

BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH*

MARCH, 1977

PRAISE YE

THE LORD



Editorial

A FAMILIAL-Y PISTLE TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

by John M. Faber

Dear Sis and Bub:

It has been a long time since I wrote to you, so there is no better time than right now—a blustery winter evening, too cold and snowy to go to the mall with Gram. Money saving weather besides. It seems that since I retired from my job I have been busier than usual. That's not really true, of course; it only seems like it. If I would set aside forty hours a week for worthwhile activities as I did when I was working, I would have oodles of time for letter writing and other productive enterprises. So I'd better heed the Walrus when he said, "It's time to speak of many things; of ships and shoes, and sealing wax, and cabbages and kings."

Whereas ships are iced-in in the harbors; sealing wax is an out-moded item; shoes are encased in galoshes; cabbages are all harvested and canned; kings have been replaced by dictators; so the only topic left on the list is "things." That topic has quite a latitude, from California's giant redwoods to the tooth-picks on your tables; from the trip to the corner grocery to the trip around Mars. Of course "things" also include concepts, or ideas, such as the doctrine of Creation; or, the doctrine of the Trinity; or, Democracy vs. dictatorship; or, tobaggoning vs. skiing; or, childless marriages vs. large families. The last named concept sort of intrigues me. No one can escape thinking about a family, seeing each of us belongs to one.

You know that Gram and I are somewhat prejudiced on that subject. We were blessed with ten healthy children who all grew up, were married, and started their own families. Our grandchildren number—at the last count—

thirty-three pairs of feet under their respective dining room tables. That fact is why your old (I can remember when we bought triple decker icecream cones for one nickel!) Gramps can't always remember your names when you come to visit. And that may be the real reason, Gertrude, that I call you "Sis", and I call Peter "Bub". That system seems to work with all thirty-three of you.

I just noticed that your Gramps writes letters like my Grandpa used to write: rambling all over the place before he got to the point. I had intended to write to tell you that the family is the basis for all society life; that all authority in society and government has its beginning in the family; but I guess it's too late for introductions, and I'd better start writing about the family I grew up in, and the family Gram and I raised, and asking a few questions about your families.

I grew up in a large family and we children always had a lot of fun in our leisure hours. In the summer evenings we and our neighbors played out in all kinds of games. I'll never forget the hide-and-go-seek games among the corn shocks, with a lighted kerosene lantern upon a pole stuck in one of the shocks for goal. Winter evenings were filled with games, too. Riddle games, pencil and paper games, chess, checkers and "flinch" games were high on our list of favorites. A once-a-year riddle was: "The name of which very wicked person is mentioned in church services all over the world each Sunday?"

We also paid regular visits to the library for books of every kind. Our village library was not as well stocked as your city ones, and that is probably the reason why

we read so many kinds of books; we surely got a liberal education from those shelves! There is one area where my folks did not watch too carefully—probably because they had their noses in their books. This, you understand was in the years 1910 to 1930 T.V. (I mean before T.V.) No such distractions bothered us; how free we were to choose our own diversions and enjoyments. We could play our games, or read our books without 2-minute ads from the sponsors! Oh, what a beautiful, unhurried, care-free time to live, especially for us children!

That situation changed somewhat when I was raising your fathers and mothers—Gram's and my family. Still no T.V.'s, but we did listen to the radio in the winter evenings. Exactly on the dot of seven every evening we listened to Lowel Thomas and his news casts. That was followed by Amos and Andy, or Vic and Sade, or those bumbling Lum and Abner. Those programs were of the every-day type of family experiences, or business ventures which included some very funny mix-ups. They never portrayed any of the modern filth that can be viewed on the "boob-tube" in all its gory color and explicit vividness. Their "funniness" consisted of rib-tickling humor, not that of the modern lust-provoking type of "crackling of thorns under a pot" laughter. We, too, were a reading family and a game playing family. Many a winter evening was enjoyed with checkers, chess and carrom boards in use. And those times of enjoyment were usually after the catechism or Sunday School lessons were heard. When I was a young lad in grade school, and came home with the tale that teacher had punished me—hoping to get some sympathy from my parents—more than likely I had punishment added, because the teacher was always right in the eyes of my parents. That kind of judgment changed when we raised our family. We asked some pointed questions of our aggrieved informers, and when we

judged the teacher might have been less than realistic in her punishment, we went to the teacher with our complaints. But, lo, and behold; we usually learned that my old father's thinking was not too far off base! The teacher was nearly always right!

How about your family life? Do you have family devotions at the table three times a day? If there is a father in your family, does he lead in audible prayer? And, if father is absent, does your mother, or older brother or sister lead in prayer? Are your spare hours spent in reading, or in playing games, or in discussing the happenings of the day? Or, is yours one of the pitiful families where the father works at night and your mother goes out to work in the daytime, and you children are left in the care of a baby-sitter who lets you live in front of the T.V. because she calls it her best friend; who cares not for your spiritual welfare, nor for the external things that shape your future life? We old (when we were first married we paid \$8 a month rent) fogies are worried about the T.V. fare you are consuming. We are deeply concerned with the fact that our old enemy, the Devil, is trying so hard to feed you his poison; that he is trying to lead you astray from the straight paths held before us in the Bible; that he is tempting you to enjoy the pleasures furnished by "the world"; that he will try to erase from your minds the lessons learned in your Christian schools, in your Sunday Schools and your catechism classes!

You may be assured that when you are saying your evening prayers beside your beds, we are also on our knees remembering all our grandchildren in our prayers that you may be kept unspotted by the world, and that you may grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our only Savior, and walk in sanctification.

You might want to know: the man whose infamy is so great that his name is mentioned every Sunday is Pontius Pilate.

Love, Gramps

THE FAMILY

by Barb Van Den Top

Barb is a member of our Hope, Walker Church.

In the Bible the family was established soon. Adam needed an helpmeet, so God created woman, and out of this union came children, thus completing the family unit. Down through the centuries it has survived as the most stable, enduring, and universal of cultural forms. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the family is defined as "a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption constituting a single household, interacting with each other in their respective social positions of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister, who share, create, and maintain a common culture." The family consists, therefore, of parents and children—parents who teach their children who, in turn, grow up to be responsible, Christian people.

We may ask ourselves, "Are our families any different from the world's? Don't children always argue and fight? And don't we have a generation gap?" If you feel the answer to the last two questions are "Yes," then we are in a sad state.

But then we must think of the differences. Take this past Christmas, for example. We woke up to go to church and attend Christmas service and the Sunday School program afterward. We thought of the Christ who descended from heaven and God's majesty to be born in a lowly manger and take on our human nature and sinful body because He loved us. At the time we were thinking this, the worldly people were probably thinking about that party tonight or those nice presents under the Christmas tree. What a difference!

There are other differences also. We don't have to worry about our parents being unfaithful, spending all their wages sitting in a bar, or even divorce. We wouldn't know what it would be like to come home with no parents around. We, as Christian young people, have real security in our families and homes. We sometimes become frustrated because we feel that we can't do "anything"; but when we think about the young people of the world who try to find security in their drinking and pot parties, we see that we, as Christian young people, are richly blessed and must thank God for our Christian homes.

George M. Ophoff (14)

by Prof. H. Hanko

Those of our readers who are acquainted with the history of our denomination will know that, although the Synod of 1924 adopted the three points of common grace, this Synod did not pass a motion which would require the discipline of those who opposed the doctrine. In fact,

the Synod specifically rejected a motion to discipline. The result was that Revs. Hoeksema and Danhof continued to write and speak concerning their views on the whole matter of common grace. They publicly voiced their opposition to this doctrine.

There were many in the Christian Reformed Church who were not happy with this state of affairs; and the result was that the matter of the discipline of Rev. Hoeksema came to Classis Grand Rapids East in the latter part of the year. This Classis deposed Rev. Hoeksema and his consistory from office — an act which was the beginning of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Classis Grand Rapids West met in January of 1925. This was the Classis which deposed Revs. Danhof and Ophoff along with their Consistories.

A reading of the minutes of Classis Grand Rapids West cannot help but give one certain definite impression concerning these proceedings. For one thing, it is completely obvious that the delegates to Classis Grand Rapids West were following closely and consciously what Classis Grand Rapids East had already done. The latter had paved the way; the former was following the blazed trail. For another thing, there seems no doubt about it that there was collusion between the two Classis — or, at least, between various members of the Two Classes. There was a determined effort on the part of the majority in both Classes to solve the common grace controversy once and for all and to get rid of all opposition to the doctrine. One more impression is left. Classis Grand Rapids West was guilty of what can only be called "steam-roller tactics." The outcome of the Classis meeting was a foregone conclusion before the first day of classical business was finished. The Classis would tolerate no delay, no argument, no opposition to its fixed plan. It had its goal clearly in mind, and it pushed towards this goal relentlessly. Rev. Hoeksema was correct when he wrote in "The History of the Protestant Reformed Churches":

Classis Grand Rapids West was more clearly conscious of its hierarchical power and ecclesiastical

authority over consistories and congregations with their pastors; and it expressed this sense of authority more boldly and proudly.

It attributes to itself the right at any time to pick up a quarrel with a local consistory or pastor or both, though there be no accusation against either of them; and in the course of that quarrel to depose the officebearers, if they presume to disagree with its authority!

It brooks no opposition or contradiction! When its commanding voice is heard, the consistories and ministers had better hasten to obey!

And its vengeance is swift as lightning!

Even though Church Orders and Formulas of Subscription speak of suspension of ministers before they shall be deposed, Classis Grand Rapids West imposes the supreme penalty at once!

It is not our purpose to enter into all the proceedings of Classis Grand Rapids West, in which the congregation of Rev. Ophoff resided. Nor is it our purpose to examine in detail all the church political implications of Classis' action. Nevertheless, we do want to get some of the decisions in these articles, and we want to give our readers some idea of what transpired at Classis which resulted in the deposition of Rev. Ophoff and his Consistory. Our readers must bear in mind that this same Classis also dealt with the deposition of Rev. H. Danhof, minister of Kalamazoo I Christian Reformed Church, and an opponent of common grace; and the candidacy of Mr. B. Danhof, called to be minister of Coopersville Christian Reformed Church, and a man who also expressed opposition to common grace. The latter's candidacy was refused by Classis.

But we are concerned here with what

transpired on Classis in the Ophoff case.

Classis began its meetings Tuesday morning, January 13, 1925, in the La Grave Ave. Christian Reformed Church. It did not actually get to the problem of Rev. Ophoff until Friday morning. The problem came to Classis by way of overtures from eight Christian Reformed consistories, six of which requested Classis to deal with Ophoff's teachings on common grace, and two of which requested Classis not to do this. It is striking that the six overtures asking Classis to deal with Rev. Ophoff were, apart from incidentals, almost identical in content — even to the very wording which was employed. This certainly was more than coincidence. We quote here one overture to give our readers an idea of what they were like.

The consistory of -- requests the classis to ask the consistories of Hope and Kalamazoo I whether they have asked their respective ministers to declare themselves in agreement yes or no with the "three points" of the Synod of Kalamazoo. In case this has not been done the consistory requests classis to require of the two aforesaid consistories that they require such a declaration of their respective ministers and requests classis to take all further steps as conditions may demand, that shall guarantee unity of doctrine in our classis and proper submission to the doctrinal deliverance of Synod.

Grounds:

1) Ample justification for such a request to minister or consistory is found in the Formula of Subscription.

2) The "three points" of Synod are automatically binding on all the ministers of our churches. See Art. 31 of our Church Order.

3) The editorial policy of the

Standard Bearer is that of plain and open insubordination to Synodical authority.

4) The peace and unity of the church demand decisive action in this matter.

All these overtures were given into the hands of a committee to serve Classis with advice. The report which was submitted by this committee is rather lengthy, and so we quote only part of the advice itself.

Your committee advises classis to request the consistory of Hope to inform classis whether it has required of its minister that he declare himself unequivocally whether he is in full agreement, yes or no, with the three points of the Synod of Kalamazoo.

It becomes evident from the grounds that the main argument of Classis was the writings of the **Standard Bearer**. Apparently when the overtures were prepared, only one issue of the **Standard Bearer** had appeared in which Rev. Ophoff had written nothing. But his name appeared on the masthead, and the classis was advised to hold him responsible for what was written, and therefore, responsible also for the opposition to common grace expressed by Revs. Hoeksema and Danhof. In this assumption they were altogether correct.

This advice was adopted and Article 63 of the minutes reads:

The chair now asks the delegates of the consistory of the Hope church whether or not they have ever asked their pastor if he agrees with the three points adopted by the Synod of 1924 in re the Common Grace question.

Elder DeJong of the Hope church is unable to answer this question since he has been a

member of this consistory for but a short time. Rev. Ophoff, however, states that this question has never been asked him by said consistory.

As a result of this answer of Rev. Ophoff, a letter was sent to the consistory of Hope which read:

Dear Brethren,

The Classis Grand Rapids West hereby requires you to require of your minister:

1) That he declare himself unequivocally whether he is in full agreement, yes or no, with the three points of the Synod of Kalamazoo.

2) An unconditional promise that in the matter of the three points he will submit (with the right of appeal) to the Confessional Standards of the Church as interpreted by the Synod 1924 i.e. neither

publicly nor privately propose, teach or defend either by preaching or writing any sentiment contrary to the Confessional Standards of the Church as interpreted by the Synod of 1924 and in case of an appeal that he in the interim will acquiesce in the judgment already passed by the Synod of 1924.

The Classis further requests you to furnish the Classis by 10:00 A.M., Wednesday morning, Jan. 21, 1925, with a definite written answer of your pastor to the two-fold requirement of the Consistory.

Fraternally yours,

The Consistory presented its answer in time, and Rev. Ophoff read the answer of the Consistory; but it is not included in the minutes.

FUTURE **PROTESTANT REFORMED TEACHERS AND MINISTERS**

The Scholarship Fund Committee is again offering scholarships this year. An essay of 300 words written on the topic "Should religion be taught in the Christian School?" is required along with a record of high school and/or college grades, and a recommendation from your consistory. The scholarships are applicable to tuition only. If you are interested in an application contact:

Deb Miedema
2850 36th Steet S.W.
Wyoming, Michigan 49509
Phone: 538-4835

Applications must be in by May 1, 1977.



Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

Modern Speech Versions of the Bible **REVISED STANDARD VERSION**

In this day of modern speech versions flooding the religious book mart, it behooves the knowing, well-read person to be familiar with them, at least at first, by name, and be able to identify their names by their abbreviations. That way you quickly become familiar with them, and begin to see the facility in utilizing the abbreviation(s) rather than the full title(s). Here you go, then:

AB Amplified Bible
ASV American Standard Version
BNT Beck's New Testament
JB Jerusalem Bible
JBP J. B. Phillip's Version
JMB James Moffatt Bible
KJV King James Version
LB Living Bible
LXX Septuagint
MLB Modern Language Bible (Berkeley)
MS(S) Manuscript(s)
NAB New American Bible
NASB New American Standard Bible
NEB New English Bible
NTME New Testament in Modern English
(Helen Barrett Montgomery
Translation)
NIV New International Version

NJV New Jewish Version
NSRB New Scofield Reference Bible
NWT New World Translation
(Jehovah's Witness)
RCHL R. C. H. Lenski's Interpretation of
NT
RSV Revised Standard Version
SRB Scofield Reference Bible
TEV Today's English Version
(or GNMM, Good News For
Modern Man)
VS(S) Version(S)
v. (vv.) verse(s)
WNT Weymouth's NT

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible, 1952 edition, is interesting even as to its front and back flaps alone. The front flap begins, "The Revised Standard Version of the Bible is an **authorized** revision..." (ital., RCH). On the back flap we read that it "is authorized by the National Council of Churches of Christ..." This is then a Bible of the modern ecumenical movement. The front flap also has the claim, "It contains no changes in doctrine or fundamental concepts." But this is a definite misrepresentation of fact. For example, Genesis 24:32, RSV, has,

“let the young woman who comes out...” The reading “young woman” is RSV’s translation of the word *ha-almah*, the virgin, occurring six more times in the OT (Ex. 2:8; Prov. 30:19; Ps.68:25; Song 1:3; 6:8; Isa. 7:14), and always and only does it mean a true virgin. At Isaiah 7:14 we have a concession to apostate Judaism and to Jewish influence. Evidence of this lies in the fact that one of the 32 scholars on the RSV committee was Harry M. Orlinsky, of the Jewish Institute of Religion, N.Y., 1945, and that, furthermore, the corrupted text of Isaiah 7:14 met with the warm approval of Rabbi Brickner, of Temple Sinai, Washington, D.C., who declared, “I am delighted to know that at last this great error of translation has been finally corrected, and that at last some elements of the Christian world no longer officially maintain that Isaiah 7:14 is a prediction that Jesus was to be born of the virgin Mary.” But then these Jews must not be very pleased with Matthew 1:18, which by itself proves he was born of a virgin. They must be even more displeased with 1:23, RSV, “Behold, a (lit., **the**, RCH) virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (which means, God with us).” (ital., RCH). Why, then does “this great error of translation” appear again in the NT? Because there it is impossible to write it off as a translation error, since **he parthenos** cannot honestly be translated by any other than **the virgin**. So it will be translated when the translator is guided by the knowledge of the original languages of Holy Scripture, not by talmudical or rationalistic philosophies.

Among the scholars on the RSV committee were: Luther A. Weigle, dean, Yale U., 1929, OT and NT, chairman. He was on the national committee, National Religion and Labor Foundation, 1933 (Communist Front); National Council Committee on Militarism and Ed. (CF); chmn com. on Chr. Ed. Fed. Coun. Chs., since 1924, etc. Edgar J. Goodspeed. Walter Russell Bowie, Union Theol. Sem.,

1937, NT. He signed a petition to terminate persecution of the CP and membership, and petitioned repeal of the Int. Security Act. He attacked the American Legion lobby at Washington as a “sinister and deadly cancer upon the body of American life” (Chi. Tribune, Mar. 19, 1934). James Moffatt, secretary, Union Theol. Sem., 1930-44 (deceased), O & NT Kyle M. Yates, So. Bapt. Theol. Sem., 1938, OT. In 1959 he sponsored Maj. Edgar C. Bundy, ed. of *News & Views* of the Church League of America. Also in his favor, he had nothing to do with the mutilation of the Isaiah 7:14 RSV passage. He protested it, but to no avail. Other scholars on the committee were from such liberal institutions as Harvard, Yale, U. of Chi., U. of M., Drew Theol. Sem., et al.

On p. iv of the preface, the first words catching the eye are, “Yet the King James Version has grave defects.” This could also be said of the ASV, and by the time we finish our review, it will have to be said also of the RSV. “The ASV was copyrighted to protect the text from unauthorized changes.” The KJV is not copyrighted. “In 1928 this (ASV) copyright was acquired by the International Council of Religious Education”, a unitarian organization. (See *Heresies Exposed*, p. 129). A reviewer of the RSV, under the imprimatur of the Division of Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., boasts of it that “it preserves for us every single article of the faith of our fathers.” Then a few lines lower he wrote, “This Savior is unique. He is unique in that his life did not begin at his birth. He had existed from the beginning. (Jn. 1:1).” Scripture says he **was** in the beginning, i.e., when the beginning had begun, the Word already **was**, which is saying more than his having existed from the beginning, which is Arian heresy. Then he quotes Jn. 1:14, “we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.” The word **Son** is

not in the text. It is **only begotten**. Here is a change in doctrine and fundamental concept, and departure from "the faith of our fathers." The eternal generation of the ontological Son of God is denied and dropped.

In Matthew 21, v. 44 is omitted, with the note that "other ancient authorities add" it. But there are a mass of authorities outweighing those omitting this verse. Matthew 27:54 has, "Truly this was a Son of God!" The well-substantiated text reads literally, "Truly this One was God's Son!" In some respects better than the RSV is the RSV Catholic Edition since it restores "the sixteen passages found in the Received Text (Gk. text on which KJV is based—RCH) that the RSV had placed in footnotes." This includes such passages as the long ending in Mark (16:9-20), the story of the woman taken in adultery (Jn. 7:52-8:11), and the Lucan account of Peter running to the tomb (Lk. 24:12). Also the centurion's exclamation is given as in the KJV, "Truly this was the Son of God!" There is still another edition, the RSV Common Bible, meant to be an ecumenical Bible, hence endorsed by Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox Catholics and Protestants. The purpose of this edition is that now all churches can use the same Bible. But we still need a better Bible than any of these RSVs. For the text early in the Bible, at Genesis 6:3, is not good. "My spirit shall not **abide** in man forever..." (ital., RCH). The Spirit of God was not abiding in those wicked men

of that day. Cp. Jn. 14:16-17. The word ("strive," KJV) means, "contend with," "testify against" or "oppose by the Word" (Neh. 9:30).

The RSV claims to retain Thou, Thy, Thee where deity is referred to; and where mere human relations obtain, **you** and **your(s)** are used. Then, "You are my son, today I have begotten you" and "your heritage...your possession," etc., make Christ a mere man in Psalm 2. Contrast these pronouns in this psalm with those in Psalm 3:3,7,8. Then note the contradiction in the use of these pronouns in Psalm 2:7-9 compared with Hebrews 1:5 and Acts 13:33. Check on Psalm 45:6-7. How can the throne of a mere man be divine and endure forever? See also Psalm 68:18 (an ascension Psalm), where the ascension is eliminated, so contradicting Ephesians 4:8-10, RSV. Psalm 16:10, RSV, reads, "Thou dost not give me up to Sheol, or let thy godly one see the Pit." Acts 13:35, RSV, contradicts this with, "Thou wilt not let thy Holy One see corruption," implying the deliverance of the resurrection of the body. But as Psalm 16:10, RSV, reads, it contains no prophecy of the resurrection. Then where Proverbs 8:22, RSV, reads, "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old," we have the Gnostic heresy that the Son of God incarnate is a mere creature, which is contradicted by Jn. 1:1-3, RSV.

(To be continued)

To bless the earth Thou sendest
from Thy abundant store
the waters of the spring-time,
enriching it once more.
The seed by thee provided
is sown o'er hill and plain,
and Thou with gentle showers
dost bless the springing grain.

Psalter 171, stanza 2

PRAISE YE THE LORD!

by Marilyn Reitsma

Marilyn is a member of our First Church.

"Today is the first day of the rest of your life." This is a very popular cliché. Think about it young people. What do you plan to do today?

Start the rest of your life by opening your eyes and seeing (I mean **really seeing**) the glorious world you live in. This world was originally created by God and there is much beauty in it that we very often take for granted.

A short time ago, we had a terrible snow blizzard. All of man's plans were spoiled or changed. We were inconvenienced. Yet, you could not help but see God's Hand in that storm. He is in control of **all things**. Praise Ye The Lord!

Some winter day I would like you to look over a field of freshly fallen snow. Snow that is sparkling in the sunshine and not yet ruined by man's footsteps. Think about how many snowflakes must have fallen. Each and every snowflake is different, original, and unique. Praise Ye The Lord!

Look up in the sky some evening and notice the bright and twinkling stars. There are millions of stars and astronomers tell us that there are many more in galaxies that we can't even see. Yet Psalm 147:4 tells us that God calls every star by name. Praise Ye The Lord!

The raging sea is also in God's Hand. Some of you may have seen mighty waves crashing against the rocky shoreline of California or the pier at Grand Haven. Here God shows His power. His dominion

is shown in the gospel accounts where we read that God only has to speak the Word and the water will obey and be still. Praise Ye The Lord!

Think ahead to springtime and the flowers and trees. "Consider the lilies how they grow. They toil not, they spin not; yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Luke 12:27).

Some of you may have had the privilege to see God's Majesty displayed in the mountains. Or you may have stood in awe at the edge of the Grand Canyon. Words can barely describe the beauty seen here except: Praise Ye The Lord!

Last of all, young people, look at yourselves. Inside of you is another attribute of God: God's Love. It is hidden sometimes but it is there. You are regenerated children of God and therefore have the love of God in your hearts. Praise Ye The Lord!

Young people, it is your duty to appreciate what God has given to you in this world. Use your gift of sight (as well as your gifts of hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling) to God's glory. See God's Power, Might, Creativity, Originality, Uniqueness, Gentleness, Beauty, and Love in **all things**. See them in such simple things as a rainbow or a sunset. Then, young people, go out and declare to the whole world the Wonders of God.

"Today is the first day of the rest of your life." It is also the day which the Lord hath made; Rejoice and be Glad in it! Praise Ye The Lord!



Feature

PERSONAL WITNESS IN OUR DAILY LIVES

by Rev. Rodney G. Mlortana

We must be witnesses. Immediately we think of the many modern missionary calls to stand on the street corner or to go from house to house knocking on doors and handing out tracts. But such is not the thrust of this article. I was asked to write an article dealing with the personal witness in our daily lives. This is certainly the calling of everyone, young and old, rich and poor, parent and child. The child of God seeks direction for his life from God's revelation, the Holy Scriptures. So, if we are to be witnesses in our daily lives, we should seek out God's Word as to the idea of a witness or witnessing.

In searching this Word of God we see that the many passages which contain the word "witness" fall, for the most part, into two main categories. The first group deals with a witness, one who has seen with his own eyes someone, or something. The second group deals with the idea of bearing testimony, a telling of what one has seen. The two, certainly, are very closely related. A witness, then, is one who remembers, who has knowledge of something by recollection, and who can thus tell about it. In other words, the making known and confessing of convictions.

Now we must take this basic idea and apply it to the subject under consideration. In our daily lives we must be living testimonies of what we know and confess. We are children of God who live in blessed, covenant fellowship with our God and with our fellow saints. As children of our covenant God, we have a sure knowledge within our hearts of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. We know that as members of the body of

Jesus Christ we are Christians. We know why we are called Christians: "Because I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus am partaker of his anointing; that so I may confess his name, and present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to him: and also that with a free and good conscience I may fight against sin and Satan in this life: and afterwards reign with him eternally, over all creatures." (Heid. Cat. Q & A 32).

This we know and we must bear testimony of this knowledge. To put it succinctly, to be a witness is to live a life of gratitude unto God for delivering us from the bondage of sin and misery through Jesus Christ our Lord. The works of gratitude are all those that proceed from a true faith. By living this way we bear testimony or we witness of Jesus Christ. Our whole life must be lived in such a way that whoever sees us can immediately see the life of Christ within us. We are children of the light and that light must shine in the midst of this world of sin and darkness. Matthew 5:16 reads, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Our good works bear witness of the light that is within us.

Let us apply this principle to ourselves for a moment. What do those with whom we come into contact see when they observe our actions, our speech, our dress, our companions, etc.? Do they see the life of Christ or that of the devil and his host? Remember the words of Christ, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." We may speak ever so many pious words, attend a Christian school, worship

in God's house every Sunday, but if our actions are contrary, our true self is revealed. A witness, remember, bears testimony of that which he knows. If we know Jesus Christ in the Scriptural sense, then our lives bear this out. And, certainly, as children of God this is our calling. We do not witness of and for Christ when we dress sensuously, profane God's name, rebel against authority, or go on a drunken spree. This is of Satan, and the world loves it.

No, we do not have to go to a busy street corner and hand out religious tracts to be a witness of Christ. Our biggest witness is a life of faith, a life of gratitude, a life in antithesis to the world of darkness. This is our purpose in life as pointed out in Scripture and the confessions. Such a life is to the glory of God.

The Heidelberg Catechism puts it this way in Q & A 86 in answer to why we must do good works, "Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by his blood, also renews us by his Holy Spirit, after his own image; that so we may testify, by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude to God for his blessings, and that he may be praised by us; also, that every one may be assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof; and that, by our godly conversation, others may be gained to Christ." The chief purpose, then, of our daily lives, is to praise God, glorify His name, and do so by living a life of gratitude unto Him. Unto that end were we created, "to shew forth His praise." God is glorified when we bear witness in all our life of His saving work for and within us through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. All of God's glory is reflected perfectly in Christ. We as members of Christ's body also reflect that glory. As a cut diamond reflects the light in its multi-faceted way, so we in Christ reflect God's glory in all of its fulness. This reflection, this witness, is seen by

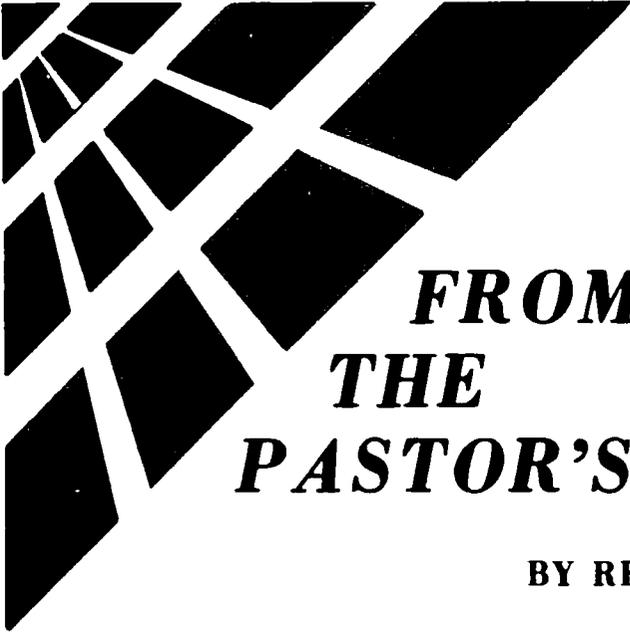
our way of living. It is a life in Christ in that God's Word has taken complete control of our spiritual control center, directing our lives completely unto His service.

But in addition to serving the glory of God, our Christian witness also serves the purpose of the Almighty in gaining others for Christ. God uses our Christian witness to bring others into the sphere and under the preaching of God's Word. No, we do not save anyone, but God certainly can use us to bring another to His power of salvation, the proclamation of the gospel. Under the power of the Holy Spirit, the unbeliever sees and desires the "peace that surpassed all understanding" which he sees reflected in our daily life.

Do it today! Do not wait until later. We are called to live our entire life as witnesses of Jesus Christ. So often as young people we are tempted to put things off saying, "I will sow my wild oats, enjoy myself. Later when I get married I can settle down and live according to God's will." Do not listen to that voice, young people, for it is the voice of God's enemy, that old serpent the devil. Harken rather unto the word of the Lord, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." This must be the case at home, at school, at work, at church, and while we have leisure time. Our whole life, our daily witness, must be a personal witness of the life that is within us, the life of Christ Jesus.

O, we cannot expect to do this alone, in our own strength. No, we need the strength of God's grace and Holy Spirit. Pray, for this is God's means of communication with His covenant people. And, really, is not a life of prayer the chief part of thankfulness, hence, the best way to bear personal witness of the renewing of our lives? Certainly, thus may God give us the grace to lead such a life unto His praise. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

Young People! Are you reading our Protestant Reformed Publications?



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. M. KAMPS

OUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

God has given to us His perspicuous or transparent Word of revelation. According to the dictates of this clear infallible Word, we must worship God. Therefore, the question: Have you ever given account before the face of God for your present church membership? Some persons in the church never even consider this question. Others, when they do ask themselves this question, cannot give an answer. Others give wrong answers. Why are you, believer, a member of the church where you are now? How do you account for, before the face of God, allegiance or membership in a church?

Christ said to his disciples, "Follow me!" By this command Jesus called his disciples to an exclusive association and fellowship. The "follow me" implies that one is commanded to forsake his aimless wandering or to leave a former association. One could not and may not be both a follower of the Pharisees or Sadducees and be a follower of Christ. Those persons who called themselves "the people of

God," but of whom Christ said that they were of the synagogue of Satan, would be called out of the sphere of the lie to be joined to the Church at Philadelphia in the sphere of the truth (Rev. 3:7-13).

The command to follow Christ Jesus always posits an exclusive relationship to Him. The exclusiveness of this relationship is necessitated by the demands of love. One's love of Christ precludes fellowship with those who oppose Him. Follow me! Forsake the world, the lie, the humanistic desires, activities, goals of men, and every false prophet who says, "Here is Christ," or "There is Christ." The love relationship of Christ and His Bride is an exclusive relationship. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Consequently, we have a problem as individual saints. Our problem is: how can we know that we are indeed "following him"? Are you and I able consciously to give valid reasons why we worship where we do? Earnest believers want to be the Church in the world. That is, they want to

be organized as the Church of Christ...the manifestation of that one organism called the body of Christ. How do you know that you are not numbered among those who persecute the Church of Christ thinking they do God a service? (John 16:2). There are now many self-deceived persons who hate and persecute God's people thinking that they do God a service.

The problem for the individual believer is that there are hundreds of separate, distinct denominations or sects or cults which all call themselves "the Church!" In many small towns and villages there are ten to twenty different unaffiliated churches. Thus the question: where must I be a member? Where do we heed the command of Christ, "Follow me"? Why did you join and why are you now a member of this or that particular church? The Methodists, Adventists, Unitarians, Mormons, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Pentecostals, Reformed, Roman Catholics and others all claim that they are the Church, and they all claim that the command of Christ, "Follow me" can be fulfilled in their respective organization.

In addition to this problem, there are those who aggravate the issue by declaring that it does not make any difference where you go to church. They claim that all and every church are more or less good churches. Others advise us to join that church which is convenient. These same people laugh to scorn those who travel seventy or eighty miles one way to attend a particular Protestant Reformed congregation far from home. Still others advise that we should join one of those congregations which would be to our social and financial benefit; certain church memberships are good for business and open up avenues of esteem and honor in the community. And, finally, we are told that after all it does not really make any difference where you go to church because we all serve the same Jesus. I for one know, however, that not every organiza-

tion that calls itself church preaches the same Jesus. Most preach and hold to a false concept of who Christ is!

One young man of another church said to me sometime ago: "Why do you people get so bent out of shape when someone contemplates leaving your church? We don't think anything of it when someone leaves our church to go elsewhere." By this remark this young man, of course, revealed a confused or reckless attitude towards church membership and the command of Christ, "Follow me."

How do we solve this problem? The believer who earnestly inquires into the reasons for his present church membership judges the validity of these reasons in the light of Scripture. This self-interrogation presupposes that we have not the right to worship God as we please. **The standard** of proper worship is the Bible. The Scriptures either approve or condemn our worship. The Scriptures declare who God is and how He will be worshipped. God determines what is proper worship, not man. This fact is often forgotten. Man, lawless man, thinks he has the right to determine what is a proper confession, a proper prayer, a proper song through which to praise the holy God. Our Savior said that they that worship God must worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24). Through preaching, confessing and singing the truth of God's Word, God is worshipped. One cannot worship the living and true God through false doctrine. Let he who would minimize the seriousness of false doctrine know that false doctrine precludes the possibility of the worship of God. One cannot worship God with lies. He that, because of false prophets, speaks evil of the way of truth (II Peter 2:2) has been deceived and what he calls worship is not proper worship at all.

Through the confession of the truth of Scripture God is worshipped by us. Christ Jesus is the truth. To know, believe, and

confess the truth of God's Word is to confess Christ's name in the world to the praise of the Triune God. The Scriptures are the God-given standard whereby we are to know the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. Thus, we must ever search the Scriptures. We must ever be numbered among those "who searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

The individual believer is duty bound before God to join himself to that Church where the truth of God's Word is loved, preached, and defended. Where the truth of God's Word is preached, the sacraments properly administered, and church discipline faithfully exercised; there Christ Jesus speaks, rules, and feeds His people. He that would worship God according to the Scriptures must place himself **under** the faithful manifestation of the one office of Christ. Where there is faithful preaching, the proper administration of the sacraments of Christ, and faithful exercise of church discipline...there is the true Church. Through membership in that Church we properly worship our God and Savior.

No one may leave that church. Everyone is duty bound to join himself to this true church. Practical or carnal considerations of distance, business opportunities, convenience, and social considerations may not determine whether

we will join or whether we will leave that true church. That decision is easily discerned by those who search the Scriptures as the only standard of truth.

At one time or another, God's people find themselves in apostatizing institutions of the church where false doctrine and worldmindedness reigns unrebuked. What must such earnest believers do? Can members of the body of Christ Jesus tolerate and condone false doctrine? They must "come out from among them" and heed the command of Christ Jesus, "Follow me!" They just join themselves to that church (or form a new institution of the Church) where the truth of God's Word in Christ is preached. Remember, to forsake false doctrine is to turn to Christ as Calvin reminds us in His letter to Sadolet.

At other times God's people find themselves hated and scorned for their confession and membership in the true Church and are tempted to leave this church because of the scorn heaped upon them. But they may not! To do so would be disobedience. Sin! Rather, when the weight of "suffering as a Christian" (I Peter 4:16) becomes too great to bear, then let God's children turn to Him in prayer seeking strength from Him to continue along this narrow pathway that leads to life everlasting.

A NOTE FROM HOUSTON

by *Eliza Sugg*

I am writing this article to tell the readers of the *Beacon Lights* of how great a gift God has given us here in the Houston area.

Our small Protestant Reformed missionary group has a great many things to be thankful to Jehovah for. First, we are thankful for the pure preaching of the Gospel we receive twice each Sunday. All the families in our congregation have come from Calvinistic Presbyterian back-

grounds, and for a time had no suitable church to attend. Then about three years ago, we sent a request to the mission committee to send us a minister for a little time. First, we had Reverend Lubbers for one Sunday. Subsequently, other ministers were sent, each to be here for a few

weeks at a time. Then after about a year, Reverend Harbach was called, and he accepted the call to be our missionary pastor.

We have met in various places, but the Lord now provides us with a suitable place of worship in Houston. It is a large room in a country club building and is equipped with tables, chairs, and a piano. Mrs. Harbach is our fine pianist.

Another thing we are thankful for is the covenant seed which has been added to us. Since our beginning we have had three babies born. So if the Lord is willing for us to organize, we have these three to be baptized and, therefore, given the sign of the covenant.

Thirdly, we are blessed by and very thankful for the catechetical instruction we receive from Reverend Harbach on Monday afternoon in his apartment. We have three classes: the youngest class is studying the New Testament for Beginners, the second class is the oldest and we are in the Essentials of Reformed Doctrine, while the third class is made up of 10-13 year-olds and is studying the New Testament History for Seniors. This instruction is truly good for it strengthens the young believers very much.

We also have a mid-week Bible class on Thursday evening in the homes of the families of our church. In this, the book of I Timothy is being studied.

During the year, we have various activities. We have Old and New Years' services. In early summer, we have a picnic at our house. In October we have a

singspiration at church, after which we have a light supper, while a week or so latter we attend a Reformation Day service. In November, we have a Thanksgiving Service and a Thanksgiving dinner. At this time, we can truly be thankful with our fellow saints. December brings Christmas time when we have a Christmas program in which all participate. We also have a Christmas Day service.

If it is the Lord's will, and it is our earnest prayer that we may be a fully organized church, we may then even more fully enjoy and benefit in the communion of saints in our little flock of Christ's here in Texas.

But in all things we must say, "God's will be done", and added to this, "Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord: for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever."

As most of our readers already know, Houston now has an organized Protestant Reformed Church. The Council of our Hope Church, Walker, Michigan, was mandated by the Mission Committee to implement the organization.

On the evening of February 15, Rev. Van Overloop, accompanied by two elders, officiated at the worship service. The sermon was based on I Kings 19:9-13.

We welcome this flock to our fellowship as churches. And we wish them the Lord's blessing as they contend for the faith once delivered to our fathers.

Truly wonderful and monstrous is the extravagance of our pride. God requires of us nothing more severe than that we most religiously observe His Sabbath, by resting from our own works; but there is nothing which we find more difficult, or to which we are more reluctant, than to bid farewell to our own works, in order to give the works of God their proper place — John Calvin

NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

by Cindi Dykstra

BIRTHS:

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Schrottenboer of Hudsonville Church were blessed with the birth of a son, Tim, on January 18.

Rev. & Mrs. Moore of First Church in Edmonton were blessed with the birth of twins, Stacie and Stephanie, on January 20. (There are now 51 members in the congregation.)

Mr. & Mrs. Lafferty of Faith Church were blessed with the birth of a daughter on January 24.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hoving of South Holland were blessed with the birth of a son, Henry Alan.

Jan Soodsma of Randolph Church was blessed with the birth of a son, Jonathan Jesse, on February 6.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:

The membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Wilbur S. Postma of First Church in Grand Rapids have been transferred to Southwest Church.

Larry Kooienga's membership papers have been transferred from Hope Church in Grand Rapids to Loveland Church.

South Holland has received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Arthur De Jong, Jr. and three baptized children from Calvary Independent Church.

Faith has received the papers of Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Pastoor from Southeast Church.

Kalamazoo has received the George Tomlinson family's membership papers.

MARRIAGES:

Henry Kamps of Hudsonville Church and Haleine Vis were united in marriage in Beverly Christian Reformed Church on January 21.

Randall Miedema of Hudsonville Church and Elsiena Ten Haaf were united in marriage on February 4.

Dave Kamps and Karla Kalsbeek were united in marriage on February 18 in Hope Church.

CONFESSION OF FAITH:

Debra Bruinsma and Jessica Poortinga made public confession of their faith in South Holland on February 20.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES:

The Junior Young People's Society of First Church in Grand Rapids had a sleigh ride on December 27 at Church Wagon. They reported they had a lot of fun even though they had to stop a few times to wait for Mr. Ed Ophoff (one of their leaders) to catch up.

The Federation Board sponsored a Spaghetti Supper at Hope School on February 3.

Randolph's Young People's Society sponsored a night of fun and fellowship on January 25 at the Randolph Christian grade school gym.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

South Holland held a dedication program and an open house for their new school addition on February 4. Rev. Engelsma spoke on "The Warfare of Christian Education." The school choir and band also participated in the program.

A hostess supper was held on February 7 in Hull. Rev. Hoeksema spoke on the "Authority Relation of Home and School."

PLAN AHEAD FOR COMING EVENTS:

Adams School, Hope School, and Covenant High are working on a joint band concert to take place on April 22. Tentative plans call for the concert to be held in Grandville High School Auditorium.

Hope's All School Program is scheduled for April 29 in Hudsonville Church.

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March 1976 - February 1977
Beth Bos - Federation Board Librarian

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CRIT	-Critique	H.L.	-Harry Langerak
ED	-Editorial	R.M.K.	-Rev. M. Kamps
PS	-From the Pastor's Study	B.G.	-Barry Gritters
TVE	-Truth vs. Error	D.M.H.	-David M. Harbach
A.U.	-Author Unknown	A.L.	-Agatha Lubbers
J.M.F.	-John M. Faber	R.J.S.	-Rev. J. Siopsma
J.P.	-Jessica Poortinga	R.R.V.O.	-Rev. R. Van Overloop
R.R.C.H.	-Rev. R.C. Harbach	R.W.B.	-Rev. W. Bekkering
P.D.	-Phil Dykstra	C.B.	-Cindy Buiters
P.H.H.	-Prof. H. Hanko	J.B.	-Jon Bol
R.G.L.	-Rev. G. Lubbers	M.J.K.	-Mrs. Jacob Kuiper, Sr.

R.H.V. -Rev. H. Veldman
R.D.B. -Ruth De Boer
R.B. -Rachel Bouwkamp
G.Z. -Geraldine Zylstra
G.K. -Gerald Kuiper
S.P. -Sue Porte
M.G.T. -Mrs. G. Terpstra
K.H. -Ken Hanko
P.H. -Pete Hoekstra
J.H.#1 -Janice Harbach
S.B. -Sharon Bylsma
B.E. -Betty Ekema
P.H.C.H. -Prof. H.C. Hoeksema
J.H.#2 -Jan Hanko
P.R. -Pat Rau

CORRECTION

The poem which appeared in the December issue of **Beacon Lights** by Sue Porte entitled "Christmas", should have been entitled "God's Covenant Faithfulness." Also, in the 6th verse, second line, read "in" instead of "ere"; and next to last verse, first line, read "ope" instead of "opens."

LIGHT

by Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema

Dear Lord
With - in
The world
Of sin
We sorely need
The light that shines
From Thee. We plead
Connect us by a living
faith, empow'ed by Christ.
His light'ning brightness give.
Infuse in us Thy grace
That we may be
Un-dim
Through
Him

CONVENTION NOTE

Greetings in Christ from the 1977 publicity committee for the 37th annual P.R.Y.P. Convention, to be sponsored, D.V., by the Young People of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church.

Once again this year's convention will be held, D.V., at Camp Geneva on the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan, on August 23-26, 1977. Already wheels are turning in preparation to make this a fun-filled, as well as spiritually-filled, convention.

Contrary to last year's convention, we are looking into the possibilities of extending the convention from Monday afternoon, the 22nd of August thru Friday morning, the 26th. In so doing, registration would be Monday morning. Again we say, this is only a possibility.

We hope that all the young people will be able to attend this year's convention. We need all and any support as hosts of the upcoming convention. We would greatly appreciate any participation of various fund-raising projects. Send any contribution to our finance committee chairman:

Scott Boer
7871 Emberly Dr.
Jenison, Mich. 49428

More details will be given later, both in newsletters sent to each society and in future *Beacon Lights*.

Yours in Christ,
Greg Van Overloop
Chairman of Publicity Committee

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