

BEACON LIGHTS

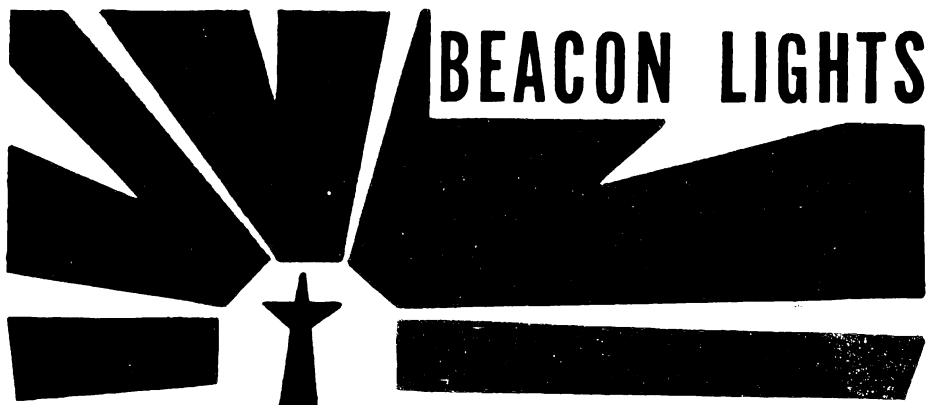
*FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH*



JANUARY, 1979

NEW YEAR

HAPINESS



BEACON LIGHTS

VOLUME XXXVII

JANUARY, 1979

NUMBER 9

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD

John Van Baren - President; Bob Faber - Vice-President; Carolyn Van Baren - Secretary; Sandy Miedema - Assistant Secretary; Greg Van Overloop - Treasurer; Scott Boer - Assistant Treasurer; Sheryl Oomkes - Librarian; Jim Van Overloop - Youth Coordinator

BEACON LIGHTS STAFF

Dave Moelker - Editor-in-Chief; John M. Faber, Harry Langerak, Gerald Kulper - Associate Editors; Gerrit Boverhof - Finance Manager; Ellen Hanko, Nancy Van Dyke, Grace Faber, Joan Schut

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

David Harbach, Rev. R. Harbach, Rev. M. Kamps, Agatha Lubbers, Rev. G. Lubbers, Ben Wigger

BEACON LIGHTS
 c/o O. P. Bookshop
 P. O. Box 2289
 Christchurch, New Zealand

If any material of **Beacon Lights** is reprinted by another periodical, we will appreciate your giving the source.

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.

All material for publication should be addressed to
 Dave Moelker 1401 Su-Lew S.W.
 Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504
 News Editor: Cindi Dykstra

4625 Ju-Le-On Dr. S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Michigan subscription dues to Grace Faber
 4190 Burton S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506

Subscribers outside of Michigan please forward subscription dues to

Nancy Van Dyke

3502 Bluebird S.W., Wyoming, Mich. 49506

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

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial Comments - Dave Moelker 1

EDITORIAL - I Am Joe's Stomach - J. M. Faber 2

CRITIQUE - The Threat of the Occult - Agatha Lubbers 3

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY - Prayer From The Heart Of Faith - Rev. G. Lubbers 6

Crossword Puzzle 9

TRUTH VS. ERROR - Have You Received Jesus? - Rev. R. C. Harbach 10

CURRENT EVENTS & COMMENTS - New Year Happiness - Dave Harbach 13

Earth Tremors and Blackouts On Vancouver Island - Rev. R. C. Harbach 15

News From, For and About Our Churches - Cindi Dykstra 18

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The subscription envelope in this issue of *Beacon Lights* is provided for those of you who have received a complimentary copy this month. Of course, it may also be used by anyone who would like to subscribe. Please send it in as soon as possible.

* * * * *

Rev. Harbach has taken time to fill us in on his work as missionary in the Vancouver, British Columbia area of Canada. We might do well as young people to keep active in knowing what our churches are doing in different parts of the world with regard to missions. This activity could also include letters to those men who are sent to labor; and how about starting correspondence with some of the young people in these far off places?

* * * * *

Beacon Lights is now available to our Australasian readers through the O. P. Book Shop in Christchurch, New Zealand. *New* subscribers from that part of the world may place their subscriptions through the address on the inside front cover.

* * * * *

A special word of thanks is in order for all those who send gifts along with their renewed subscriptions. Because of your gifts in this way and through collections, we are able to make ends meet. If we were to depend on subscriptions alone to print our magazine, their sum total would last only three months. We covet your support in this way and through your prayers on our behalf in the coming year.

Help us to help each other, Lord
Each other's cross to bear;
Let each his friendly aid afford,
And feel his brother's cane.

Charles Wesley

I AM JOE'S STOMACH

by J. M. Faber

I am Joe's stomach. I am nestled high in his abdomen, on the left side, under his diaphragm, and protected by his rib-cage. When Joe eats a full meal I shape into a pouch about ten inches long; and can I stretch! I can hold as much as two quarts of food! When I am empty, I am like a deflated balloon. If Joe could only see the processing within me, he probably would not eat so much, and he would not be so fat. Whether he gulps a hamburger-with-everything, or a gourmet meal in a Holiday Inn, it is very soon mashed, churned, pulverized, and generally battered beyond recognition. (remember when your little brother "threw up"?) But it is only by gyrations that it begins the digestive process effectively, insuring Joe's energy and his repeated joy in eating the next meal.

By the time Joe's hamburger (or beef a la Bourguignonne) reaches me from his esophagus, it has already been softened. This entry into and exit from me are regulated by circular muscles somewhat like old fashioned purse-strings. I work on the food both chemically and mechanically. My strong muscular walls knead the food like your mother kneads dough, all the while mixing into it two chief ingredients, pepsin-which is an enzym, and hydrochloric acid-which is such a strong corrosive that can eat its way through a cotton handkerchief-yet it does no harm to my lining which is protected by a sticky mucous.

My principal role in Joe's body is to

serve as a storage tank until the next section of the digestive tract is ready to receive it. That section is the small intestine, which is a slow methodical worker and processes the food in very small quantities at a time. Therefore, I allow my contents into it under the control of a circular muscle at my lower end. Doctors call it the pylorus, but I simply regard it as my gate keeper.

As long as Joe eats and drinks moderately and consumes wholesome food, I get along with him real well. Quite often, he completely forgets about me and the work I do for him. But that's all right for then I am giving him no trouble because of sloppy eating habits. But, occasionally Joe drinks alcoholic beverages, and sometimes to excess! I pass that stuff on very quickly to the small intestine. I quietly listen to that organ scold me for the latest contribution, but it also rather rapidly disposes of such food into the blood stream. It may take a greater part of a day to convert some food into chemicals by way of the blood supply which nourishes Joe's body; but alcohol? That is a different story! Within an hour it has already been assimilated by the blood and has gone to his head. His brain is befuddled, his tongue is set wagging without control and his speech becomes slurred; and it soon travels way down to his legs and feet and lo, and behold, Joe is staggering. Then if he persists in adding to my work with still more alcohol, even I, Joe's stomach cannot any longer **stomach**

it. I will throw it up to him and he will lay in his own filth. The Wise Man in your Book of Proverbs quotes Joe in his drunken stupor: "They have stricken me, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." Poor, foolish Joe. I am usually quite proud of my owner and so are my helpers, the intestines. But when he foolishly imbibes such stuff, we hurriedly pass it on and Joe is "given over to his own heart's lust".

I can be abused in other ways so that I retaliate by giving Joe trouble and pain. If he allows himself to be overcome by a long period of stress and causes me to produce too much acid, this will burn through my lining and breed an ulcer. With medication (chemicals to combat over-acidity), I soon recover from my unstable state and settle into the groove of humble servitude.

My name has even been taken up into your common language; as when people say, "I have no stomach for such behavior", as I would say if Joe should eat sawdust.

I am often blamed for things of which I am innocent. Once when Joe was a little boy, he stole some apples from an orchard and ate them. But, alas, they were green and Joe told his mother that his stomach hurt. Huh! I had quickly passed those green apples along the way. Little Joe's pain was in the next-of-line, the intestines. I have heard Joe say, "My stomach is rattling". Wrong again. That rumbling is further down the line. But I don't mind that too much. All I ask is that Joe "feed me with food that is convenient for me" and I will be his friend and will serve him all his life, be it ten or one hundred years.

Hearty Eating! J.S.



CRITIQUE

THE THREAT OF THE OCCULT

by Agatha Lubbers

In a recent interview, the Rev. Dr. Arthur F. Glasser, dean of the school of world missions at the Fuller Theological

Seminary in Pasadena, California, said, "Our generation has produced more new religious cults than any generation in the

total history of the human race." Another recent report indicated that 1300 new and sometimes "fly-by-night" cults have come into existence in the last 13 years.

We live in an extremely perplexing and troublesome time. The "Age of Aquarius" is upon us. According to astrologers, this is the age that will bring with it a new religious atmosphere. Although we have reasons to fear astrologers, we cannot ignore the popularity and influence of many cults.

Religious deception and outright rejection of Biblical Christianity mushroom in many places. Interest in religion, the occult, mysticism and Eastern religious ideas has never been more popular in America than it is now in the 1970's. In fact, religion is one of the fastest growing fields of graduate study at the secular universities today.

These facts are striking because the Protestant theologians of the 1960's were asserting the "death of God" and the eventual decline and fall of religion. Vernon C. Grounds is quoted in **Cults and the Occult in The Age of Aquarius**, Edmond C. Gruss. Grounds wrote in the **Christian Heritage**, January, 1973, as follows:

In their learned opinion supernaturalism of any sort was no longer a believable option for intelligent people, just as fairy tales are incredible to a rational adult. In fact, those radicals prophesied that religion as a whole seemed slated to disappear, a kind of cultural fog evaporating before the rising sun of scientific knowledge.

But to judge by the course of events in the early 1970's those radicals are going to be exposed as false prophets. Religion, whether traditional Christianity or the latest brand of spiritism is not dying out by any means; instead, it is experiencing a tremendous upsurge."

The recent bizarre events associated with the Peoples Temple in San Francisco and in Jonestown, Guyana, South America, have only served to confirm the judgment of those who claim that religion headed by the fanatic with charisma is on the rise.

Although we are shocked by the events in our land, we should not be surprised that such things happen. Those who are caught up in movements such as the Jonestown experience and are swept along by the leaders of these occult groups are often drop-outs from the main-line churches. These drop-outs are seeking meaning, direction, comfort and love. In fact, those who joined the Jonestown group said that they joined because they were seeking acceptance and love, and they were surprised to be so warmly received by the Jones "church".

Time, December 4, 1978, reports that social scientists who have studied these groups agree that most cult members are in some sort of emotional trouble before they join. Such people are vulnerable to well-planned recruitment techniques.

Because they have not received the love of the truth, God sends them strong delusion and they believe the lie. (Cf. II Thessalonians 2:10-11)

T.K. Wallace investigated the question, "What's behind the Occultism Craze?" by questioning people in bookstores which specialized in occult material. He reported in **Family Weekly**, February 28, 1971, the following:

"I believe there's a master plan to the cosmos, and I want to learn it," said one person. "I need something like horoscopes or Tarot cards to make my decisions for me," said another. "My marriage is on the rocks. I need to find happiness somewhere," a third told me. Still another said, "My life is dull, and I must find something exciting."

Notice the thorough-going emphasis in the comments of these people, who are searching and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, that life for them is a delusion. They cannot find happiness and they do not have the **only** comfort in life and death that the child of God has, namely, that he belongs with body and soul for time and eternity to his faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

21 Although we do not agree with the premillenarian eschatology of Hal Lindsey, his analysis of the contemporary situation as reported by John Dart in the *Los Angeles Times*, March 10, 1973, seems to explain the contemporary explosion of occultism.

Satan changed his strategy about 1967... and has since sought to have the world believe in the supernatural.

This helps to explain the interest in the occult, witchcraft, Satanism, astrology, Oriental mysticism, and similar cults in the last few years.

Cultism is also one of the signs of Christ's coming. Jesus told His disciples that false Christs and false prophets shall arise and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect. (Matthew 24:24).

We are thankful to our Covenant God that our Protestant Reformed young people are not swept along with the occult craze of our age. This is a matter of God's sovereign, free grace which not only saves His children but also preserves them in the greatest trial. God has been faithful to our churches and has preserved our young people from this soul-destroying menace.

We should remember, however, that the way into the occult is extraordinarily easy, the way out is extremely dangerous. This should forewarn us so that we will not experiment in these areas. We are to

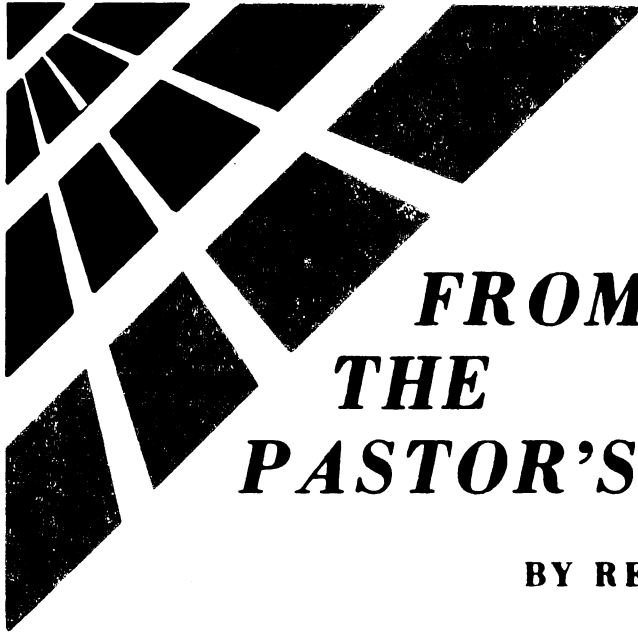
take the message of God seriously. "And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people." (Leviticus 20:6)

It ought to be clear that the danger of the occult has always existed. The Word of God which is the source of our instruction in all the events of history speaks authoritatively concerning these events. Today's religious deception and outright rejection of Biblical Christianity is taught in I Timothy 4:1-2.

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their consciences seared with a hot iron."

The stories of the Jonestown experience confirm the judgment of I Timothy 4:1ff. Jones called himself the reincarnation of Jesus and began calling himself God--the God who made the heavens and the earth. Such blasphemy God could not long endure. God would send strong delusion into this cult so that they should believe a lie and be damned. (cf. II Thessalonians 2.)

What is our responsibility as Covenant young people in these days? Although evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, we are to continue in the things which we have learned. "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (II Timothy 3:14-15)



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. G. LUBBERS

PRAYER FROM THE HEART OF FAITH

How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask His? Luke 11:13

The Bible teaches us much about the spiritual art of prayer to God, which we must learn and take to heart, young people!

First of all, we are taught that all of life's issues are from our hearts. Therefore, we are to keep our hearts with all diligence; there is nothing so important as the keeping of our heart; it is the keeping above all keeping. (Proverbs 4:23) Small wonder that the Psalmist prays so fervently, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer." (Psalm 19:14) Therefore we must be pure in

heart! (Matthew 5:8) For to come into the presence of the LORD, we must have "Clean hands, and a pure heart, and we must not lift up our soul unto vanity, nor must we swear deceitfully," when we approach the throne of grace in prayer. (Psalm 24:4)

He who prays, walks on the straight and narrow way which leads to life, and which way few there are that find it. Also in the matter of prayer there are many who walk the broad way. Their prayers are an abomination in God's sight. God is far from the prayer of the wicked. They may make many prayers, but God will not hear them. (Isaiah 1:15; Psalm 18:35; 34:15,16;

18,19) If we regard iniquity in our heart, God will not hear us! God is a spirit and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24) Now we must walk so that we serve the Lord in spirit and in truth. Then we will say, "but verily God hath heard me; He hath attended to the voice of my prayer". (Psalm 66:19) Yea, we will continue and say, "Blessed by God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me." (Psalm 66:20)

In order to pray to the Lord, we must have **believing hearts!** Let this truth sink deep into our souls! We must do this for our very life's sake, young people. I am deeply concerned about you in this matter! Let us try to understand this a bit in depth together, shall we?

The first matter which, I believe, we ought to underscore, is that a believing prayer is very much concerned about the first table of the Law, the first and great commandment. The believer does not do this out of slavish fear, servile trembling, but he does this with holy awe and reverence. As much as he loves his life, he flees all idolatry, sorcery, superstition, soothsaying, learns rightly to know the only true God, trust in Him alone, expect all good things from Him only, and to glorify Him with the whole heart. That is a very important part of Christian thankfulness to God, which is both just and truthful. (Heidelberg Catechism, Question 94) See also Matthew 4:10 where Jesus rebukes Satan concerning his perversion of prayer, when he would tempt Jesus to worship him!!

The requisite of true prayer is one which befits the chief part of thankfulness to God. For that is what constitutes the essence of true prayer which is acceptable to God and which is heard by Him. The very heart-throb of our **asking, seeking** and **knocking** must be a thankful heart, the Christian gratitude which reveals itself in good works, which are out of faith, according to God's law and which are unto

His glory. That is the **simple formula** of good works, and also of prayer as the chief part of good works. Have you memorized this formula as found in Question 91 of the Heidelberg Catechism, my youthful reader? My reader with the hoary head, have you memorized this and practiced this more and more through your three score years and ten? May God grant it!

Have you followed me carefully so far? Good! Then we can proceed.

Our Reformed fathers who composed the Heidelberg Catechism were good Bible students with excellent exegetical skills. You will find them often referring to the "three things" which we must know, as believers who belong to Christ, in order to enjoy the only comfort in life and dying. The "three things" may not always be in the same order: misery, redemption and thankfulness, but they are always there. Also these three elements form the proper requisites (not pre-requisites!) that is, what truly belongs to that prayer which is well-pleasing to God and is answered by Him. When one of these elements is missing or is deemphasized in our praying, there will be no true: **asking, seeking** and **knocking**, with the corresponding: **receiving, finding and having the flood-gates of grace opened to us from the fulness of Christ**. God only gives the operation of the Holy Spirit to those who with hearty sighing (sincere desires) and without ceasing storm the gates of heaven for the gifts of the Spirit upon His church in general, and upon us as believers in particular. This truth too should sink deep into our hearts.

Prayer is the chief part of thankfulness!

It is quite evident that the first part of thankfulness evidences itself in the fact that we stand in relationship to God as our Covenant God and Father as revealed in His Word. This means that we see God not only as the creator of the world, and upholder of all things; but that we see Him as revealed in the face of Jesus

Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord. It means that you call God Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work. Yes, you stand consciously before this one true God, who alone is God, and whom to know is life eternal. You press forward and approach to God as your Father who loves you and established His love to you. You come as a new creature for whom old things have passed away and for whom all things are now become new.

However, for that very reason you come to God deeply conscious of your needs. You rightly know your need and misery as you come. You and I come as poor and needy sinners, whose conscience must be cleansed from the guilt of sin, and need to be assured of our being justified by God Himself the judge of heaven and earth! O what a need this is. God be merciful to me, a sinner. You come as the prodigal son, saying, "Father I am not worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hirelings." You say with the Publican in the temple, "God be merciful to me, the sinner". (Luke 15:17,18; Luke 18:13) Yes, you have come to yourself and see yourself in the light of the perfect, royal law of liberty. The picture you saw was not flattering, was it. And you did not become a forgetful hearer, so that you did not remember what manner of man you are. It was the picture of a spiritual leper, unclean by sin, guilt and corruption. Yes, that is reality, my youthful Christian reader. And we know it, we know it, do we not. Let us not forget this when we come to God in prayer.

But we are also sure that our heavenly Father hears us, hears us, ever anew each morning. We know that he gives freely, and never chides. Yes, we give good gifts to our earthly children,

who we love so very much. We love them tenderly, yet we often are evil in this love. It is polluted with sin. We are parents who are "evil", and not perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. But God gives His Holy Spirit to those who ask of Him. He sends the comfort of heaven, and washes us from the guilt and pollution of our sins, does He not? He does this for Christ's sake only. Him He set forth a propitiation for our sins in the death of the Cross, that He might be just and a justifier of guilty sinners. Because He did not spare His own Son, but gave him over for us all, He will also freely give us all things with Him. (Romans 8:32)

Yes, my child, you cannot go to the Lord in your own worthiness, can you? There is only one way to the Father and to the throne of grace. It is as Jesus says, "through me". I am the way and the truth and the life! No one cometh unto the Father but by me. (John 14:6)

That blood-sprinkled way is the new and living way which leads to God, the Father in the inner sanctuary of His throne. Approach that throne in true faith, in thankfulness for so great a gift of salvation; yes, even for the gift of prayer itself.

May the Lord Himself pour upon you the spirit of grace and supplication; may you look upon Him who was pierced for our sins, may we mourn as those who mourn in Zion, knowing that our heavenly Father's grace is greater than all of our sins. (Zechariah 12:10; Romans 5:20,21) Yes, ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, and knock and it shall be opened unto you. There is no exception to this rule for all who worship in spirit and in truth. For our Father in heaven is faithful as He has promised to hear our supplications and prayers!

A man with God is always in the majority.

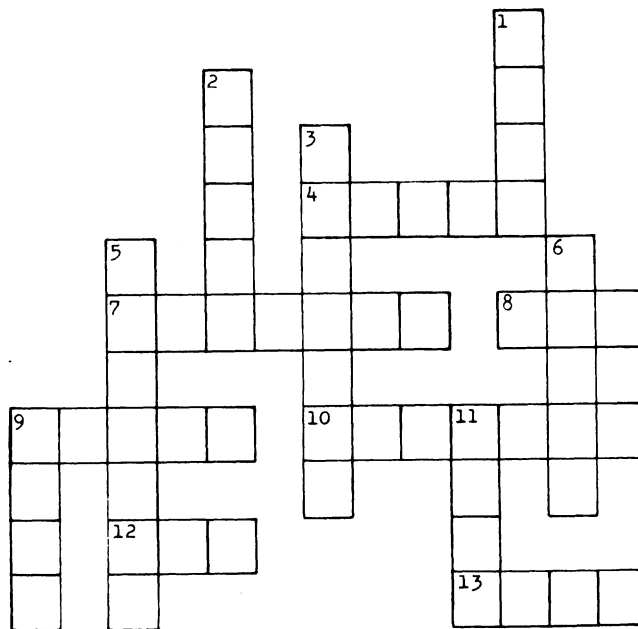
BIBLE BIRDS

ACROSS

4. A bird with mighty wings. (Isa. 40:31)
7. A type of vulture. (Ps. 102:6)
8. A blind bird. (Lev. 11:19)
9. Another bird named in Leviticus 11:19.
10. A type of fowl mentioned by Jesus as He looked sorrowfully over Jerusalem. (Matt. 23:37)
12. A wise bird. (Lev. 11:17)
13. A member of the hawk family. (Lev. 11:14)

DOWN

1. The bird that brought the olive leaf back to the ark. (Gen. 8:11)
2. What bird did God send the Israelites for food in the desert? (Exod. 16:13)
3. A bird with beautiful tail feathers. (2 Chron. 9:21)
5. What bird was sold two for a farthing or a penny? (Matt. 10:29)
6. What bird fed Elijah? (1 Kings 17:6)
9. A bird in the family of diurnal birds of prey. (Lev. 11:16)
11. What bird is associated with Peter? (Matt. 26:34)





Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

HAVE YOU RECEIVED JESUS?

The following is the text of a radio sermon over KARI, Blaine, Washington, in a new broadcast series entitled, "Bible Truth Meditations". One of the main purposes of this broadcast is to reach the Victoria area, which it does with excellent reception on Saturday mornings at 10:45.

Dealing with the proposition that the spiritually dead sinner is incapable of accepting Jesus, but that the regenerated sinner may and does receive Him, we turn to the Word of God at John, chapter one, verse 12, where we read, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Translating the text more literally, it reads: But all who received Him, He gave right to them to become children of God, to those believing in His name." The text refers to Jesus the true Light of the world. To all who received Him, He gave right to become children of God! Let's limit ourselves to just the words, "as many as received Him," or "all who received Him". What does it mean to **receive** Jesus? You don't hear much about this today; you hear more about accepting Him. But there is considerable difference between "receiv-

ing" and "accepting". You easily see the difference if you think of "receiving injuries in an auto accident" and "accepting a Nobel Peace award". In **receiving** we are passive; in **accepting** we are active.

Well, then, in the strict, biblical sense, we do not accept Jesus, at least, not initially, but we receive Him. It is not that we go to and take Him, but that He comes to and gives Himself to us. The latter must precede the former. Since sinners are spiritually dead in sin, and have no right to be children of God, they cannot be so active as to 'accept' Him. A corpse, like dead Lazarus, cannot accept life. But it can receive life when He who is the Resurrection and the Life resuscitates and revivifies it with new life, raising it from the dead. So then, as spiritual Lazaruses, we are all dead to God and all saving good, and therefore cannot accept anything. But we can, in His giving Himself and His own life to us, receive that life and His own wonderful self.

Look at the difference this way: a water glass receives the liquid poured into it: it does not accept it. I receive your invitation to have a glass of water before I accept it. I am first passive in the matter,

then active. Lazarus certainly had to passively receive resurrection life before he could actively accept anything!

If we do not maintain this biblical distinction clearly, and stick to the biblical terminology of "receiving Christ", rather than "accepting Him", we shall then fall into the proud error of attributing to the spiritual dead sinner powers he does not have. For since the original sin and fall of man, all are incapable of doing **any** good (spiritual or civil), and are prone to all wickedness. All are, therefore, incapable of accepting eternal life, but those made alive by Christ can and do receive it. If we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, it is because we **were**, prior to that receiving, born of God. John 1:13. All who were born of God, born from above, born again, received His Son, and **so** have right to become children of God. This distinction alone honors God, for it puts God first, not man. To 'accept' is a human act. To receive Christ, as a flower receives the refreshing dew, is a supernatural act. The flower does nothing, but has something done for and upon it. Then the flower is refreshed and activated to life. Then faith is not "accepting Jesus", an act of would-be autonomous man; but faith is a supernaturally produced reality. It is the gift of God. With that gift I receive Him. Without that gift I can do nothing of a spiritual nature. The sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, lacks the natural ability to accept the Resurrection and the Life. To "receive Him" is the passive act of the spiritually dead who are supernaturally renewed by the life-giving Spirit.

It further honors God for us to realize and confess that the misery of man's total depravity in sin and spiritual death, his total inability to any good **in God's sight**, leaves him totally morally impotent to help himself or prepare himself for receiving any help from God. And **divine** help we sorely need. But we cannot even begin to prepare ourselves to receive His help, much less, accept it. We cannot do this.

"No man **can** come unto Me, except the Father, who sent Me, draw him" (John 6, verse 44). We must first be "accepted in the Beloved" One (Eph. 1:6). God's people. Scripture tells us, were first chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and thus they were accepted in the Beloved One!

Take up an exhaustive concordance and see that the Bible does not speak of man's accepting **Him**, but of God's accepting **man**. Job (13:8) asks, "Will ye accept **His** person?", a rhetorical question, requiring no answer, since it is obviously, No, for we are unable to accept His person. There must be prayer for us that "the Lord thy God accept **thee**" (1 Samuel 24:23). For "the Lord doth not accept" those who go off and wander away from Him (Jeremiah 14:10), as we have done. The Lord says, "I will not accept them" (v. 12) But the Lord does hear such prayer, "thy God accept thee", and tells us where He accepts His own people: "there will I accept them", (Ezekiel 20:40) namely, in Mt. Zion, the true Church. That is very important, for many today speak of "accepting Jesus" who do not accept the institute of the true church, but, instead, meet in little extra-church (even anti-church) groups.

The question, then, is not, Have you accepted Jesus? but, Has God accepted you? If He hasn't, then you won't be able to accept Him! If He has, then you will receive Him and be given right to become a child of God! The question is, Has God from all eternity chosen you in Christ, and that before the foundation of the universe? Are you accepted in Him, the Beloved One? Has He regenerated you with new spiritual life, making you a new creature in Christ Jesus? Out of that new life, has He given you the supernatural fruit of saving faith? Has he turned you from darkness to His marvelous light? If so, then you turn to Him—that's conversion—and you receive Him with the embracing of forgiveness and love, as that sinful but

forgiven woman embraced the feet of Jesus, washed them with her penitential tears and dried them with her hair. That's beautiful heavenly act of receiving Him, rather than the humanistic earthly act of nature that "accepting Him" is!

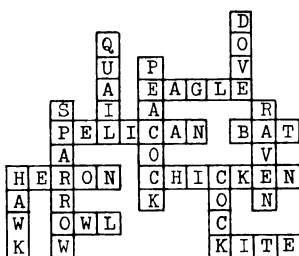
Receiving Him is the act on the bride's part of responding to the bridegroom. It is a conjugal act. The heavenly Bridegroom first sovereignly accepts His bride, the Church, then she, responding, receives Him. Here is a picture of marital life, a reflection of God's covenant life with His people. The Bride (the Church) is flesh of the Bridegroom's flesh, and bone of His bone in that embrace of receiving Him. Thus we are more and more united to His sacred Body and become one flesh with Him. Receiving Christ, then, is like Jacob finally giving up wrestling with the Angel, to go on embracing Him. Jacob halted (limped) as he left that place where the embracing occurred. So, conscious of our natural halting gait, we see our need to live in utter dependence upon Him. "Accepting Jesus" is boasting of what we can do, or have done. Receiving and embracing Him is utter dependence on what He can do! We receive Him as the branches embrace the Vine, and receive the life of the Vine to flow through us. The Vine accepts the engrafted branches. The embrace and receive the Vine, and doing so, receive its livening juices. Therefore, "accepting" is of pure nature; "receiving Jesus" is of pure grace. It is especially of the grace of having been born of God!

Receiving Him is what the branches engrafted into the Vine do with the life-power of the Vine flowing through them. Accepting Him" is what men **think** the branches do of themselves.

Have you received Him? Then that means He has in His wondrous sovereign grace come to a broken, empty, earthen vessel, and in His coming, made it new and whole, and has filled it with all His blessings.

What then? Are we saved because we accept someone or something? because we accept an invitation to come to Jesus? or because we accept an offer of His salvation? or because we imagine we can exert some movement in the direction of God? Is it that God waits for man to make the first move? Is it left to us, to the power of man, to be regenerated or not, to be converted or continue unconverted, to accept or reject Christ, to receive Him or not? No, in no way! It all rests with the supernatural working of God to actuate the will of His chosen ones, so that they then do receive Him. In this way, their will is made active and willing in the day of God's power! **Then** we are rightly said to believe in His name, and savingly to repent of all our sins, by virtue of sovereign grace received. Have you received Jesus? Do you believe on His name? If so, on the authority of no less than that of Jehovah God I tell you that you have a divine right to be a child of God. Amen.

BIBLE BIRDS



Current Events & Comments

NEW YEAR HAPPINESS

by David Harbach

Happy New Year! Those three words we spoke to many people at the beginning of this new year and rightly so. After all, it is another year, 1979, and we certainly want that year to be a happy one for those we love. Yet, you know that the world around us says the same thing and, in fact, makes a great big holiday out of the new year. Why, just consider all the parading, fireworks, and worldly amusement that goes on up to twelve o'clock and long after twelve o'clock into the early hours of the next day, the first day of the new year. Even then the celebrating does not cease. Why, you have the Mummers parade, football games all day long, and speeches innumerable about how their god has given them another year to carry on in their worldly pursuits that will bring them happiness. Does all that bring us happiness too? Sometimes we really wish we could be like the world and have their kind of happiness. May God graciously forbid! I hope, young people, that this article serves to motivate us in the right direction in order that we may truly have a happy new year.

HEY YOU, yes you, the one with the flashy new car; and you too, the one with the latest hairstyle and newest fashion in clothing; and you too, who has all the brains and hardly ever has to study; and you too, the one who plays the piano so beautifully; and you too the one over six feet who loves to play basketball; and you too, the one who is always quiet; and you too dear reader..., are you happy? That is,

is your life here on earth a happy life? What then makes you happy? I know, it was all those nice new presents you received for Christmas, or maybe the fact that you had a break from your studies in order to relax, or being able to watch all those exciting football games on T.V.? Then my question to you is what difference was there in your happiness than that happiness which the world calls happiness?

Happiness is Lord's Day I of the Heidelberg Catechism. That's right! "Question 1. What is thy **only** comfort in life and death? Answer. That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ;...." "Question 2. How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou, **enjoying this comfort**, mayest live and die **happily**? Answer. Three; the first, how great my sins and miseries are; the second, how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries; the third, how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance."

What a difference there is between the false happiness of the world and the true happiness of the children of God. The two are directly opposed to each other. The world does not give one snap of the fingers concern about its sins and miseries, not does it care to be delivered from them because those sins and miseries are its chief delight; therefore, the world can give no gratitude to God nor can we when the happiness of the world is our

kind of happiness. Indeed, the world of darkness is very really spiritually dead. The world of iniquity goes about its business day after day as if this earthly life will never end and Christ will never come. How horrible! How foolish!

Imagine the world of darkness as a man sitting on a very comfortable chair, in a completely dark room, that has a large number of T.V.'s placed in the walls that surround him, at eye level. Now picture in your mind that each TV is turned on to a different channel, and it is Satan who controls what each channel is to show. Why, that man can feast to his heart's content on any program he desires to see, whichever one makes him happy. The only light he sees is what comes from the TV screens. That is a picture of man's happiness and it is nothing more than the seeking of carnality and worldliness. Again we must say, "How horrible!" "How foolish!"

What about us, the children of the Living God? We have already mentioned our true happiness, but how is it different than the world's happiness? In the first place, we know from the scriptures that this earthly life will not go on forever and, therefore, we live our lives according to the Holy Scriptures with that fact ingrained into our hearts. Obviously, we, the children of God, do not go about seeking to fulfill the lust of our eyes, the lust of our flesh, nor the pride of life. We consciously fight against all of that sin in our lives, preparing ourselves for the coming of our only Lord and Savior Jesus Christ upon the clouds of heaven. We take notice of the truth that Christ is coming again, and we pay attention to the fact that He is coming again to save the church and to destroy the world of darkness. We belong to Jesus Christ, both our body and soul, in life and in death, and that Jesus Christ is coming again. All of that is possible only because of the wonder of God's grace shed abroad in our hearts. That grace is never a "common grace", it

is always irresistible and particular, given to the elect only, given to those whose body and soul belong unto Jesus Christ. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Matthew 25:13.

Secondly, true happiness is closely connected with that calling to watch. You have, in the Holy Scriptures, a beautiful parable that Jesus spoke to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, Tuesday of the Passion Week, the week in which our Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for all the sins of the elect. Many of us know the parable by the title "Parable of the Ten Virgins" found in Matthew 25:1-13. In order that you may have a complete explanation of this parable, read Prof. Hanko's "The Mysteries of the Kingdom", pages 275-284. By Prof. Hanko's permission I will quote the section titled "The Meaning of the Calling to Watch".

"So we must watch. What a rich and important admonition this is! It implies, in the first place, that hope is the main principle of our life. This hope reaches out in eagerness and longing for Christ, even as a bride eagerly awaits the coming of her bridegroom."

"In the second place, the admonition implies that our lives must always be the lives of pilgrims and strangers in the earth. This is wisdom. This is the oil of preparedness. We have here no abiding city. Our eternal destination is the house of our Father, and to this destination we press forward."

"In the third place, the admonition implies a constant prayer, It implies the prayer: "Come Lord Jesus, yea, come quickly." The Church which longs for Christ's return also prays for this day to come. Unceasingly, with great longing and earnest tears and sighs, the Church lifts up her petitions to the throne of grace for the return of her Savior."

"And finally, the firmer this hope lives in the hearts of the people of God, the stronger does the Church make herself

ready for the appearance of Him Who loved her unto death.”

Although this parable pictures the Church visible which is here on earth, the people of God know that hoping for, watching for Christ the bridegroom, is hoping for the coming of Him who owns both our body and soul; who, with his precious blood, hath fully satisfied for all our sins, and delivered us from all the power of the devil. What true blessed happiness that brings to our souls.

Indeed this is a happy new year. Some day soon, the twelve o'clock which the world knowingly ignores will come, but for them it will mean their destruction. Then there will be no new year for them, only suffering God's eternal wrath in hell.

However, for the people of God that twelve o'clock means the coming of the bridegroom, Jesus Christ. What joy and happiness there shall be, and is even now! That new year shall know no time, for it shall be the full blessedness of eternal life with our only Lord and Savior in the new heavens and the new earth!

Could we be happy this year if we had only one pair of shoes, one suit of clothes, one overcoat, one good dress, one automobile, or maybe none? Are we rich if we have more than these? What does the Bible say? How do we determine what our needs are? What do we **really** need? Do our selfcreated needs hinder our watchfulness?

Earth Tremors and Blackouts On Vancouver Island

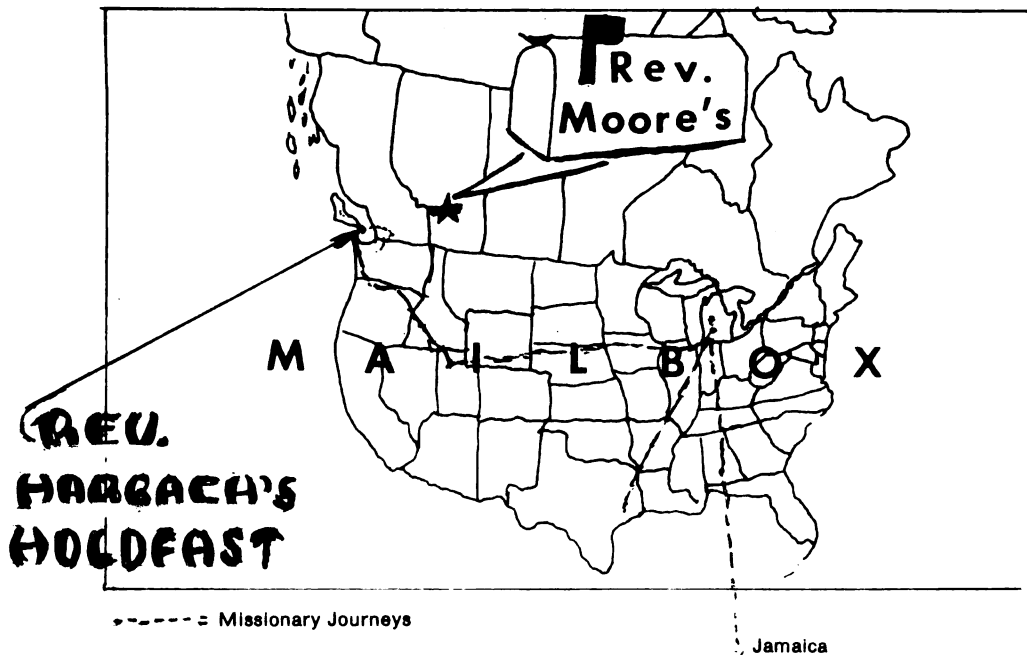
by Rev. Robert C. Harbach

As you look at the map of North America appearing in almost every issue of Beacon Lights you notice what appears to be a piece of lint falling out of Uncle Sam's hip pocket. That is Vancouver Island! We are on the Island in the city of Victoria. Vancouver Island is about 280 miles long, and, at its widest point, about 80 miles wide. Like Jamaica, the terrain is extremely rocky, mountainous and green, and is shaped like a fish, its nose and head bounded by the Georgia and Juan de Fuca Straits, while its body and tail are "swimming" in the Pacific Ocean.

Our trip out here took us out of Michigan, through Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and across the ferry from Port Angeles over the Juan de Fuca

Strait to Vancouver Island and Victoria, capital city of British Columbia, all a distance of about 2,532 miles from Grand Rapids. We arrived August 30, 1977, and immediately began regular church services in the Holyrood House, amply outfitted with many meeting rooms, lounges and a Scottish restaurant with such house specialties as Tupenny Pie and Cockaleekie Soup. We "batched" in three motels for a while until we were able to get into the apartment where we are now. Apartment dwelling is something like living in a canyon cave, the corridors of which din with the heathen shrieks and are almost incessant, mounonous drumbeats of the savage neighbor troglodyte inhabitants.

Last year we had a catechetical



season completed in O.T. Bible History and the Essentials of Reformed Doctrine, teaching 8 to 12 children. Our adult Bible class of eight made a lengthy and minutely detailed study of "The Essentials of Reformed Doctrine." Now the children are studying th O.T. with the aid of "Our Guide," and the adult class, increased by an extra family, continues in study of the Reformed Confession, And at this moment we are into "angelalogy."

We began publishing a one-sheet letter which we put into a religious publication forat with the name **Calvinist Contender**. Also in last year's Bible study season, we taught a class in the Reformed Essentials every other Monday evening in

Abbotsford, B.C. This is about 64 mi. only, but involves an hour and 40 minutes across 24 miles of water and takes about 4 ¼ hours of travel one way! As interest in this class waned, it was not continued this season. However, we are now busier than we were with that class in a new radio broadcast out of KARI, Blaine, Washington, which we call, "Bible Truth Meditations". This is aired on Saturday mornings at 10:45 to 11:00, the first broadcast occurring October 21. It was earlier, in September, that we celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary, and as it so happened, with and at the "treat" of our children, Phil and Jan, who flew out with their sleeping bags to camp a while on our

WORSHIP SERVICES

CENTERED AROUND REFORMED PREACHING

Holyrood House - Saitire Room - 2315 Blanshard at Bay St.
Rev. R. Harbach, minister in the Protestant Reformed Churches

SUNDAY 10 a.m. Preaching from Second Timothy
3:30 p.m. Preaching Bible Doctrine

Bible Truth Meditations KARI 55 Sat. 10:45

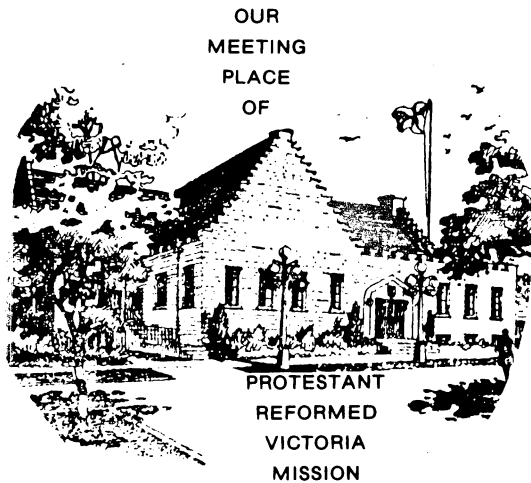
A pure Calvinist and Reformed Broadcast
Wednesday Adult Bible Study Class - 8:00 p.m.
Studies in the Reformed Confession
for meeting place call - 384-6341

living room floor. It was also 33 years ago that I was ordained to the ministry in the Reformed Episcopal Church, and it has gone on to 28 years that we have been Protestant Reformed with 23 years in the Protestant Reformed ministry.

You read in the October 1, 1978 Standard Bearer of the three earthtremors we experienced on our island. So literally we've had earth-shaking news to report. It is also note-worthy and newsworthy to report that we celebrated Canadian Thanksgiving on Monday, October 9, and that it was on the U.S. Thanksgiving Day that the city of Victoria had a "blackout". Also blacked out were the neighboring Saanich townships, the Sooke area and on "up island" to Nanaimo and as far as Comox. The news was that Port Angeles, across the Strait, was also blacked out. So for a few hours we sat listening to

developments on our battery radio in the feeble light of a dim flashlight. Does this perhaps have spiritual significance? Oh, yes! for this island is, for the most part engulfed in heathen Egyptian darkness, where precious little of the pure gospel light is seen. We are happy to be a part of that precious little light as we preach at the southern tip of the island, and now the Lord sends our voice bearing His Word quite a distance the length of the isle. Dark it was that (American) Thanksgiving night. Yet we had so much for which to be thankful we are children of light, we walk in the path of the just which is as a shining light, of God, who called the light out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! Many sit in and curse the spiritual darkness. Could they perhaps instead light a candle? They could seek the warmth and comfort of our little lamp of truth! Some do, and of late a few more also do. We pray that the eyes of yet still others may be opened to the light of God's absolutely sovereign grace.

Fourteen months we've labored here, preaching to a group now of three families, plus one individual, plus occasional visitors. We miss our home church and feel the greater distance we are from it than it is from Jamaica. Yet to our almighty heavenly Father there is no past or future, only an eternal now, no isolating distances, no light years of space, for He is here with His whole being as He is Jehovah-shammah, "the Lord is There" with You!



Victoria, B.C.

Maranatha!

Home should be something more than a filling station.

He never rises high who knows not how to kneel.

NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

by Cindi Dykstra

BIRTHS

Mr. and Mrs. Don Van Dyke of Faith rejoice in the birth of a daughter Brenda Kay.

Mr. and Mrs. Pat McGraw of First were blessed in the birth of Molly Beth on August 8.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Haak of South Holland rejoice in the birth of a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Ryan Regnerus of South Holland were blessed with the birth of a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Schimmel of Hope were blessed with the birth of Anne Elizabeth.

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Hanko of Hope rejoice in the birth of Sarah Elizabeth on Nov. 22.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Faith has received the membership papers of Rev. and Mrs. Bruinsma and a son from Southwest, those of Mr and Mrs. W. Clason and a son from South Holland, and those of Mrs. Dale Miedema (nee Laura Brunsting) from Hudsonville.

Loveland has received the membership of Wm. G. Joostens from Redlands, and has transferred the membership of Mr. and Mrs. P. VandeVegte and a son Larry to Southwest.

Hope has received Mr. Steven Kerkstra as a communicant member and has transferred the membership of Mr. and Mrs. B. Kamps and a son to Hudsonville.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

On Nov. 19, Tom Buiters, Beverly Poortenga, and Philip Wiersma publicly confessed their faith before our South Holland congregation.

Bob Elzinga publicly confessed his faith before our Hope, Grand Rapids, congregation on Dec. 17.

ACTIVITIES

Loveland's Young People sponsored a recreational evening of basketball and volleyball on Nov. 13. Proceeds went for the 1979 Convention.

On Nov. 15, Prof. R. Decker spoke in Randolph on the subject of "Women in Church Office".