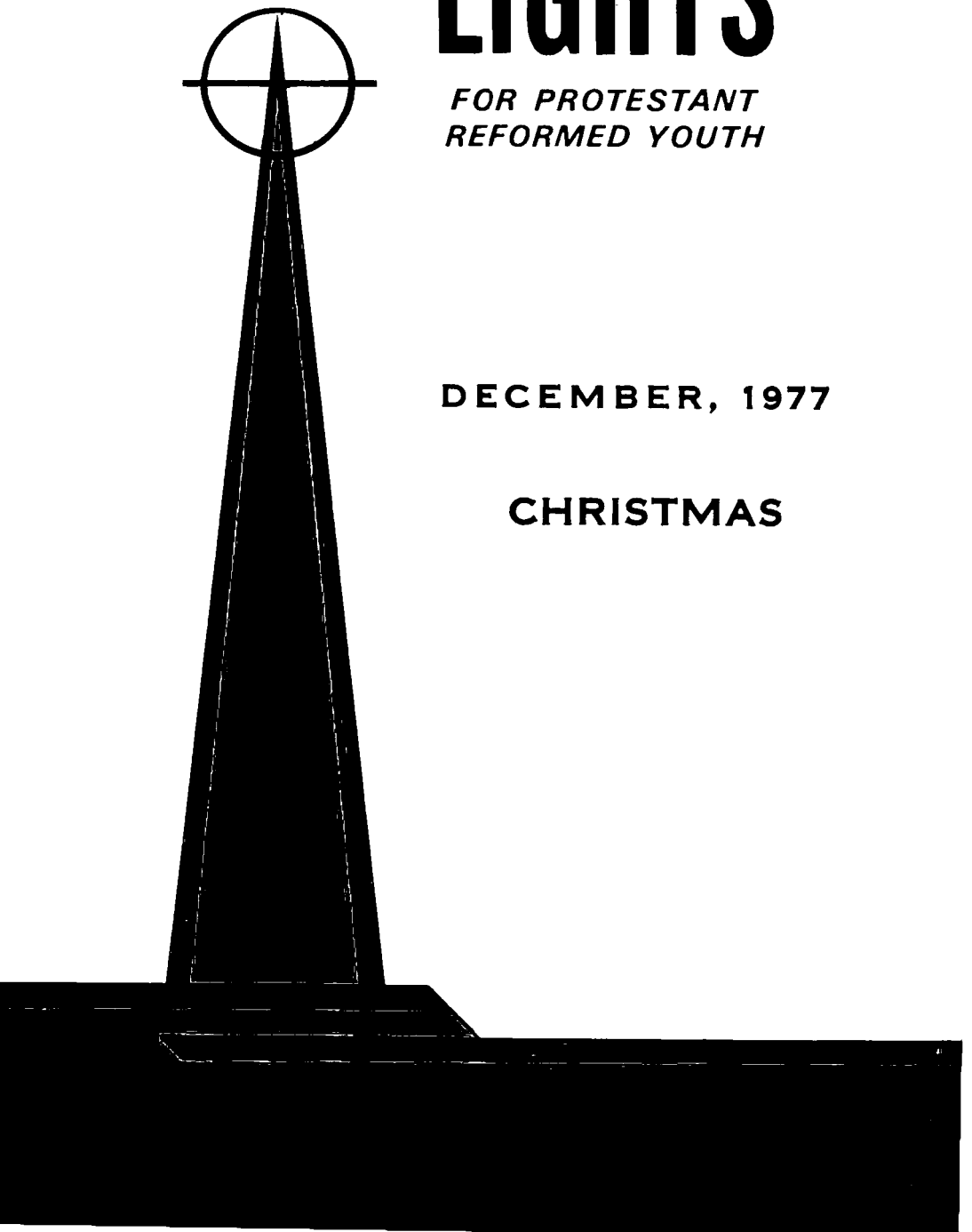
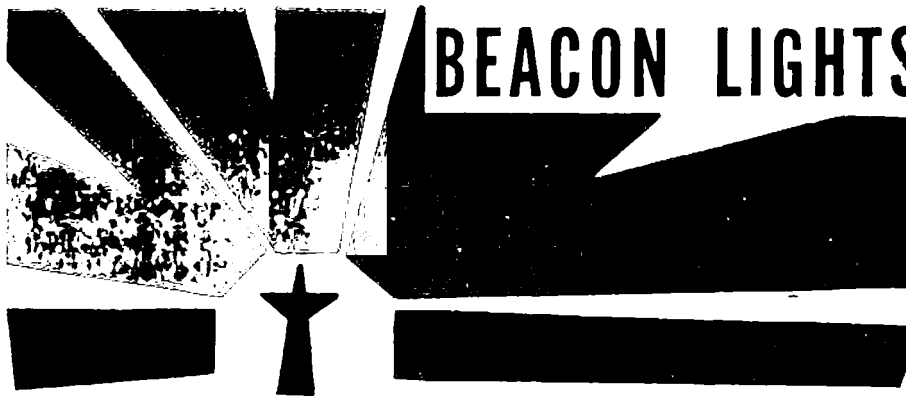
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



DECEMBER, 1977

CHRISTMAS



VOLUME XXXVI DECEMBER, 1977 NUMBER 8

Published monthly (except June-July and August-September are combined) by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

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The articles of **Beacon Lights** do not necessarily indicate the viewpoint of the Editorial Staff. Every author is solely responsible for the contents of his own article.

Contributions of general interest are very welcome.

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Forms 3579 should be returned to **Beacon Lights** 1401 Su-Lew S.W., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49504

Second Class Postage paid at Jenison, Michigan

Subscription price $3.00

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

In this last issue of 1977 we are pleased to introduce a series of articles entitled "Leaving father and mother." Rev. C. Hanko plans to discuss in this series the finding of a mate, the courtship, the marriage vows, and the bond of marriage that unites two lives in love, in devotion, and in the fear of the Lord. Rev. Hanko's many years of pastoral care plus the experience received from raising his own children will be reflected in these articles. In his own inimitable way he will present insights and guidelines which you will not soon forget.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Rev. Robert C. Harbach, who is now laboring in the Victoria, British Columbia area of Canada, sends us a Pacific Northwest inspired Truth vs. Error. Sasquatch to some. Okanagan to others. Bigfoot (abdominal snowmobile man?) to most. Don't pass it up!

* * * * * * * * * * *

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Joel Sugg, Schoolmaster of The Country School, recounts for us his endeavors to fullfil that command of God. Mr. Sugg is a member of our newest congregation Trinity Protestant Reformed Church, of Houston, Texas. Mr. Sugg owns, operates and maintains his own Christian school in Katy, Texas.

* * * * * * * * * * *

We take this opportunity as Federation Board and *Beacon Lights* staff to wish you a blessed Christmas and New Year. May the true meaning of Christmas fill your heart and remain with you throughout the coming new year.

Editorial

GOD WITH US

by Gerald Kuiper

The word "Incarnate" came up in my English class recently when we were studying Greek and Latin prefixes. One student thought it meant something like "incarcerate" - something to do with a putting away. Another thought it was something evil because she had heard of a book with that word in its title, and that book was not an acceptable one. We discovered that the meaning was "embodied in the flesh" or "existence in bodily form." Some of my students were

surprised when it was pointed out that the incarnation is the central idea of Christmas. Christ made flesh; Christ dwelling among us. Christ the Promised One now becoming Christ the man. God with us!

I thought later that the concept of the incarnation is probably the one key to the idea of what Christmas is all about. We hold as an article of our faith that Jesus, the Son of God was "conceived by the Holy Ghost" and was "born of the Virgin Mary." The fact of the virgin birth already leaves out a great share of the people about us who "know" that to be impossible. But the idea of God becoming man is even more incomprehensible to an unbelieving world. But again, this beautiful fact is the core of God's plan of salvation.

Think of your instruction in catechism concerning God the Creator, and concerning man who was a disobedient creature that rebelled and became dead in sin. The only satisfaction for that sin, we believe, could be made by one who is truly God and truly man. So God, in His Sovereign plan, sent His only Son Jesus into the flesh to atone for that sin and make us right with God. To us His children and to the church of all ages He promised in Isaiah 7:14b, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Later in Isaiah we find the beautiful declaration in chapter 9:6. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." This Christ is spoken of again in Titus 2:13 & 14 where we have the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies summarized by Paul when he writes; "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men...Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Young people, rejoice with me today; for we are that people. We are that people who are the adopted sons and daughters of our Father in heaven. He sent His only begotten Son into the flesh to redeem or buy back His chosen ones. And our elder brother Jesus Christ gave himself willingly to the death on the cross to accomplish salvation for us. GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST! O, how we must sing that with the angels of Judea!

Let us be jealous of our heritage of knowledge concerning the incarnation of our Lord, guarding, preserving, and savoring the knowledge we have concerning God's grace to us. And let us through all our lives worship and adore Him, Who is Immanuel, God with us!

CHRISTMAS

by Sherry Van Beek

Sherry is a member of our Southwest Prot. Ref'd. Church.

Christ was born on Christmas Day
He came to live on earth
Because it was the Father's Will,
He bore a lowly birth.

There was no room within the Inn
To make the Babe a bed.
This Little One, who now is King
Was born within a cattle shed.

Although He bore a lowly birth,
Did not the angels sing?
Did not they tell the shepherds
Of Jesus Christ, our King?

Did not the wisemen travel
From a land that was afar
With a guidance as they traveled
The brightness of a Star?

Did not this Babe soon suffer
To save both you and me?
Did not He die upon "the Tree"
To set His people free?

And yet when Christmas comes each year
Its meaning's put to naught
For little think of Jesus and
Salvation that He brought....

But rather dream of presents
That lie beneath a tree....
"I wonder which belongs to me,
What could the present be?"

Christ was born on Christmas Day
So many years ago
And this must be remembered
As each Christmas comes and goes.

For this Christ of long ago
Will come for you and I
And take us Home to Heaven
To our Father's Home on High.

Drawing by Terry Gleason

Leaving Father and Mother (1)

by Rev. C. Hanko

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." Gen. 2:24

There comes a time in the life of the young man when he breaks away from the parental home. After spending two decades or more in what to him was the only home he ever knew, he forsakes that home to make a new home for himself. This applies to the young woman also; a fact that is so obvious that the text quoted above does not even mention it. The young man **forsakes** father and mother. He makes a complete break with his parents, not in the sense that he disowns them as parents, wants nothing more to do with them, ignores them, or fails to respect them. He still loves them, honors them, visits them, seeks their advise when necessary, opens his home to them and cares for them in their needs. Yet he forsakes them so completely that their home is no longer his home. He ventures out to establish a new home; his own home, just as a bird leaves its nest, never to return, but to build its own nest elsewhere. The young man makes a home for his bride, so that she also packs up her belongings, moves out of her parental home, and goes to live with her husband in their new relationship of husband and wife.

Why is that break with father and mother so complete and final? The answer is, that at the dawn of history God said that it is not good that man should be alone. This is an ordinance of God that belongs to man's creation. Just as a fish finds its natural habitat in the water, the bird in the air, and the fox in the forest, so the natural environment for the young man is a home with his wife, requiring a break with his former parental home. When God created us He created us male and female. Adam came forth from the hand of the Creator with a strong, handsome, masculine body. He had an intelligent face, a dexterous, multipurpose hand, a keen mind; honesty and sincerity shone from his eyes, love to his God characterized his royal bearing. He was king, there was no doubt about that. He was king over all that he surveyed. Eve was a woman. Her long hair, her womanly figure, her feminine face, all spoke of the unique beauty of the woman. She also had a stately bearing, not that of a slave, but rather as of noble birth. Together they made a most attractive pair. In fact, it is extremely difficult for us to form a mental picture of the unblemished, radiant beauty of our first parents, who were created good, entirely fit to serve the purpose of their Maker. The inroads of sin, so evident in us, had not yet marred their natural attractiveness.

Eve was different, not only in physical appearance, but also in many other ways. She was bone of Adam's bone and flesh of his flesh, yet a new creation, formed by God to be a helper to Adam. Her love to God shone through her love and devotion to her husband. She was dependent on him to show her the marvels of creation. She admired her husband, respected him, gladly listened to him, that she might join him in telling the praises of their Maker. They were drawn to each other, not as friends, but by the natural, magnetic attraction of the opposite sex. They were sufficiently alike, yet also

sufficiently different that they were perfectly mated to each other. They needed each other, and that, mind you, in perfection, without sin. For sin had not yet entered to wreak havoc on that most intimate relationship between one man and one woman. It was certainly not good for man to be alone; not for Adam, nor for Eve. According to God's creation ordinance they needed each other to make their life complete.

There is still another reason why it was not good for Adam to be alone. God had given Adam dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowls of the air, and over every living creature that moves upon the earth. His mandate from God was, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." Adam was an integral part of the whole earthly creation. Paradise was his home. The vegetables that grew from the ground, the fruit that hung on the tree were at his disposal. The animals roamed the garden for his sake. Today that is very obvious to us especially in the domestic animals, the dog, the horse, the cow, the hen. There were treasures in the earth, still unexplored, such as iron, copper, silver, gold, coal and oil. There were the powers of electricity and of the atom, still to be discovered. There was much to do in subduing the earth. Adam could only make a small beginning in that tremendous undertaking. Therefore Adam would need children to fulfill his cultural mandate. He could not remain a bachelor He needed a mother for those children, one to bring them into this world and to help him train them for their calling in life. Only by having children, bringing into existence the human race could he spread out and inhabit the earth to subdue it. When God said, "Be fruitful and multiply," He even laid in man the desire to have children. A husband wants children to make his home complete. He likes to have a son of whom it is said, "He is the exact image of his father." The motherly instinct in the woman makes her yearn for a child to press to her breast, a child to claim as her very own. All this nonsense of "woman's lib" is a defiant attempt to oppose God's laws, to oppose even the natural laws that are innate within the soul of every human being. The home of Adam and Eve could not be complete without children. Their lives could not be complete. Their calling could not be realized. Simply because they were our first parents, of whom God had said that it was not good that they should be alone. Therefore still today a young man leaves his father and his mother to cleave unto his wife.

A third reason why it is not good for man to be alone is, that already in paradise God instituted the holy state of marriage as a picture of Christ and His Church, of God and His Wife. Adam was created a covenant creature, to know God, to love God, and to serve God in love. He bore the very image and likeness of God in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. He was God's prophet, God's priest, and God's king in the midst of the earthly creation. In one word, he was God's friend servant, living in covenant fellowship with God, walking with God, and talking with God in intimate communion of life. This very covenant fellowship with God was reflected in the intimacy of Adam and Eve. Together they walked, they talked, they enjoyed each other's companionship. Eve was always ready to assist Adam in his labors in the garden. Together they experienced the love of God in their own hearts and lives. What a rich and glorious experience that was for Adam to find the same love of God echoing in Eve's heart, to have her join with Him in telling the praises, the glories of their God. They wanted children, not merely for the sake of having children, but to replenish and subdue the earth to God's glory. No other thought ever entered their minds before the fall than that they should have children who with them should fear and

serve the Lord. God's ultimate purpose with them was, that they should bring forth the covenant seed, the Christ, and along with Christ the whole assembly of the elect, that will eternally rejoice before the throne in the new creation. If we look for the full realization of that mandate to "replinish the earth and subdue it," we must look to Christ and to the new heavens and the new earth, where each individually and the whole multitude that no man can number collectively will bring praise and glory and honor unto our God, Who created all things and works all things unto that ultimate glory of the new creation. No, it was not good for Adam to be alone. How could he know the intimacy of God's covenant love in his own life? What applies to Adam applies no less to us as God's covenant people in these last days.

God prepares for each young man his own wife. God gives him a helper to make his life complete. In God's own time and in His own unique way (married couples often reminisce about the strange way in which they were brought together by the providence of God) God brings as by His own hand to every man his wife. Two persons forsake father and mother and cleave, that is, are glued to each other as one flesh. God unites two hearts, two minds, two spirits, two persons together in the unbreakable bond of marriage, which remains until "death us do part."

But more about this later. I would like to discuss briefly yet the finding of a mate, the courtship, the marriage vows, and the bond of marriage that unites two lives in love, in devotion, in the fear of the Lord.

(to be continued)

GIFT GIVING IN THE LIGHT OF THE GIFT

by Rev. Wayne Bekkering

Soon it will be Christmas and we are already in the midst of the rush to buy gifts for everyone. Stop with me and let us consider this subject for a while.

Do you have a problem with our custom of gift giving? Now I do not mean the problem of not knowing what to buy everyone, but I mean "Do you sense that our old established custom of gift giving does not serve the spiritual enrichment of our celebration of the birth of our Savior, but in fact serves to draw us away from a proper appreciation of God's Great Gift? "Have you ever found that your chief excitement and anticipation with respect to your celebration of Christmas centered on the gifts that you might receive and trying to guess what they might be? Have you ever gone to church on Christmas morning with a great joy and excitement because you got something you did not expect or something that you really wanted? Or have you perhaps gone to church on Christmas morning with a feeling of disappointment because you did not get what you wanted for Christmas? Have you ever had the thought "What fun would Christmas be without presents?"

Some of us may have had these thoughts or have been in situations similar to the ones suggested, and that shows some of us that we do indeed have a

problem with gift giving.

As saints of God we want to be pleasing to God in all our life and we certainly want to celebrate Christmas to the glory of God. Therefore, we want to examine our tradition of gift giving in the light of God's Word and in the light of The Gift.

I suppose that if any of us were asked what the origin of our custom of gift giving at Christmas might be would answer to the effect that it stems from the fact that God gave us the greatest of all gifts in the sending of His Son, Jesus Christ.

It ought to be stiking to us, however that our practice of gift giving closely parallels that of the world. More striking yet is the fact that the world's custom of gift giving does not have its origin in the Biblical record even though they may think that it does.

The exact origin of the world's gift giving at Christmas cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. Different nations and people have developed their own versions of certain stories and myths in different ways. It is very probable that a pre-christian Roman festival commemorating the "Golden Age" under the reign to Saturn, a mythical Roman god, has influenced Christmas gift giving. From this festival, called the Saturnalia, were drawn various elements which were later incorporated into the celebration of Christmas. These things ought to spur us to take a closer look at our accepted custom of gift giving and see whether it reflects a proper Biblical practice or a pagan custom.

There is much gift giving in the world's celebration of Christmas, but a gift giving that talks about love, yet does not proceed from the love of God in Jesus Christ is humanism. The gift giving of the world is fundamentally a manifestation of the the lust, greed and selfishness of their wicked hearts.

We must not follow the world, but we must look to the Word of God. God there gives us the greatest example of gift giving when He gave His Only Begotten Son.

The sending of Jesus Christ into the world is a manifestation of God's great love toward us. God's love toward us is a love that transcends human comprehension. It was a sovereign and infinite love that caused God to send the Son of His love to come into the world to die for wretched, miserable and undeserving sinners. God gave His Unspeakable Gift to fulfill a great need, which only He Himself could fill.

We ought to notice, however, that God's gift giving is not just limited to one event or one day, but day by day God continues to bestow upon us rich gifts through Jesus Chrsit. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17)

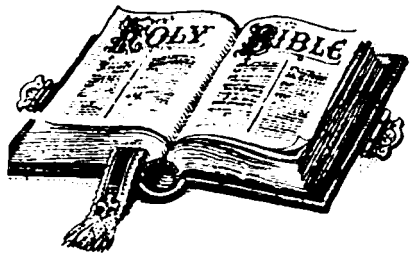
In our gift giving then we are to be motivated by and to manifest the love of God which is in us. We are going to listen to God's Word in Romans 12:1 where we read. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

If we find that our gift giving does not serve the spiritual enrichment of our celebration of the birth of Christ, but instead draws us away from the proper appreciation of God's Great Gift, then we must rid ourselves of our wrong motive or custom. We must be conformed in our gift giving to God's will and glory.

Gift giving that is glorifying to God is not easy, for it requires that we fight against all our carnal tendencies and worldliness. It means too that we will find ourselves out of step with the thinking and practice of the world around us. We will appear foolish and ridiculous in the eyes of the world. But ought we not expect to

be different from the world, and ought we not be distinctive in our gift giving as well as in all our life?

Let us examine ourselves with respect to our gift giving to make sure that we follow the Biblical example rather than a pagan custom of the world. Let each of us strive to show true thankfulness to our God for His Great Gift. Jesus Christ.



PETER'S MATHEMATICAL ERROR

by Peter Koole

Mr. Koole is a member of Hope Prot. Ref'd. Church, Walker, Michigan.

If by the reading of the title you concluded that this article has something to do with arithmetic, you are partially correct. We will be reviewing numbers by multiplication both by human standards and divine.

It is in verse 21 of Matthew 18 that Peter comes to Jesus asking him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times?" In verse 22, Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times, but , until seventy times seven.

What we really intend to focus our attention on is Forgiveness. The title as I have put it is just a little window dressing to catch your attention.

I get the impression as I read the entire chapter of Matthew 18 that this session of instruction by Christ is when He is alone with the twelve. Following upon the Lord's answer to Peter, we have the parable of the unmerciful servant. This parable is given to his disciples (and also to us) to impress upon them that as soon as they ceased forgiving one another, they must needs forfeit the blessings and assurance of forgiveness for themselves.

Prof. H. Hanko in his book on the Parables does an excellent and thorough explanation regarding this parable and the principles laid down regarding forgiveness. I suppose I could stop writing right now and say read pages 65-71 because I am sure he can and does convey the subject of Forgiveness with much more clarity and ability than myself. But the Editor of the Beacon Lights asked me to write an article on this subject of Forgiveness, so in my own style, ability, and thought pattern, I shall attempt to comply.

Getting back to the disciple Peter who raised the question concerning the number of times one forgives his brother, we see he not only raises the question, but in the next breath gives the answer. At least in his own mind and with human judgment, seven times was more than that which was required by the rabbis of that day. In other words, Peter meant to say there comes an end to the forgiving...it is limited. But the divine Jesus says no Peter, not one times seven, but seventy times seven....endless without ceasing always.

The Lord teaches us to pray Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

The two parts of this petition are inseperably connected. You cannot pray for the one without being able to state the other before the face of God. A readiness and willingness to forgive others is part of the indication that we have truly repented. Moreover, it is to be whole-hearted. Not only to forgive, but also the solemn and oh so difficult virtue to forget. We stumble and fall over that a thousand times during a lifetime... if we would only forget.

It's basis and root springs from Christ's forgiveness...even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye Colossians 3:13.

In the incident of the healing of the paralized man lowered through the roof, He, Christ worked the miracle expressly that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins. Forgiveness by or through Jesus Christ means forgiveness arising from all that He is and all that He does. His death on the cross is often said to be a death for sin. Forgiveness rests basically then on the atoning work of Christ. That is to say an act of sheer grace.

John the Baptist preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Christ himself directed that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name.

Forgiveness is similarly linked with faith in Acts 10:43 and James 5. Faith and repentance are not to be thought of as merits whereby we deserve forgiveness Rather they are the means whereby we appropriate the grace of God.

Serious and difficult situations arise in our homes, our schools and in our Churches because when offenses come, we do not always see the urgent necessity to follow what Christ Himself had to say in this same 18th chapter of Matthew. I am referring to the 15-17th verses. Verse 15-moreover if thy brother shall trespess against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone...and what follows.

I realize that lengthy debates and discussions have arisen over whether one's sin or offense is of a private or public nature. I don't dispute the fact that it does make a difference in approach and every case is to be judged on its own merits, nevertheless Matthew 5:23-24 has much to say when we think it's not our fault. Read it...think about it.

It is so convenient to have certain passages and principles of Scripture laid down for the other person...What we all need is a little closer self examination. Ask yourself seriously, am I interested in gaining the brother, or in self justification? Oh what petty strife and grievances could be avoided and laid aside if we could look past personalities and persons and practise what is said concerning Forgiveness. When issues arise, and they do, and that is not all bad, instead of judging according to persons involved, let us rather evaluate according to the principle of the matter and the main issue presented.

In the fellowship of the Church of Jesus Christ, and therefore in the communion of saints, the child of God lays hold upon spiritual benefits and makes this confession that his sins are forgiven. But now if for some reason the believer, whether he be young or old cuts himself off from that fellowship and seeks for himself the treasures and pleasures of this world for a season, he will soon lose the conscious joy of God's forgiveness.

It is also a reality that if he or she, young or old, bears a grudge and is hateful towards his brother or sister or neighbor, and through the years has no change of attitude nor of a spirit of repentance, that that one will end up with bitterness in his or her soul towards all of life...a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

The third part of the Lord's Supper form under examination of ourselves, puts it so personally where it says, "whether he purposeth henceforth to show true thankfulness to God in his whole life and to walk uprightly before him, and also

whether he hath laid aside unfeinedly all enmity, hatred, and envy, and doth firmly resolve henceforward to walk in true love and peace with his neighbor. All those then who are thus disposed, God will certainly receive in mercy and count them worthy partakers of the table of his Son Jesus Christ."

Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

BIGFOOT

That's his name in the Pacific Northwest. Here in Canada, he, or it, is known as Sasquatch; and in the Okanagan region the Indians call it Ogopogo. Bigfoot is actually very ancient; nothing new about him. He goes back to the antediluvian civilization (Gen. 6:4) to the days of Job (16:14), and to the times of Joshua (Num. 13:33). In fact, Moses had made things easier for his successor by wiping our Bigfoot and his clan (Josh. 13:12). David also killed a Bigfoot of His day (I Sam. 17:49f), and perhaps an even bigger Bigfoot, a giant son of The Giant, with six toes on each foot, was killed by a nephew of David's (I Chron. 20:7).

People today dream about Bigfoot. That's nothing new either. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a Bigfoot (Dan. 2:33-35), and actually made in gold a statue of him ninety feet high (3:1). In our day, not even an approach to such an accomplishment is made. But there is the blah about Bigfoot. Without any difficulty, we can trace a trend in Bigfoot's history which leads ultimately to the eschatological (last) Bigfoot (Rev. 13:1), The Beast! The very last Bigfoot shall be worshiped and receive worship. So he shall become the world's greatest blasphemer of God, and, of all, the most detestably anti-first and anti-second commandment. The ultimate Bigfoot will have power over men's lives, to either bring them in subjection to himself or kill them. He will ruthlessly force his followers to bear his mark on their persons, without which they shall not be able to do business. So he will

crush men and nations under his Big Foot (Dn. 7:19, 23; 8:13). But, it is an interesting fact, that every Bigfoot in history as mentioned in the Bible gets killed, gets wiped out by divine judgment, as an enemy of God and of His people. Then also Orthodox Jews ought to realize that Bigfoot cannot be the Messiah; he is not Christ, but Antichrist.

People today not only dream about Bigfoot, but many claim to have seen him. Passing through a part of Utah recently, we heard the news that UFO's and Bigfoot were again sighted. It is very difficult to take this seriously, especially in view of the fact that much of Utah is dominated by a hierarchical cult, the founder of which had weird, egotistical visions, seeing what he wanted to see. This modern craze is a spreading of the Roman Catholic mind, which has of old "witnessed" visions, appearances of Mary and all kinds of taudry miracles or shabby wonders. The current charismatic movement is of the same mind, which has always chamioned so called healing miracles. This Romish imbued movement moves the churches involved back in the direction of Rome more than in any other direction.

All this is part of a set-up. People are looking for UFO's—and for Bigfoot. They **want** to believe in UFO's.* They **want** to believe in Bigfoot. At the UNO it has been recommended that the whole thing of UFO's be investigated. Neither God nor His Christ have any part in the UNO as far as that organization is concerned. There is no recommendation to open its doors to Christ and His cause. But it will concern itself with UFO's, and even make them a priority. Jesus warned of this religious and political trifling when He said, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (Jn. 5:43). People will flirt with, flutter and flock after false teachers, false prophets, false Christs and false lights. At the same time they in every possible way oppose the true Messiah. They are antichrists and they want an antichrist to follow. They listen to everyone who in his own name sets up, for himself only, a one night stand to spread upstart rumors. Taking all this they breathe a deleterious smog. That they forsake the God of truth is bad enough; that they do so for lying vanities (nothings) and lying wonders (2 Thess.2) is infinitely worse. The Man of God's right hand the world will not have, but the Man of Sin they long for. God will then justly deceive them with false prophets. He himself, in His sovereignty, has deceived the false prophets that He might purge and destroy them out of the Israel of God (Ezek. 14:9). He sends them strong delusion that they should believe The Lie, that they all, who believed not the truth that they might be saved, might be damned (2 Thess. 2:10-12). They who preferred the errors of Antichrist will be blinded and deluded by them, which is the proper punishment for not holding to the Word of God. All of our modern day witchcraft, Satanism, fortune-telling, palmistry, phrenology, re-incarnation, neo-Himduism, the occult, the Bermuca Triangle fad, the flying saucer fictions, the Yeti, Mo-Mo (short for Missouri Monster! Is there a Mi-Mo, a Michigan Monster?) are evil things which intrigue modern men; and for these abominable superstitions and dalliances with the devil, they will be haunted with hallucinations, with false cults and their false prophets.

This is also an age of the monster craze. There are monster comic books, monster movies, monster TV shows, monster T-shirts, monster toys, dolls, monster masks, monster scares and rumors. Tiny children just love these "monsters." Today's children have gone a long way from Jack and the Beanstalk and Jack the Giant Killer with their favorite Frankenstein. Or, it's not a teddy bear any more, but a cuddly King-Kong. (I am afraid of what Campbell's Soup or Post's Cereal Co. might come out with

next, for people gobble up "monsters"s enough as it is!) Now we have Nessy, the Loch Ness Monster, the Abdominal Snowmobile Man, and, Quien sabe? what new Boogie Man is just around the corner?

But how is it that all these monster fans, who know nothing of the truth and doctrine of man's total depravity, or who hate, despise and avoid it like the plague, if they intellectually do know anything about it, nevertheless make man in an image distorted worse than he is, and with that image go beyond the strongest implications of the Bible doctrine? Why do depravity-deniers strive for that more depraved than depravity itself? They make themselves unwillingly advocates and unintentional illustration of the very Bible doctrine they can't stomach.

Well, Bigfoot is certainly representative. He is certainly representative of a low-brow, low calibre mind; representative of the evils, of the great tribulation, the bowls of wrath and lying wonders yet to come, representative of that Man of Sin, the Lawless One. But there is another Bigfoot, of titanic size, of great, mortal danger and threat of all mankind. Sometimes he wears priestly garb or the white robe of an angel of light. But just below his ankle length disguise can be seen protruding the cloven hoof of Satan, or the enormous foot of the Great Red Dragon, the god of this world who blinds the minds of unbelievers, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them. Yet there is another Foot we must consider, the foot of the Lord of hosts. He trod the mighty Assyrian empire under His foot (Isa. 14:24f). He has put all things under His Son's feet (I Cor. 15:27). Bigfoot, Antichrist, must lie prone and place Christ's pierced foot on his neck. The Holy War is mainly won and the seige of the Town of Mansoul is ended when Black Diabolos and his hordes of diabolonians are by Prince Immanuel conquered and driven out for ever.

The world looks for a super-power, a super-event, a Superman, an impostor. The world loves to be deceived, and will take lies any day to truth. The world longs for one who will take their minds off God that they may worship those who are no gods. Worldly heroes, worldly amusements, worldly excitements and worldly wonders all show the dominance of the will of man in opposition to the will of God. It is fundamentally the worship of man in opposition to the worship of God. It is a dragging God down to the level of the world, a making God the servant of man. To put it numerically, it all adds to 666, the number of man. This is the number of apostacy which produces the Man of Sin; the number of false doctrine and wicked corruptions in the church, which produces the Son of Perdition. It is the number of that Wicked One, who is addicted to and operates entirely in wickedness, who plots and commands vile wickedness in others. It is the number of mystery, of the mystery of iniquity, where under cover of petended zeal for the religion of Jehovah, superstition and idolatry are promoted and persecution of the faithful is subtly executed against them. It is the number of error, of lies, the number of philosophy, of magic, the number of heresies, of deception, the number of the mind of man in opposition to the mind of God. It is **mene tekel** in oppostion to **gloria in excelsis deo.**

What more shall or can we say of Bigfoot? Whether he ever turns out to be real or not, Bigfoot is an image. He's an image of The Beast. The False Prophet shall have power to have images of The Beast made (Rev. 13:14-18). These images shall apparently have life. They shall be amazingly and deceptively life-like. For they shall "breathe" and "speak" and they shall cause any who do not worship them to be killed. Miracle power will be attributed to them. These images of The Beast will simply have the whole world wonder-struck. They will

have the whole world guessing and wondering what is behind the Beast (13:3), not knowing, because deceived, that it is Satan!

How do we stand as to Bigfoot? We "preach the Word! for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but...they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned to fables. But watch **thou** in all things!" (2 Tim. 4:2-5).

*The available pictures of UFO's are like straw hats skimmed into the air and photographed with slow shutter speed to produce a blurred image. The result — an appearance exactly like what has always been palmed off on a gullible public as a UFO. Big deal! Most, if not all these pictures present not only the unidentified but the unidentifiable! So far, there's nothing, certainly not yet, to be so shook up about.

CONVENTION SPEECHES

SEEKING THE LORD IN OUR DAILY WALK

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

You know, of course, what a walk is: that activity that we engage in to move around from place to place. And it carries us through the activities of life. In the days in which the Bible was written, I suppose more than now, walking was their only practical means of conveyance. Perhaps a few had donkeys or camels. The Romans might have had their horses and chariots; but for the most part, those who went from place to place did so by the use of their feet. Now we have our wheels, we ride, we have our cars and the main part of our moving around we do by getting in the car and riding where formerly they walked. But the figure is still evident to us. It's as though all of life were a journey along which one travels or walks or makes his way.

Now we are all familiar, of course, with traveling. You want to go from one place to another. You get in the car and you go along and as you are traveling, if you know where to go, you proceed to your destination. All along the way, there are different forks in the road, there are different junctures, there are crossroads and each time there is a decision. If you don't know where you are going, you are always searching around. Do I take this fork or do I take that, do I take that road or do I wait for the next, do I turn at this corner, do I follow this curve. That's the way we travel from place to place. The whole idea of the figure of walking which appears quite commonly in Scripture, and I suppose most other places too, is that life is such a journey; with all of these decisions to be made along the way as to where we are going and how we are going to come to our goal. And in the context of which we are speaking, of course, we recognize the fact that these decisions, these decisions even of our daily walk are

spiritual, moral decisions made as it were before God.

Now, you are all young people. And I suppose if one were to take some kind of an examination of your different likes, there would be a rather great similarity. You are either students or you are just shortly out of school. You are very much concerned with your preparation for life in school and you are taking up an occupation outside. You are involved in the matter of courtship, with a view to possible eventual marriage, and the establishment of your life beyond. There's a great deal of similarity, at least in those outstanding characteristics. And yet when it gets down to the matter of people and their life, you can never really generalize. Every person is uniquely an individual. You have your own nature, you have your own being, you have your own individual circumstances and responsibilities in life that makes your life different from anyone elses. No one else can fit your exact place in the exact way that you do.

There are basic moves that you make in life, basic roads or paths that you travel that have their comparisons to others. And yet the way in which you go is always so uniquely your own that no one else's is quite like it. It's a walk that is your walk and it is a daily walk, where every day and every moment of the day across the path there appears junctures, or forks in the road, different cross paths, decisions that have to be made. Each one essentially involves a spiritual decision.

It starts every day anew. You wake up in the morning and, of course, you get up. The first thing you have to decide is, what are you going to wear today? What is your appearance to be? There is a decision made there for it's true, you know, that somehow the clothing that people wear is an expression of their inner soul and of the view they have of themselves and the goals which they fill. I'm often fascinated by that. I'm fascinated by watching young people in their dress through a week like this at a convention, you see the different ways in which people dress. These shirts with the sayings on it. Its one of the phenomena of our day. Its an expression of sorts, but more than that the very style, the color, all of these things are a way of saying where you finally want to identify, who you want to be like. More than any thing else, the clothing which you wear is a means of saying, "I want to be identified with these kind of people or those: with the neat, with the sloppy, with the showy, with the reticent. I and my clothing make an identity in life." And so, every day you wake up and you decide, in a way, how you express yourself by the clothing that you wear. You go down to the breakfast table. There you meet the other members of the family. Then at that point you somewhat, almost unconsciously, make a decision: you are going to be happy, you are going to be cooperative, you are going to be communicative, or you are going to be quiet, and sullen, and you are going to be surly. It's one of the characteristics of young people, and that only too often in the home. Or you are going to follow sort and show that you can speak the same way and use the language that is vile and crude and vulgar as his or hers is too. And so you go on, you go through the activities of the day, you come down to the entertainments that you seek at night. You are going to make your decisions through the day and through the night: are you going to work, are you going to work to the utmost, are you going to get by with as little as you can either on the job or in the school? Are you going to give yourself out to anything you desire simply to entertain yourself? Or are you going to engage yourself in an evening of things that are worthwhile? What are you going to speak about? What are you going to do? Everything is a juncture in life that brings you along the way.

Now, of course, you begin to develop patterns. We all do. What you do most commonly sets in as a form of habit. Its

like when you travel along a road every day. Once you are used to the way and travel it often, it just becomes a matter of habit. And so it is with all these patterns and fashions of life. Habits begin to set in. The kind of way you dress one day will tend to repeat itself over and over again until it becomes your accustomed attire. The way in which you meet your parents will fall into a pattern. The way you deal with your friends will too. And the way you work on the job. But always these are essentially decisions that have been made. And behind them are spiritual responsibilities, as we've heard the last few nights, spiritual responsibilities which lead up to decisions. These determine the course that you follow through life as you prodeed along the way.

The text for this year's convention theme contains an instruction, an admonition: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." It implies that this progress through life, this road that we travel, is determined by the seeking, the reaching out for a particular goal. And that's true of course. God has made us to be, you and me, rational, moral creatures. We don't just live instinctively. We aren't just trained like animals to respond to certain stimuli. Regardless of what modern physcology may be more and more prone to say, we are made to be rational, moral creatures. Who with the heart, will decide the goals toward which we are to travel. Now, there are all kinds of secondary goals that preoccupy us day after day. You go through a few days like you have out here on the convention grounds and time and again you've been up against that question, "Well, what am I going to do now? Am I going to try the cold water swimming or stay to the pool, walk down the beach or play on the volleyball court. Am I going to meet with a boy or a girl or with friends? What am I going to do?" All of life has that, these secondary goals toward which we direct ourselves. We go out, we work, we have to have our money and so we work for that; we have our particular friends that we seek after; we have our styles of entertainment that we engage ourselves in; we have our pleasures that we like, the things that we do. They come and go pretty much day after day in their own way, but underneath them all there are basic goals, basic desires, basic directives that finally set the patterns of life. And they aren't so many. They're rather few. Perhaps if we can get down into the heart of the matter, particularly as young people, if there would tend to be one thing that determines the pattern in life, it is the desire to find for oneself meaning and worth and purpose. We're that way. We're made that way. Deep down inside of you if there is one thing you want; its to amount to something, to have some value, to have some meaning, and purpose, and worth to the life that we lead. That is, in the terms of our figure, to the path that we follow through our days.

A great deal of these secondary goals that we take so nonchalantly from day to day are really derivatives from the basic goal. You go out, you have a few days like this, you know its vacation time, and its understood that you are here for the purpose of convention, for the purpose of spiritual activity; but you are here to enjoy yourself too. And there's a good part of your schedule that has been directed toward that. But you look back at it and being young people there's been a lot of laughter, a lot of gayity on the surface, but, there's been a lot of pain underneath too. Things that have hurt. You get this matter of sports. You're out there on the volleyball court, or tennis court, on the beach or by the swimming pool; these are things that you do for entertainment. Sometimes you enjoy them, sometimes you don't. When are you having a good time? Now you may just like a particular sport and enjoy playing volleyball as such, but its an awful lot better if you're on a

winning team, isn't it? or if you're surging ahead in the competition of the individual or in the tournament realm.. Why? Because when you're winning, you get this sense, at least for a moment, that somehow I can do it well and I count.

I met a girl the other day. I don't know who she was. I presume she is & may be here tonight. She was coming from the tennis court with a racket in hand. Passing by, just to make converstaion, I said, "Well, did you win your game?" She glanced up at me and said, "Me? I never win." and walked on. I suppose something happened that somehow made her feel she couldn't do it. She didn't count. I trust she's recovered from the blow; but it's the kind of thing, you know, that happens to each one of us day after day. You get a convention like this and it's a lot of fun, but it's built on a foundation of broken hearts: boys that want the attention of certain girls, certain girls that want the attention of certain boys, and somehow it just doesn't mesh. You try without making it appear that you're trying. Everything hangs in a glance, a look, a note of attention. I always wonder, you come to the end of a convention, and I trust you have had for the most part a good time; but just how many are there that didn't make it, that somehow didn't find any friends and no one noticed and took the time to give them attention, the attention that their heart cried out for.

You know, your stage in life is a hard stage. It's the most difficult. As long as you're a child, you somehow rest on the foundation of the family. You belong there. Unless the home is an extremely unstable home, and sometimes sadly they are, life is painful from the very beginning. But ordinarily if there is an essence of stability in the home, the child takes for granted the love and the place which he has and that's its foundation. But you came into that teenage period - 13, 14, and 15 - and you begin to realize, "I'm going to have to step out on my own." And you step out and make steps into a world you don't really know how to handle. You don't want to rest on mom and dad anymore. You want to rush ahead into adulthood, and yet you can't. Sometimes it seems the world is full of possibilities and there is excitement. You know the kind of vocabulary young people use. It's tremendous, it's immense, it's just a wonderful thing. I often think when I listen to them: Boy, when they get something really good, what kind of words do you use to express it then? You've used all the big words up. But over against it, there's that pain, that uncertainty, that fear. And it drives you. You've got to do something that counts. Anything that you think you may be able to do, well you dive towards it. If you are anywhere good at sports, you become a sportsman. If you're anything good at study, then you study. If you're anything good at going out and talking it up and living it high, you go out and you try that. Anything that seems to provide a place for you in life where you count. And so often it seems that it's more than you can handle. Always around the edges there is this thing beckoning you on into false satisfactions. There's all kinds of them. The whole money thing: if you've got money you've got power, so go out and get money. Because if you ever get to the point where you've got money, you can buy influence. It makes you important. It seems like that to everybody except those who have got it. They die a death all their own. You try it, you try it in sports, you try it in friends. You've got these machines, it's a form of narcotic that we have, you get out on a high-powered machine, get a motorboat, get a high powered snowmobile, get a motorcycle. It's a heady feeling when you're riding down the street and you've got all that power between you legs. It makes you feel great and strong, and there for a minute you feel like you count. You've got to quit. If you don't quit, sooner or later you're going to kill yourself trying with those

motorbikes. But for a time it seems to be worthwhile. There are the other things, too, there's the drugs, the narcotics, including smoke and alcohol too. They're there, they somehow in their way say, "Hey, I'm something, I count." You follow that road far enough and you set a pattern until you feel nine feet tall because you're dead drunk. Even though the next morning you know you're going to wake up to a hangover. But for awhile it gives you a sense of value. And all of these other things: the dancing, the sex, the fascination of science fiction that all the kids are reading. It's a way of losing yourself in a world where you can believe for a minute that you count. You're seeking for something. Really, you know, your convention text is addressed to exactly people in that situation. You know, of course, where the chapter starts: Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?" Whether it's your alcohol, your hard drugs or your motorcycles. Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread, that can't satisfy. You labor for that which satisfieth not. "Harken dilligently unto me and eat ye that which is good. And let your soul delight itself in fatness." Young people, there's only one thing that can give you real meaning and worth in life. There's only one thing that provides it. I know, it sounds foolish really. These after all are, as has been pointed out a very particular kind of people to whom this chapter is directed. This isn't just anyone, when scripture speaks in these terms of people who thirst and people who hunger, it's talking to a particular kind of people. Those who by the working of the Holy Spirit, have died to themselves. You can go out, you can try it. You can go out looking for that sense of bigness, of importance, of power be it in money, or motorbikes, or drugs, or sin. But it doesn't fill. Yet there's something in man that can't let it go. There's something inside our very nature that always said in the midst of the misery of it all, "but if only I had a little more.!" It must be I haven't got quite enough. And that's why the way beckons you along until those bad paths become patterned paths and habits that drive people on into sin, and ultimately down that swift road to hell.

But our text, the chapter, the scriptures, are speaking to those who are different. Those upon whose hearts the Holy Spirit has impressed that truth, that you can't make it on your own. You gain half the world and you still loose your soul. "Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found. Call ye upon Him while He is near." I know it doesn't make sense, not to our heated brains that are so deeply entrenched in this idea. "Look, if you're going to count, you've got to make it on your own. You've got to be able to show off and say look what I've done. I've won the game, I've been on the right team. I've made the mark. I've impressed the people." That's that narcotic affect that leaves a hangover the next day. Seek ye the Lord. That is the One Who is great beyond all greatness. You go on into that chapter and you have that tremendous description of the greatness of God that follows on there. As you get down to verses 8 and 9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heaven is higher that the earth, so are my ways higher that your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." You see, it's that recognition look, my ways. And always the wrong way. If you're going to go down the path of life and each time say again, "What do I want?" You're always going to end up along the wrong fork.

God's ways, God's thoughts, they're the only ones that know the end from the very beginning. The goal that really counts, the life that has meaning and

value so great it endures beyond time into all eternity.

You hurt sometimes inside? I do too. We all do. You hurt because you'd like to have a little more recognition and you'd like to count? Seek the Lord. Call upon Him. That's the only thing that fills up that void, that takes that pain away, that endures unto all eternity. To belong to Jesus Christ. Seek the Lord. What does it mean? As has been so amply said, take that Word and use it for your map. I mean in a very real way. I don't care what the problem is. If you want to learn how to dress in the morning, how to greet the family at the breakfast table, how to answer a cursing friend, how to go about your labors, what to do at night when the work is done, there are principles here. It doesn't tell you do this and don't do that in so many words, but there are principles here to be taken and learned and followed. That's what seeking the Lord is. You take it and you use that as the map to determine what forks in the road you take, what junctures you follow and what you do not. Seek the Lord. Seek Him and His church. We need the Word of God, and dear young people, we need each other. We're not just a group of individuals learning our lessons. The church is a body, a body of those who belong to Jesus Christ. We need each other to set good patterns. It happens at conventions like this. From all I've heard, it's gone real well. If you've got some in the crowd who make the wild unbecoming sinful thing the thing to do, it can catch on and spread. I hope and pray and I trust this convention has been for you a way to learn these are the patterns that really count, to strengthen, to encourage and to substantiate each other in the way of living as Christians would and should. And the way of establishing a pattern of life, and that's what this is all about. We as a denomination are a denomination that would set ourselves apart from the ways of the world to reject it's false satisfactions, its narcotics, whether they be physical narcotics or whether they be physcological or spiritual narcotics. A pattern of life where together we strengthen and encourage one another in the way that is right and good and true. May you from this convention go forth to establish a way of life wherever you go, whether it's on to work, whether it's on to marriage, where you never return to a young people's convention again, whether it's to come back next year. May you go forth from this convention knowing that the only thing that gives to your life meaning and value is to reject the narcotics of this world and seek ye the Lord while He may be found. Call ye upon Him while He is near.

THE COUNTRY SCHOOL

by Joel D. Sugg, Jr.

Instruction at the Country School began in the fall of 1970 at the farmhouse residence of the Sugg family forty miles west of Houston, Texas. It was started as the means of continuing our children's Christian schooling while rearing them in a rural environment and still paying the bills. Through the grace of God, these objects have been essentially accomplished for something over seven years now.

Christ-centered academic instruction for an average of about 15 youngsters from beginners through high school has been given by the schoolmaster, assisted

by older students formally and informally helping the younger. The three eldest daughters of the family have each taken a substantial part of their own time to instruct formally one or two beginners; and each day some older student may informally assist a younger one by explaining a math procedure, listening to an oral reading or memorization, reading a story aloud, or observing a writing exercise, all for some short period when the schoolmaster is engaged with other students.

The teaching at the Country School is principally the tutoring of each student for various short periods rather than instructing a class for a more extended time. The major part of the learning is accomplished by each student studying individually assigned work at his own desk and bringing his completed work or questions to the schoolmaster for grading or explanation. This individual approach is made feasible by such elements as generally suitable text material, the discipline of a personal schedule of completion, a somewhat broadly prepared teacher, and the interested willingness of older students to assist the younger when necessary.

This student assistance is essential to the school's success and is made practical for us by the rather wide difference in age among the students. This year as an example, we have only ten students, but there is one for each grade except 3rd, 6th, and 8th. The use of such assistance has prevented the lining up of scholars waiting for help, and it has had the additional benefit of developing in some of the young people an early sense of responsibility not only for themselves, but also for their influence upon the younger ones. Older students do not all develop well in this regard, but enough have done so as to work a real benefit for the school and themselves.

From the description above it can be seen that our little enterprise is probably more like a big family than an orthodox educational institution. In this regard, we are humbly aware that it is in the family that most of us have the greatest need for God's gift of love for our neighbor, which may be seen as the branches of that tree which is our love for God, that wonder tree which God has planted and nurtures in His love for us. So it is in the Country School.

The school's continuance has been rather tenuous from the beginning. Almost two years ago, when financial problems seemed insurmountable, the Lord allowed us to continue by a new avenue. This was the opportunity of our family working together to produce necessary income independent of the school, but still permitting the school to continue on a somewhat more limited and more concentrated basis. We began a janitorial service in which all the family has participated in some way, with the principal work being done by the schoolmaster and the older children. Through the gracious provision of a comfortable rural residence just outside Katy, Texas, it has been feasible for us to enter this new undertaking. This course is not without its rough spots, having many stresses, strains, and groans, but with God's strength all are accepted as part of the work which He has appointed for our sakes. The children are making an essential contribution not only to their own education but also the well-being of the whole family.

Surely the Lord has done this to help bind us more closely together at a time when the bulwarks of the family are being struck at viciously on all sides. Since the time some 15 years ago when the oldest first entered school, we have looked upon Christian schooling, aside from its other great objects and benefits, as one of the most effective means of drawing the family together and protecting it from the world's onslaught. This is said in face of the fact that some of our greatest trials

have had to do with such schooling, but we thank God that even as we remain weak, He is ever-faithful to give strength.

As we reflect upon the loving care of our Heavenly Father in holding our family together and close to Him, which He has accomplished in part through giving us a deep concern for Christian schooling, our hearts are filled with gratitude for His graciously drawing us to the Protestant Reformed Churches. Our varied Christian experiences of the two decades earlier have prepared us to appreciate better the covenant faith and walk of these people of God of whom we now are a part. We have come to see more completely than ever before how the Christian family is itself a type of God's greater family, the covenant people to whom He is Father. What a comfort it is to be a part of Christ's body where providing Christian schooling is a common obligation and not a lightly regarded exception. With the formal organization of our congregation, the arrival of Pastor Bekkering and his family, and now having seven out of ten students coming from P.R. families, we have much encouragement to develop the Country School as close to the Reformed pattern as possible until such time as we may be able to establish our own parental school, if this be God's will. We pray that we may continue to be set apart with increasing clarity in our Reformed church, homes, and school to the end that God may be glorified, even by such earthen vessels.

George M. Ophoff (19)

by Prof. H. Hanko

His Work As Professor

In the last article we talked briefly about Rev. Ophoff's labors in the congregation of Byron Center. If you recall what we wrote, you will also remember that our emphasis was upon the fact that Rev. Ophoff was particularly called by God to the work of professor in the Seminary of the Protestant Reformed Churches. It is to this aspect of Rev. Ophoff's work that I wish to call the attention of our readers in this and subsequent articles.

I had the distinct privilege of attending Seminary while Revs. Hoeksema and Ophoff were teaching. At about the time I started my college studies Rev. Hoeksema suffered a severe stroke. After the Lord brought to Rev. Hoeksema recovery from this stroke and after he resumed his labors in the Seminary, I and a few other students at college were fearful that by the time we arrived at the Seminary, Rev. Hoeksema would no longer be able to teach. The result was that we requested permission of the Theological School Committee to attend Rev. Hoeksema's Dogmatics classes so that we could have our Dogmatics with him even though we were not ready as yet for seminary work. This permission was granted, and we spent three years with Rev. Hoeksema in Dogmatics class before we entered the Seminary. It was during these years that we also, quite naturally, got to know Rev. Ophoff as a teacher—although we never took any formal classes with him until we actually entered Seminary. But the Lord preserved both Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Ophoff, and we spent another three years under their instruction.

The memories of these years are still very strong. Especially when we started Seminary, a year or two before the split of 1953, the Seminary was rather large and, in fact, had students from the German Reformed Churches and from the Netherlands. There were also several students from our own Churches, many of whom are with us no longer. Some were studying for the ministry; some were attending various classes although they had no intention of entering the ministry.

Before we concentrate upon the labors of Rev. Ophoff, there are several general remarks which are worth making. These remarks are mainly impressions which linger on over the years.

The first impression which I had already in those years and which still continues is the impression of the immense dedication of these men. More than once the thought came to us that both these men could undoubtedly have been great men in the Christian Reformed Church had they stayed in that denomination and been willing to bend their consciences to swallow the poison of common grace. They could have been two of the outstanding preachers in those Churches. They could have, without doubt, been two of the greater theologians which that denomination produced. They could have occupied positions of leadership in denominational affairs. It is not impossible to imagine that sooner or later they could have taught in the Seminary. But they had refused to subscribe to doctrines which they knew to be contrary to the Word of God. The result was that they were sitting in the cold, dark, and often dank basement of First Church spending a great share of their time with a few students to teach them the Reformed faith and how to be ministers of the gospel. Even though we were few in number (later our numbers in Seminary were reduced to three or four, and there were times when there was only one student) these two men labored unceasingly to give us the very best they had. The question often arose: Why were two men who could have been so great, content to spend their time with a couple of students in such poorly equipped quarters? I think the question never occurred to them. They were completely content. And the fact that their place was, from every human viewpoint, so small, did not keep them from giving us the very best of Seminary educations. This was dedication of a very high degree, and the depth of their dedication left its mark upon us.

The second impression which I have of those years was the impression of the patience of these men. They were patient with us—patient beyond the call of duty. We were fresh out of college. We had, as so many college students have, an exaggerated idea of our grasp of every conceivable intellectual problem. We were, in short, rather cocky. These men, on the other hand, had forgotten more than we ever knew. We would challenge their position in class, argue with them, debate their theology, question what they were teaching and not hesitate to express disagreement. It would have been somewhat natural if they had become extremely impatient and had laughed at our foolishness and ignorance. But they did not do this—not once, in my recollection. They enjoyed the arguments, entered vigorously into the debates, and encouraged us to ask all the questions we wanted to ask. They treated our problems seriously and tolerated our ignorance with amazing fortitude—although I suspect they must often have smiled behind their hands at our foolishness.

The third impression which I have is the impression that our education was of the highest possible caliber. I cannot stress this strongly enough. It is true that, especially during the years of struggle which resulted in the split of 1953, these men were often preoccupied with many weighty matters. It is also true that school

did not always operate on a regular basis because of the work these men had to do in Classis meetings and Synodical gatherings. It is also true that we were sent, in the years after the split, all over the country to preach—even during the school year. But the fact remains that our education was an excellent one. We had good courses. We had to study and study hard, often times on our own.

But when I speak of a good education which we received, I mean especially that the education was based completely on Scripture and the Confessions. Both are true. I recall vividly that when we debated with our professors, they had all the patience in the world, but they insisted that all our arguments had to be based on Scripture and the Confessions. If we were called down in our debating it was only for what Rev. Hoeksema would laughingly call "our philosophizing."

They taught us that every argument had to be grounded in Scripture or it was not worth considering. They taught us a respect for the Confessions which remains to the present. They taught us in this way how to be ministers of the gospel.

My fourth impression of school was that it was a time of great fun. We worked hard. We had to work hard. We could not do much else but squirm inwardly and outwardly when the paralyzing eyes of our professors would nail us to our seats for a lesson unprepared. But we had great times. It was in by school days that I learned that neither Rev. Hoeksema nor Rev. Ophoff were the cold and austere men they were pictured to be. They were hearty, fond of a good joke, could see the humorous side of things, were prepared to "let down their hair" with the students and could often laugh uproariously along with the rest of us. There was genuine camaraderie in school. They were pleasant years and times which can never be repeated.

Rev. Ophoff's classes were also a lot of fun. Often times however, they were a lot of fun for different reasons. Rev. Ophoff had absolutely no conception of time. If we did not ourselves take over the matter of beginning and ending classes, one class could have run through the whole morning without Rev. Ophoff being aware of it. One of the students once brought an alarm clock to school set to go off on the hour when the class was supposed to end. When Rev. Ophoff, startled by a loudly ringing buzzer, asked as to the source of the noice, a glib-tongued student talked him into the use on an alarm. This lasted for just two days, for Rev. Ophoff could not be time-bound.

We had fun in his classes too because we thought we were always getting away with all sorts of things in his assignments. I say, we thought we were getting away with things, because to this day I am not sure. I sometimes suspect that he was more aware of what was going on than we gave him credit for. To cite but one illustration. Some of you may be aware of the fact that the Hebrew Bible uses dots for vowels and various other signs. When in our Hebrew quizzes we had a dot in the wrong place, we would often tell Rev. Ophoff that it was a fly speck, and he would give us credit for a right answer. But I suspect sometimes that he knew, but went along with our little joke enjoying his fooling of us more that we enjoyed our fooling of him.

But his classes were also fun because we never knew what was going to happen at any given time. I recall the time that the opening of the day was delayed because Rev. Ophoff had come to school sucking on an immense jaw-breaker. The sucking grew in fury as the minutes sailed by and the jaw breaker failed to decrease in size. The look on Rev. Ophoff's face grew increasingly puzzled, until, pulling the jaw-breaker from his mouth, he said in disgust: "No wonder it wouldn't melt. The paper is still on it."

But we learned. A former student

once said that Rev. Ophoff stayed longer at Mt. Sinai in Old Testement History class than the children of Israel. This was, no doubt, true. But we learned. And we grew. And we were, sometimes in spite of ourselves, being prepared for the ministry of the Word.

PEACE ON EARTH

by Sue Porte

Sue is a member of our Hope Prot. Ref'd. Church, Redlands, California.

In the stillness of the night
Radiating glory of heavenly light
An angel of the Lord appeared
Unto lowly shepherds; who greatly feared.

They stand in awe as the angels' voice
Bids their trembling hearts rejoice
Good news I bring, of tidings glad
No longer let your hearts be sad.

Then, suddenly, melodious and clear
A song is wafted on the air
In joyous tones the heavenly strain
Is echoed far in sweet refrain.

Glory to God in hightest heaven
And Peace upon the earth is given.
Reverberating o'er and o'er again
Peace on the earth; Good Will toward men.

What does this mean? Peace on the Earth
When in my heart there is no mirth.
Sadness and Misery are my lot
Sin clings to me as a leperous blot.

The prophet's words fall on my ear.
O! if ye my command would hear
Then thy righteousness had been as the waves of the sea
And thy Peace, as a river flowing free.

Isa 48:18

Again the prophet's voice does speak.
The way of Peace they do not seek
From crooked paths they do not cease
Who goeth therein, shall not know Peace.

Isa. 59:8

O, why art thou cast down my soul?
While waves and billows o'er thee roll
In the day His loving kindness is with thee
And in the night His song shall be with me.

Yea; I hear the echoes of that song
Thrilled on the air by an angel throng
And I hear the angel speak again
Your Savior was born in Bethlehem.

He came to do God's Holy Will
To perfectly His law fullfill.
Took on Himself, my curse and death
To bring good will and Peace on earth.

He entered into my deepest shame
To restore all honor to God's name.
He sank into the lowest hell
There the dragon's head to fell.

And now when storms toss o'er my soul
Or high the waves and billows roll
He commands the sea, obey His will
And bids the tumult, Peace, be still.

Luke 8:24

His parting words fall on my ear
Let not your hearts be troubled, do not fear
Though in this world tribulations ye shall bear
Peace I give to thee; My Peace I leave with thee.

John 14:1 John 16:33

And when triumphant from the grave He rose
Victorious over all His foes
The doors being shut for fear of the Jew
He stood in their midst saying, Peace be unto you.

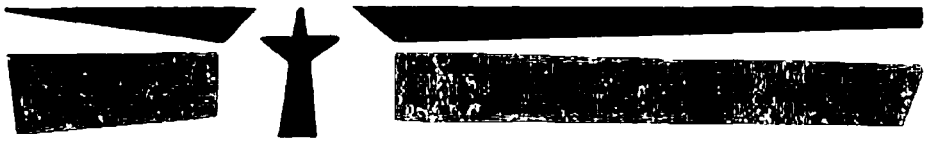
And when into the heavens they did gaze
His hands in blessing He did raise
In graciousness His face did shine
Lifted up His countenance divine
To give thee Peace.

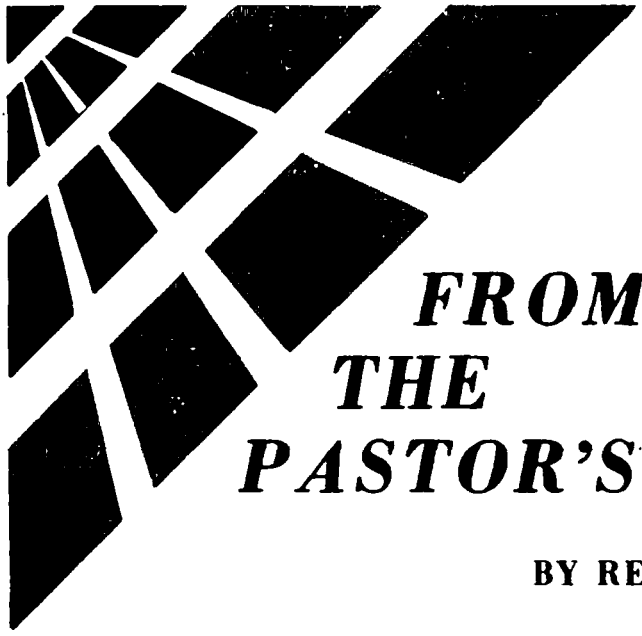
Nu. 6:24,25,26

TEST YOUR MEMORY

1. What plague immediately preceeded the killing of all the first born of Egypt?
2. Where were the saints first call Christians?
3. What empire was in power at the time of Jesus' ministry?
4. What did the Angel who guarded the entrance to the garden of Eden hold in his hand?
5. In Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image, of what were the feet made? Daniel 2:33
6. Who was called "The Evangelist"? Acts 21:8
7. By whom was a stone named "Ebenezer"? I Sam. 7:12
8. What nation was called a "wash pot"? Psalm 60:8
9. What was the fate of the ten faithless spies? Numbers 14:36-37
10. Who accused David of being proud and haughty? I Sam. 17:28-29

We take this opportunity to thank Mr. Dave Kregel for his time and effort put forth to help mail the **Beacon Lights.**





FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. M. KAMPS

CHRISTMAS BROUGHT DIVISION

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." Mt. 10:34

The essence of Christmas is Immanuel. Christmas as an historical event can, of course, never be repeated. Mary and Joseph went to the city of David nearly two thousand years ago and there Mary was delivered of the holy child, Jesus, the Christ, was born. The prophesied Prince of Peace had come and His birth was announced by the host of heaven and the one brilliant star that appeared, disappeared and reappeared. The historical event can never be repeated as event for the unique historical situations need never be repeated.

But Christmas can be preached and is preached throughout the ages. The Christ of glory declares the essence, meaning and purpose of His birth, His coming, through preaching of the gospel of peace. We rejoice in His birth because He is ever with us. His birth is meaningless, if His promise is not true; "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Thus how must we view the words of Matthew 10:34. Note that, in the first place, Jesus forbids His disciples to "think" that He had come to send peace. Secondly, Jesus assures the disciples that the purpose of Christmas is that He is come to send a sword. Strange words spoken by the Prince of Peace. Paradoxical? Only apparently so!

Jesus is certainly the Prince of Peace throughout history and all eternity. Jesus sends and brings peace to His own by the power of His Spirit and on the basis of the power of His atoning blood. He carried away all the wrath of God towards His own. All the elect, the Church, which had been given to Jesus, the Christ, from

eternity, are the ungodly whom God declares justified on the basis of the shed blood of the Head of the Church. Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Abiding peace...for the Church in the world of sin and throughout all eternity.

But there is another kind of "peace". Of this other peace Jesus is speaking in Mt. 10:34. Earthly peace it might be called. It would be the result of the removal of all hatred, strife and war from among men and nations. Man is at war with himself. For he is an enemy of God and his neighbor. The natural man and all humanity is ethically one; humanity is corrupt, depraved, dead in sin. This ethical oneness of humanity occasions and causes and manifests itself in hatred, bitterness and strife among men.

Jesus has not come to send peace on the earth. Not an earthly peace. He has come to send division and the sword.

From the context of Mt. 10:34 it is plain why Jesus spoke these words. He had just commisioned His disciples to preach the gospel to the lost sheep of Israel. The disciples had entertained the idea of the establishment of an earthly Kingdom of peace, with Jesus as King. The disciples envisioned a glorious Kingdom exceeding even the glory of Solomon's kingdom. For the King, Jesus, had power to heal the sick, to cast out devils, feed thousands with just a few loaves of bread. The disciples were more than eager to go out and declare the gospel of physical amelioration, their social gospel. But when Christ warned them that their preaching of His gospel might occasion their death, the disciples were undoubtedly mystified. Thus Jesus says: Think not! He understood their perplexity. The disciples had figured that Jesus came to establish an earthly kingdom of earthly peace, which all men everywhere would gladly rejoice in and, therefore, not be offended by their preaching. Thus Jesus attempted to remove their mis-understanding by warning "that I am not come to send peace on earth...but a sword.

Not peace, but a sword I am come to send. What did Jesus mean with this term "sword." The sword is used symbolically for tension, strife and war. Jesus had come to send division. (Luke 12:51) Christmas brings the everlasting division between men. There are in every age those forces that stand in opposition expressed by the terms: faith and unbelief, obedience and disobedience, the lie and the truth, light and darkness, Christ and anti-christ, christian and anti-christian. This division is always a spiritual warfare. This spiritual warfare is between the true Church and the false church, believer and unbeliever in any particular family, and between the old and new man within the one saint.

This struggle is life long and throughout all ages to the end of time. Never will there be an earthly peace and a kingdom of Christ of this world. Many desire it. Most preach it. But they who preach a Kingdom of Christ of this world, or a social gospel, must of necessity experience disillusionment and frustration. Total disillusionment comes "when" every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." Not their purpose, but His is ever accomplished.

This struggle throughout the ages is the evidence that God has in grace caused the seed of the woman to hate the Devil, the lie, and sin on the one hand, and on the other to love Him, the truth, and the Christ. In the beginning, after the fall, the first declaration of the gospel takes the form of God's act of "puting enmity" between two seeds. Christ came to bring that division among men. Whenever and wherever Christmas is preached there division results. This dark side of Christmas is the shadow that is inseparably joined to Christ's work as the Savior of humanity, the elect Church.

The disciples had to learn this. The

disciples were called as Christ's heralds to serve this purpose of the Sender. Peter and John soon learned this after Pentecost for "they had called the apostles and beaten them." (Acts 5:40) Paul must have learned this when he was left for dead after having been stoned in the streets of Lystra. Remember the beautiful sermon Stephen preached.

This lesson we must learn.

Every preacher of the gospel must willingly, through his preaching serve "the sending of the sword" for this is the purpose of Christ's coming, Christmas. It is the Church's calling to be submissive to the King who came to send division. Preaching that leads to a compromise of the truth and to peace with the unbeliever is a gross disservice to Christ.

Why does the preaching of the gospel of the Christ bring division? Because through Sovereign grace, only some persons according to God's purpose of election are drawn out of the ethical corruption, depravity and death: and drawn into the fellowship of God in Christ. Only some are so blessed. Those whom God is not pleased to draw into the light and the fellowship of Christ are left in their sin and corruption which death they love. Therefore, the result of Christ's work is spiritual warfare between two peoples; Ables and Cains, Jacobs and Esaus; faith and unbelief which is a reflection of God's election and reprobation.

The nominal church is troubled by this teaching of Christ...I am come to send a sword. The apostatizing church would attempt to explain this truth away. But Christ's purpose cannot be denied Him nor undone, for He is the living Lord to whom all power and glory hath been given. His purpose is ever accomplished. Tension, strife, and war follow the footsteps of the Christ as He goes forth in all ages declaring the purpose of His coming...of Christmas. Church history testifies to the truth of Christ's teaching. In the world ye will have tribulation. The servant is not greater than his Master. Even as they hated the Christ, they will hate and persecute the Master's brethren. Christ's preaching occasioned His death. Our preaching occasions the persecution of His Church.

Christmas brings everlasting division.

It would be good to think about these things as you do your Christmas shopping. Everywhere music, laughter, gaity, and shouts of "Merry Christmas". But it is all a facade. Many shout "Merry Christmas" only because they have distorted and corrupted the idea, meaning and pupose of Christmas for themselves. Is it possible that in Hell some will rethink this expression and ask themselves why they had formerly spoke of a Merry Christmas? The reprobate world is a seething cauldron of iniquity and hatred toward God and His Christ. This hatred is awakened by the preaching of the Church.

NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

by Cindi Dykstra

BIRTHS

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Tolsma of Edmonton were blessed in the birth of a son on Oct. 5.

Mr. & Mrs. Al Kaptein of Hope Church were blessed in the birth of Terry Allen on Nov. 7.

Mr. & Mrs. John Schipper of Hope Church were blessed in the birth of a son on Nov. 11.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Faith has received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. John Bishop, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Noorman and 4 children and Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Wiersma from Southeast, and those of Mr. & Mrs. Don Van Dyke from First and Hope Church respectively.

First Church has sent the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Dave Looyenga and a baptized daughter to Kalamazoo, those of Mr. & Mrs. Cal Reitsma and 4 baptized children, Rev. & Mrs. G. Van Baren and family, Mr. & Mrs. George Yonkers, Jr. and Mrs. Grace Boeze have been sent to Hudsonville Church, those of Miss Barb Zandstra have been sent to South Holland those of Mrs. Don Van Dyke (nee Linda Pastoor) have been sent to Faith Church and those of Mr. & Mrs. Henry Kamphuis and two baptized children have been received from Hudsonville.

South Holland has received the membership papers of Jackie Kamps from Hudsonville Church and has sent those of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Bruinsma to Southwest.

Doon has sent the membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Ken Kuiper and Pamela to South Holland.

Southeast has sent dismissal papers to Karen Ritsema and has sent Linda (Vander Vennen) Van Uffelen's to Hudsonville Church.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

Melanie Ver Hey confessed her faith in Edgerton Church on Oct. 23.

Ken Boer confessed his faith in South Holland on Oct. 30.

Alden De Jong, Tim Hoekstra, Floyd Jansma, and Mike Kooistra confessed their faith in Hull on Oct. 30.

MARRIAGE

Neal Hanko and Jeanne Zandstra were united in marriage on Nov. 3 in Hudsonville Church.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

South Holland's Young People's Society has been busy with money making projects for the '78 convention. Lately they've sponsored a submarine sandwich sale, a car wash and wax, a spaghetti supper, and a bake sale.

Edgerton's Young Peoples Society had a bowling party on Oct. 7.

Doon Young People sponsered a hayride Oct. 17.

Hull's Young People sponsored a Reformation Singspiration on Oct. 30.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Rev. Kamps spoke on "Does the Bible Contain Errors" in a Reformation Day Lecture held Oct. 26 in Sheldon Iowa.

A Reformation Day Lecture was held in Hudsonville Church on Oct. 27. Prof. Hoeksema spoke on "Reformation-Option or Mandate?"

The consistory of Trinity Prot. Ref. Church held a lecture in which Rev. Bekkering spoke on "The Reformation-A Deliverance From Bondage" It took place in the Alief Brethren Church on Oct. 31.

Covenant's Senior Choir presented a concert in Hudsonville Church on Nov. 20.

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