 9, "and the Word was face to face with God," and "The true Light, which enlightens every man, was then coming into the world." Contrast John intended between "He was face to face with God in the beginning" and "A man came into being, sent from God, whose name was John...concerning the Light... he came into being." At this point the NIV follows the King James Version. Also Montgomery's translation has it all over the NIV in this: "He came to his own creation and his own folk welcomed him not," also in this, "and the Word became flesh and tented with us," and in this, "Behold, that is God's Lamb, who takes and bears away the sin of the world," and, further, this, "Then Annas sent him

in chains to Caiaphas" (John 18:24), and, finally, on *love* where distinction is made between *agapein* and *philein* in John 21.

This, too, we like: "...Christ, who is over all, God, blessed forever. Amen." (Romans 9:5). Where the ASV with its (per)version reads, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable" (II Timothy 3:16), implying there is also uninspired and therefore unprofitable Scripture, the Montgomery testament translates correctly, "Every scripture, seeing that it is God-breathed, is also profitable..." This is good also, "I had formerly been a blasphemer and a persecutor and a doer of outrage" (I Timothy 1:13).

Each book of the New Testament is prefaced by a brief introduction. Some of these contain gems or germs of thought. Quoting, the author says Luke's gospel is "The most beautiful book in the world." She says the Epistle to the Romans "has been called the profoundest work," and that "what was in germ in Galatians is here stated with a fulness and splendor that leaves nothing to be said." Coleridge calls it 'the most profound work in existence.' "Ephesians is the Alps of the New Testament." —Webb-Peploe. Philippians "is a prisoner's paean of joy and praise."

Here is one more sample. "For God's wrath is ever being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who smother the truth by their unrighteousness. This is so because that which may be known of God is manifest among them; for God has made it manifest to them...For although they knew God, yet they did not glorify him as God...professed to be wise they became fools and exchanged the majesty of the imperishable God for an idol...So God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their own bodies...That is why God gave them up to passions of dishonor...So did God cast them out to an outcast mind, to do those

things which were indecent...Though they knew well the ordinance of God, that those who practice such vices are worthy of death (RCH: they **knew** all that! yet) they not only continued to do the same, but were even applauding those who practice vice" (Romans 1:18-32). For the purpose of New Testament English Bible reading, study and comparison, this translation, which is in the King James Version tradition, certainly has a useful and dignified place.



Feature

BONDED TOGETHER

by David M. Harbach

Dave is a member of our Hope, Walker Church.

According to Webster, the word society can mean any organized group of people joined together because of some interest in common. By taking a close look at the words "organized," and "joined," and the phrase "because of some interest," it is my hope to convey to you my thoughts concerning the importance of our young people's societies, as we have them today.

In the first place, we must keep in mind that man today seeks to organize himself for a common goal. Man's goal in part is to organize humanity, such that man may be glorified. For instance, man must organize himself to elect a president, to fight crime, to fight inflation, and to preserve the earth's natural resources. Those are worthy causes, but man used those causes so that he may set himself up as God.

In the second place, we as young people's societies are organized in much the same way as man is organized into various societies. There is an established

order to our society that enables us to carry out our goal in a respectable manner. But our goal is the opposite to the world's goal, in that we seek to glorify God and not man. We stand before man as the children of God. (Matt. 5:16)

We are an organized group of young people, that is, we are an established organism, a systematized whole seeking to glorify God. Above all, we are part of that organic unity in which Christ is the center. (John 15:5)

To study the second word, "joined," perhaps we should ask this question: Now that we are organized, how are we joined together?

First of all, the word joined means to be brought together or made into one, without the loss of the distinction of each member. There is in the study of the word joined, an antithetical relationship. Man is bonded together to accomplish man's goals, one of which, as was stated previously, is his own glory. It is also at this point that man seeks all men to be bonded together for the attaining of that goal. As the young people of God, we must be very alert to that fact, because

man openly seeks to make us become joined together for man's goal. Consider the many ways in which man seeks us to be bonded together, such as through the magazines, newspapers, television programs, advertisements and books. Is not our adversary the devil as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour?

In the second place, we as young people's societies are bonded together to seek the glorifying of God through the study of His Holy Word and other activities, which we do together throughout the year. What a tremendous difference between man's goals and our God-given goals. We strive to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. (Mark 12:30). And that love, which we have, is the bond of perfection. (Col. 3:14). We are joined together or bonded together by the love of God, through Christ Jesus our Lord. (John 17:22 & 23).

Man is interested only in earthly things. He strives to make himself rich and powerful on earth. He can not

comprehend and believe the things of the kingdom of God. (John 3:3 and 13:19). But we as the young people of God have been given the gracious ability to see spiritually the truths of the kingdom of God. (Luke 12:31, 32).

Now ask yourselves these questions and answer them honestly. As the children of God, may we ignore the opportunity to study His word? May the things of this earth supercede in importance our seeking the things that are above? May we take our society for granted? May we ever say we are brought up in the church and therefore take our heritage for granted, using this as a prideful excuse for being apathetic for the study of God's word?

Then the truth comes to us that we are an organized society of young people bonded together by the love of God. Seeking to glorify God primarily through the study of the Holy Scriptures. We are only able to do this through the activity of our faith as living members of the body of Christ.



CRITIQUE

NEW BEGINNINGS

by Agatha Lubbers

Critiquing Critique

When the previous editor, J. Van Overloop, retired from the editorship of **Beacon Lights**, he composed a letter for all the editors and writers in the magazine — at least I assume he did, because I received one. In this communication he

stated that **Beacon Lights** contains all the rubrics to make it a good magazine for our young people. The statement pointedly reminded me at that time that we do have all the rubrics that our young people need in their magazine and I have a special responsibility as a writer in that magazine

to write articles that help our young people.

It is necessary that we be reminded of this fact occasionally because we tend to forget and lose our perspective. This loss of perspective and the accompanying loss of a genuine and well-defined sense of purpose results in a deficiency of zeal for a very important cause.

I can remember well my attempts to write the first article that I ever wrote for **Beacon Lights**. I was a teen-ager then. That was a score of years ago or more and it was such a struggle to write that article. Writing is still a struggle. To write well and effectively demands arduous effort. Just ask those who are required to write, and they will tell you that it's labor; but it's rewarding effort.

There was a time when I was a far more frequent contributor to this periodical than now. This is not caused by a lack of interest in the activities of young people. It is chiefly because I am much more involved in the activities of young people in other significant areas.

The rubric "Critique" has been the chief recipient of the articles I have written since the inception of the rubric in the October-November, 1959, issue. It was often difficult to write an article which seemed to fit exactly the terms of the rubric. The original idea resulting in the birth of the rubric was that it would contain articles which reported and commented on important events which occur in the secular world and in the church world. Comment in "Critique" would include discussion of the intellectual and religious movements which affect the life of the child of God. It was the intention of the originators of the rubric, therefore, to publish articles which would apply the principles of the Word of God, the truth of the Ecumenical Creeds, and the truths of the Reformed Confessions to these events so that Protestant Reformed young people would receive assistance and direction in establishing a proper attitude toward

these events and intellectual movements.

Young people continue to need this kind of assistance and direction in the very complex and sinful world in which they are called to live. The errors of the world are increasingly deceitful, and one can easily be deceived if he does not carefully examine the basic ideas held by the proponents and leaders of these movements.

In order that we may reestablish our direction and rededicate ourselves, we need to critique and evaluate our own attitudes and our individual and collective activities. We need this in every area of our life. We also need such evaluation of our attempts to assist young people in their contemporary and on-going struggle against sin.

* * * * *

A New Year Resolution

As I contemplated the difficulties of sound critique and proper evaluation, I was reminded that we are entering a new calendar year. This new beginning compelled me not only to look ahead but reminded me to evaluate and judge the past. This process of evaluation is a painful one because it tends to reveal garish sins, numerous mistakes, and scores of miserable failures.

Evaluation throughout the history of the world always has been a painful process. We learn this when we study the Holy Scriptures which are able to make us wise. At the beginning of each day my first hour study hall students and I have been reading the minor prophets for devotion. Recently we have been studying the stunning message that Amos, the sheep-herder and fig-gatherer of Tekoah in Judah, had to deliver as a prophet of Jehovah God to the rebellious and idolatrous ten northern tribes of Israel. They had ostensibly departed from idolatry. The blatant Baal worship which was prevalent in the days of King Ahab

had been annihilated; but they continued other forms of idolatry. They did not worship Jehovah in spirit and in truth as they had been commanded to do in Jerusalem. They continued to worship in Bethel and in Dan by bowing down to the calves of Jeroboam. They supported the schismatic and wicked priesthood of the gainsayer Amaziah. To this wicked and covenant-breaking people the prophet Amos came with a message of judgment. The evaluation of Jehovah God was that they had not departed from idolatry. Amos, who undoubtedly was dressed in the rough garments of a shepherd, told the sophisticated people of Samaria that as a nation Israel would be destroyed and would be led into captivity. This was a frightening message of the judgment of God, but the men of Samaria would not heed the warnings of Amos. Because of their rebellion and hardness of heart, they were taken into captivity and as a nation they were never restored to power or to honor.

When we examine and evaluate our own lives and our own activities, this also can be a painful experience. I refer to the kind of spiritual inventory we are called to conduct at the end of each day and at certain other specified or unspecified periods in our life. You, who are the youth of the church, who are recipients with your parents of great and precious promises, are called to take spiritual inventory of your lives. This is the kind of critique that is both helpful and necessary.

The painful and honest evaluation which we conduct will uncover errors and faults. When these faults and errors are uncovered, they demand correction. Such remedy is part of the painful process.

If a broken member of our bodies is left to heal without proper splinting, it will not grow correctly. When the proper corrective measures are utilized, the patient suffers discomfort and inconvenience; but the corrective measures are necessary if the improperly healed

member of our body is to contribute to the beauty and best functioning of our bodies.

This is the way it is also in other areas of our lives as Christians. Some of you, who read this contribution, are going to make a public confession of your faith. This will be a "new year" or a new beginning in your life. When we become confession members of Christ's church, we are asked to make some solemn resolutions. We resolve to adhere to the true doctrines contained in the Old and New Testaments and in the Articles of the Christian faith. We resolve to reject all heresies repugnant to this true doctrine. We resolve to lead a Christian life and to forsake the world and its evil lust. We resolve to submit ourselves to Christian admonitions. We resolve to submit to church government and to church discipline if that becomes necessary.

If you have studied the form used in the Protestant Reformed Churches for making confession of faith, or have studied the questions asked in the form for the baptism of adults, you will recognize the similarity to the resolutions in the previous paragraph. These things we must affirm with all our hearts as we begin this New Year in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1977.

Because we are young people who are regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, let us with a firm resolve live according to all the commandments of God. As we conduct our New Year evaluations of the past and pledge a new beginning, may each one examine his own conscience to determine whether he has resolved to show true thankfulness to God in his whole life.

If this is your new beginning, although it be only a small beginning of the new obedience, you will live thankfully in the New Year, because the dwelling of God is with the men of His good pleasure. God, who dwells with us by His Spirit, wipes away all tears, takes away all death, and says, "Behold I make all things new."

THE WAY TO HEAVEN

by Rev. Robert C. Harbach

The way to heaven, steep, paved with thorn,
Compacted with crosses, those who mourn.
Like Israel's way found in desert bleak,
Fleeing Egypt, its black furnace reek.
Like Jonathan and armor-bearer
On toward the foe pressed ever nearer;
Crept they on all four,
A jagged, flinty floor
'Neath; and all around, thistle and briar,
While above, mountain cliff and craggy spire.

So heaven is reached thru toil and pain,
Troubles, trials pressing on amain;
With blood, sweat, tears, tension and friction,
Taken by violence, affliction.
The way to heaven is by the Cross,
By which we count all things else but loss.
The ships to heaven by hell-gates sail,
Past treacherous shoals where many fail.
To enter the strait gate, one must kneel;
So leaving false ways to reach the real.

Heaven's a hill up which we aspire,
Hell's a hole steeped in sulphuric mire.
Hell, without staff, men with ease attain:
Heaven ends agony, strife and strain.
Hell's way deeps downward from bad to worse:
Heav'n's is upward, away from the curse.
The way to heaven--sorrow's the story,
But the end's had in joy and glory!

George M. Ophoff (12)

by Prof. H. Hanko

His Early Years In The Ministry

What were the years like that Rev. Ophoff spent in Hope Church? They were those decisive years when the common grace controversy came to its head. However, before we enter into the controversy itself, it is well to sketch briefly the ministry of Rev. Ophoff before the break of 1924 actually came. This is not because of the fact that the reverberations of the common grace controversy were not heard all the way into the quiet rural community of Riverbend; but this is because the early work of Rev. Ophoff seemed to be far removed from the battlefield.

on July 27, 1922. This was a year and a half after Rev. Ophoff assumed his labors in Hope Church. Three years later on August 23 George was born; but this was in the year 1925, after the common grace controversy had reached its climax at the synod of Kalamazoo in 1924. George is now a member of First Protestant Reformed Church. In the course of his life two more sons were given to the family: Herm, now a member in Southeast, was born on July 26, 1927; and Ed, a member of First Church, was born September 20, 1930.

As was so often the case in those days, women from the congregation came into the home to help Mrs. Ophoff with the work. The parsonage can still be seen if one wants to take the time to drive into the beautiful Riverbend area. Coming



Rev. & Mrs. Ophoff with Fred

His family life was, in many respects, the normal family life of a parsonage. To Rev. and Mrs. Ophoff sons were born. The oldest, Fred, now deceased, was born



Rev. & Mrs. Ophoff on front porch of house on Reverbend.

west on Riverbend Drive, the old parsonage is the second house from the corner of Riverbend and Kenowa on the south side of the street. From the picture included with this article, it is evident that the area was still a farming community. The church was immediately to the west of the parsonage. The house now standing on the corner rests on the foundation of the old church building.

Rev. Ophoff's work was, however, the work of shepherd of the flock. This involved many different labors. It involved, first of all, catechetical instruction. His instruction was, in itself, excellent. There are those living today who vividly remember the years they spent in catechism with Rev. Ophoff. He was able to communicate in a forcible and unforgettable manner the truth of Scripture to the children. But even in the instruction of the children of the church, his character became evident. He never managed to learn the names of more than a half dozen of his catechumens and he would constantly get their names all mixed up when he would call on them to recite. The ability to remember names and associate names with definite children were beyond him in most cases. The children were also able to fool him into thinking they knew their lessons while all the while they would read the answers from their books propped up on their knees. He never caught them at this and it became a very common practice, especially among his older catechumens. These characteristics of his instruction were partly due to the fact that Rev. Ophoff always found it difficult to believe anything bad about a person — even though he held firmly to the truth of total depravity and understood its meaning. But it was also partly because he never had given any thought to the possibility that children might have taken their books along to catechism just for the purpose of reading their answer. In spite of these things, his instruction was forceful and successful, and he had little

or no problem with discipline in the class. His attitude toward his catechumens was always one of deep concern for their well-being and he would sometimes go at great lengths to give them instruction in things which he thought they needed. For example, sometime after the split came in 1924, the minister of the Christian Reformed Church of Hope, Rev. Vander Kieft, attempted to get some of Rev. Ophoff's catechumens into his catechism classes. When Rev. Ophoff learned of this, he took his class from his own catechism classroom with him to the home of Rev. Vander Kieft; and, in the presence of these catechumens, he proceeded not only to point out to Rev. Vander Kieft the error of such "proselytizing," but also the error of the whole common grace doctrine. Rev. Ophoff was convinced that his catechumens should witness this encounter to learn from it concerning the issues which divided the two churches.

The same was true of Rev. Ophoff's preaching. There were many weaknesses in his preaching, but there were astonishing strengths. To mention some of these weakness first of all, one thing especially stands out. He was rarely able to arrive at the church services on time. Often when people would drive up to the church in the morning with their horses and carriages, they would see Rev. Ophoff, in his pants with suspenders draped over his hips and undershirt, heading for the outdoor privy. This would assure them that once again their "dominee" was going to be late for the service. At least at first, the consistory would wait for him in the consistory room until one of the members of the congregation, about five minutes after the services should have started, would go to the head of the stairway and shout down: "'t Is tijd broeders." ("It is time, brothers.") With that, the consistory would solemnly file up into the auditorium without their pastor and an elder would begin the service. Somewhere during the preliminaries, Rev. Ophoff would arrive,

speak a few words to his elder, and take over the service.

One reason for this tardiness (a tardiness which remained throughout his life and characterized many of his engagements) was no doubt his total preoccupation with his work. He was extraordinarily oblivious to the passing of time and did not seem to have much regard for the movements of the hand on the clock. He could become so completely engrossed in his sermon prior to the services that the time would slip by without his knowing where it went. Not even his wife could get through to him that he must hurry to be in church on time.

He often used the pulpit to reprimand individual members of the congregation for sins of which he knew they were guilty. This characteristic was also to cause him a great deal of trouble. Some of our older members will remember that years ago, when the members of the church were predominantly immigrants or children of immigrants, the position which the church occupied in the community was far different from today. It is hard for us to appreciate this. But especially in a rural community, the church was far more important than now. The church was at the center of all the life of the people. Often members of the church were community leaders and officials. The community had to police itself and was capable of doing this only because the majority belonged to the same congregation. But the result was that the consistory was thrust into a position where it was obligated to handle many of the problems which arose in the community. To the consistory the members would come with all their grievances against their neighbors. Mr. — charged me too much for a load of hay. Mr. — sold me a pig which turned out to be sick. Mr. — sold me a cow which gives half as much milk as he said it did and he will not reimburse me for the amount I think I have coming. Etc.,

etc. To these problems, even when they involved one or two members of the congregation, Rev. Ophoff would address himself in his preaching. It must be remembered, however, that although this was in a way making the "preekstool en steekstool" (the pulpit a whipping post), it nevertheless took a great deal of courage on the part of Rev. Ophoff to reprimand the congregation for sins of which he knew they were guilty. Nor did he care how important their place was in the community; the important thing to him was that they had sinned.

And yet, his preaching was powerful. It was unique. There were few who preached as he did. His tendency to be disorganized sometimes carried over into his preaching so that his sermons were not always the masterpieces of homiletics which one would tend to expect from a professor in the seminary. Nor were his sermons carefully and in detail worked out. Caught up in the preaching and excited by the Word of God which he was called to bring, he could often be so carried along by his preaching that the sermon on which he was preaching was never finished. But for all that, it was powerful preaching. It was powerful, first of all, because it was completely exegetical. Even in those days when the church was relatively strong, real exegetical preaching was not as common as we often think. But Rev. Ophoff expounded the Scriptures. And the people heard him gladly, for through him the Scriptures spoke. It was powerful also because even then he showed his love for the Old Testament not only, but he showed his deep understanding of the character of the times in which the Old Testament saints lived. He could appreciate the Old Testament as few can. He could put himself into the life of the saints whose lives are described by the Scriptures as few preachers could then or can now. There were few then and are few now who could make the Old Testament come alive

for the congregation as he could. Jacob was his favorite character and even those who were children in those days have vivid memories to this day of his sermons on Jacob. His preaching was also powerful because it was Reformed. The glorious Reformed faith shone through every sermon in such a way that the people, from the oldest to the youngest, could understand it. But this ability to make his sermons understandable was partly due to the fact that his preaching was down to earth, homely, filled with illustrations from everyday life, and carefully adapted to the needs of the congregation. Added to this was the fact that his language was

sharp and forthright, clear and concise, utterly frank and open.

There was no question that his preaching was his power. Other things he had difficulty getting straight. In those days there were no bulletins and the minister was handed a list of announcements to read from the pulpit. But Rev. Ophoff's pockets were so jammed with old lists of announcements that sometimes he read three or four wrong lists and went through four or five pockets before the correct list of announcements was found.

Nevertheless, under such preaching and instruction the congregation grew. Then came the split.

Outline of one of Rev. Ophoff's sermons.

Page 1

- over by account in the 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th
- 1) what we are to understand of the text
2) what it means that we are account in the text, samples
3) to do by account
- 2) Account
 1) Account
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 9) Account
 10) Account
 11) Account
 12) Account

sample, what it means, also calling.

a) Account in the text

b) Account in the text

c) Account in the text

Page 2

1) Account
 2) Account
 3) Account
 4) Account
 5) Account
 6) Account
 7) Account
 8) Account
 9) Account
 10) Account
 11) Account
 12) Account

NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

by Cindi Dykstra

BIRTHS:

Mr. & Mrs. Bruining of Hudsonville Church rejoice in the birth of a son, Robert Ralph.

Mr. & Mrs. B. Ringnald of Southwest Church rejoice in the birth of a son born November 22.

Mr. & Mrs. Dave Wiersma of Hull Church were blessed with the birth of a son on November 26.

Mr. & Mrs. Jason Holstege of Hudsonville Church rejoice in the birth of a daughter, Mary Elizabeth born December 8.

Rev. & Mrs. D. Kuiper of Hudsonville Church were blessed with the birth of a son, Victor Paul on December 11.

Mr. & Mrs. Rog Kamphuis of Hope Church were blessed with the birth of a son, Paul Roger on December 12.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP NEWS:

Hudsonville Church has received the papers of Mr. & Mrs. Johannes Bosch from Borculo Christian Reformed Church.

Hudsonville Church has received the papers of Mr. & Mrs. Richard Feenstra. Richard comes from Zutphen Christian Reformed Church, and his wife, former Cathy Bylsma, comes from First Church.

The membership papers of Mrs. R. Kamminga (nee Bev Kuiper) of Southwest Church, have been transferred to Hudsonville Church.

First Church has received the membership papers of Mrs. Mike Kooienga (nee Cryss Westra) from Faith Church.

The membership papers of Rev. & Mrs. D. Kuiper and their children have been transferred from Hudsonville Church to Lynden Church.

Harry Petroelje's membership papers have been transferred from Hope Church

to First Church in Grand Rapids.

At his request, Southwest Church has sent dismissal papers to Dave Pohler.

The membership papers of Mrs. Marie Poortenga have been transferred from First Church in Grand Rapids to Hudsonville Church.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH:

Gladys Hoekstra of Hull Church made public confession of her faith on November 28.

Mr. & Mrs. Craig Garvelink of Hudsonville Church made public confession of their faith on December 12.

Pam Offringa of Southeast Church made public confession of her faith on December 12.

Mrs. R. Kamminga (nee Bev Kuiper) of Southwest Church made public confession of her faith on December 19.

Beth Bos, Anne Doezema, Bob Doezema, Cheryl Knoper, and John Van Baren of First Church made public confession of their faith on January 2.

MARRIAGES:

Allen Thielvold and Sandi Mantel were united in marriage in Doon on October 29.

Mike Kooistra and Renae Jansma were united in marriage in Hull on November 17.

Peter R. Hoekstra and Lavonne Kusters were united in marriage in Hull on November 19.

Edward Veltman of First Church and Laurie Davis were united in marriage on December 1.

Randall Kamminga and Beverly Kuiper were united in marriage in Hope Church on December 10.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES:

Rev. Woudenberg spoke for the Christmas Mass Meeting at Hope Church on December 19.

The young people of Hudsonville had a Fruit Basket Party on December 20.

On December 22, the South Holland Young People's Society went caroling and had a party in the church basement afterwards.

The Hudsonville Young People sold homemade bread for the holidays. Proceeds went for the 1977 convention.

A singspiration with the theme "Daystar From on High" was held at First Church on December 19.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

On November 22 a film of the past convention was shown in Hull School's gym.

Adams Street Christian School presented a band concert in First Church on

December 9.

The congregation of Kalamazoo had a Christmas Supper at the Chalet Restaurant on December 10.

Covenant Christian High School's Choir presented a Christmas program and carol sing at First Church on December 12.

The South Holland Church Choir sang at the Holland Home on December 13.

The Hope School Choirs presented a Thanksgiving-Christmas Choral Program "Glory Unto God," at First Church on December 17.

The Hope Church Choral Society presented their Christmas Concert at Hope Church on January 2.

PLAN AHEAD FOR COMING EVENTS:

The Federation Board is sponsoring a Spaghetti Supper on January 27 at Hope School.

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