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FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

JUNE - JULY, 1979

A FUTURE FOR FAMILIES?

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Editorial

ATTITUDES TOWARD COVENANT INSTRUCTION

by Harry Langerak

Have you ever paused during the busy activities of the school day to observe what is happening around you? Do this sometime. If we are observant, we will soon find that there are many ways in which our fellow students demonstrate by their behavior the attitudes they have toward covenant instruction. It will soon become evident which of us appreciate our instruction and are thankful for the schools God has given us. I would like to make a few observations about our attitudes as they relate to our covenant Christian schools.

What is an attitude? An attitude can be defined as a behavior representative of a feeling or conviction, or behavior expressive of an opinion. Let us look at this definition briefly. First of all, it says that an attitude is seen in our behavior. Behavior is our outward acts and involves those actions that are seeable, fearable, and perceivable to the senses of others. Secondly, behavior is representative of a feeling not perceivable by others because it is from within us. It is from the heart or the inner man that feelings and opinions arise. These feelings which are not discernible to others are manifest in our behavior. The point is that the behavior of a person will tell us much about his attitude.

Let us apply this definition of attitude to ourselves as covenant young people. God has given us the blessed privilege of being chosen by Him to be conformed to the image of His Son through the operation of His Holy Spirit in us. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." Romans 8:29. A spiritual ethical change has taken place within us. We were by nature dead in sin, but we are now dead *to* sin. We have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man. We must, therefore, show in every aspect of our life this change that has taken place within us. Luke 6:43-45 must be the abiding principle guiding us in our lives. "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out

of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

The idea I would like us to remember is that the way we behave is definitely a reflection of what is in our heart. Our behavior, therefore, as it reflects what is in our heart is a mirror of whether we hate God or love Him. By the operation of the Spirit within us, we now love God and this love is going to reflect itself in our attitudes toward all things.

Since the motivating force in our lives is love toward God, we will esteem highly the blessings that He gives us as His covenant children. We do this because we know that the blessings He gives us are always signs of His favor, and if used properly are always designed to bring us into closer covenant fellowship with Him.

Our covenant Christian schools are just such blessings of God given to us in His grace. These schools have been given to us through our God-fearing parents for the purpose of instructing us in the fear of the Lord. Our parents at our baptism took upon themselves the solemn duty to instruct us in God's fear. This is the obligation which God placed upon them in Ephesians 6:4, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nuture and admonition of the Lord." God in His grace continues to give them the means with which to provide us with schools.

What must be our attitude toward the schools which God in His goodness has given to us through our parents? We must not forget what we have said earlier; all our life must be permeated by the renewal that has been wrought in us by the Spirit of God. We realize, therefore, that instruction is a necessary part of our life as a child of God. God has commanded us to know Him, and as His children we respond by eagerly seeking to know more about him. Therefore, we gladly follow the admonition given to us in Proverbs 1:8, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:" and Proverbs 4:1, "Hear ye, children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding."

This attitude will reflect itself in many ways. First of all, we will be thankful for our schools and teachers. Since prayer is the chief part of our thankfulness, they will be the subject of our prayers. We will also be thankful for covenant homes into which we have the blessed privilege of being born and raised, homes which have seen the need for God-centered instruction. It has always warmed my heart to hear students pray for their parents and teachers, and who are thankful for their school. Parents and teachers need our prayers also because they are weak and sinful. By praying for them, we are demonstrating our

concern that they receive God's help in the great responsibility they have in our instruction.

Secondly, our attitude will be reflected in how we seek after knowledge. Seeking to know is one of the important aspects of instruction. We must seek after knowledge as if it were the most important thing we do. Not just any knowledge, but central to our knowledge is God. To know God and His works is the principle part of our instruction. This implies that instruction has a spiritual foundation. We are not getting an education just to get a position, or to be able to act intelligently, or to get rich. The sole purpose of our education is to know God and fear Him, and thereby be more fit instruments in His hand for use in His kingdom. This means that we will vigorously pursue knowledge by doing the most possible work rather than the least possible, thereby showing we have purpose to our education.

In the third place, we show by the way we use our abilities that we have a proper attitude. I am reminded of the parable of the talents in this connection. To some of us God has given much and to some of us less; but the command we have is to use what we have been given to God's glory. And further, each must seek the well-being of the church as the body of Christ as he used his abilities. The body functions best when each is performing to the best of his ability that which God has given him the talents to perform. We must also show care and concern for one another's well-being. This means that we help one another spiritually and intellectually. We joyfully bear one another's burdens.

Finally, we must respect the purpose of the school which we attend. Its purpose is spiritual; that is, training us in the way that we should go in the fear of the Lord. By our attitude, we must show we love this purpose and are thankful that there is a school that still instructs with this purpose in mind. We must let our friends know, let our parents know, and let the world know that we see the need for the covenant instruction we receive. Then we are truly letting our light shine as in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The promise for a proper attitude is that God will bless our efforts in school and also the efforts of our parents who in love have given us the blessed heritage of covenant instruction. We will be stalwart sons and daughters who will be intellectually and spiritually equipped to meet the enemy in the gate. We will be able to teach the blessed heritage we have to our children in the generations following.

In conclusion, let us not trust in our own strength, but let us pray to God to direct our attitudes for we have a faithful Mediator Who can be

touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He has sent His Comforter, the Spirit of Christ Who will direct us in the way of all truth. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and learn not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Proverbs 3:5-6."

THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF JAMAICA

by Rev. Kenneth Brown
Dias Protestant Reformed Church
Hanover, Jamaica

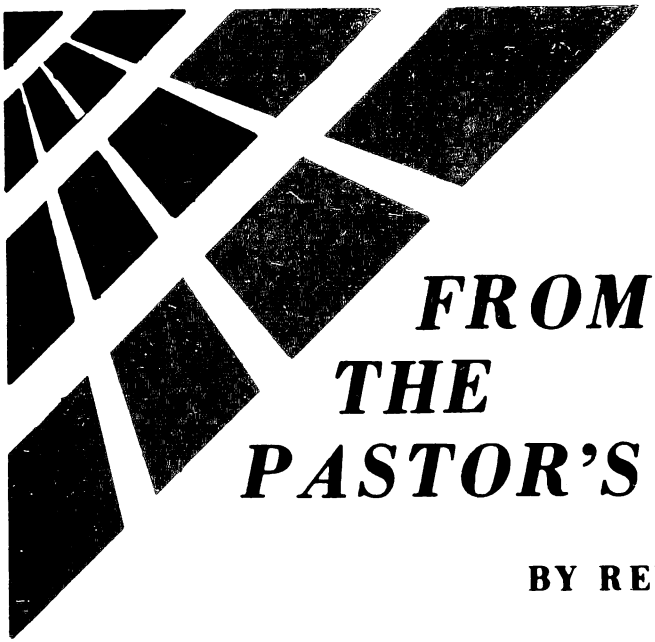
There is at present among the young people of Jamaica a great deal of spiritual concern. In most of the churches on the island, a great part of the members are young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five years. They are deeply concerned with trying to lead a Christian life and such expressions as "The Lord will provide" are very commonly heard among them.

The concern of life for these young people is very much the same as that for young people in their age group throughout the world; they are faced with the hardships of unemployment and other financial difficulties. Two-thirds of the young Jamaicans are unemployed and have no main source of income, while some of them have families which depend on them. Some of these unemployed young people are educated and a great proportion are skilled in some trade or other. But, due to the state of the economy, there are very few industries and, therefore, fewer jobs to offer to this cream of Jamaican society.

The result of this is, however, that on church days everybody goes to church where they seem to forget their worries and are willing to worship the Lord. Most of the young people of Jamaica are more active in the church than the older Jamaicans and will not grumble when asked to do some things for their church and their community. Although most of the young Jamaicans are frustrated and talk of emigrating to a more developed country, their chief ambition is actually to work and help ease the social and economic strain of our country.

In conclusion, one could say that the young people are both spiritually concerned and patriotic in their poor and humble way.

May God send His blessing to our young people!



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. G. LUBBERS

BLESSED CONFIDENCE IN JEHOVAH'S WORD

"...for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." (Genesis 28:5; Joshua 1:5; Hebrews 13:5b)
"...the Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do to me." (Psalm 118:6; Hebrews 13:6)

There are times in the life of both young and old believers when the future looms dark and forbiddingly; when all our life seems to crumble about us, and our souls are overwhelmed with sorrow and with fears! It then seems that God is asking us to perform the humanly impossible. We feel weak and well nigh overcome with the afflictions and troubles into which we are led by the Lord!

Surely this is also the case with you, young people. Yes, you are young and brave; you have a swaggering bravado about you. But all of us have times of fear when we need infinite comfort and solace. And we need to know that the anchor holds sure and steadfast in the holy place. We need to be reassured that we are safe and secure in the hands of our heavenly Father, the Covenant Jehovah God. We need the assurance that when our little bark is tempest-tossed by the mighty winds of sin and temptation, that God has control of the winds, and that nothing comes to us by chance, but that these experiences all come to us from the hand of our heavenly Father. (Lord's Day 10, Question 27) Yes, herbs and grass, rain

and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness; yea, and all things come to us not by chance, but by God's fatherly hand!

O, but it did look dark for Jacob when he left his paternal and maternal home to go to Haran, fleeing from the face of his brother Esau who would kill him. Lonely, weary and fearful he came to the place called Bethel where he lay down to sleep. And here, in this most frightening hour, Jehovah, the heavenly Father, comes to speak to Jacob, "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again to this land: for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Yes, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"! (Genesis 28:14, 15). Now in Hebrews 13:5, we read that this is what He **hath said**, that is, He hath said this and continues to say this to all His covenant people—also to you, young people. This is His covenant word of promise. Let this be the anchor of your soul as you graduate from High School and from Grade School. As you step into the future and must make plans, and you stand at the crossroads in indecision and doubt; when you hardly know which way to turn, then say: **He** hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Lord, thou **hast said** this to father Jacob in all his weakness and sinful imperfecton, because Thou didst love him, love him, love him...to the end!

Yes, **He** hath said!

Jehovah, our heavenly Father, later, much later, said these same words to Moses. And we do well to appropriate these words by faith, so that we remain standing unmoved from the hope of the Gospel, also as covenant young people. May your father and mother exemplify this rock-like faith and confidence in the Lord, clinging to His Word of promise. O, Israel will need to cast the enemy out of the land of Canaan and they will need to fight the Lord's battles so that the walls of Jericho come tumbling and crashing down. Israel will need to shout the victory cry of the coming of the Lord with the sound of the trumpet of God. And what "hath He said" to Moses, and by Moses to Israel? Listen, young people. May it ring in your ears forever. May you cherish this word in your hearts: "Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, He it is that doth go before thee: He will not fail thee nor forsake thee!" (Deuteronomy 31:6). Yes, these words are repeated (O, blessed repetition) in Deuteronomy 31:8b: "He (the LORD) shall be with thee, He will not fail thee, fear not, neither be dismayed"!

And that we may know that the Lord does not forget His **own** words, these very words are repeated by Jehovah to Joshua when he is about to bring Israel into the promised rest. When Joshua, as the type of Jesus, must bring Israel into the promised rest (Hebrews 4:8), then the LORD comes to him by His word. And here again we notice "that He hath said". (Hebrews 13:5) He **said** to Joshua in human language, which was a Divine message and promise; He has said this to us in the Holy Scriptures, "...I will be with thee: I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous...." (Joshua 1:5, 6, 7).

Could it have been said in clearer language and with more Divine assurance? Hardly!

Shall we now place our trust in earthly things such as silver and gold? Shall we have hearts filled with anxious cares, saying: What shall we eat and what shall we drink? Shall we set our goals here on earth to obtain earthly riches that we may have security? Shall we set out in education and in all our endeavors to amass a worldly inheritance of silver, earthly lands and riches? Nay, young

people, let our conversation be such that it be without love for money, not placing our trust in dumb idols of gold, but rather in the living God.

By our speech we shall be known. What do you say in the face of all these great and repeated promises of God? From the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaks, does it not? What lies on top of our heart comes out first! Yes, we shall say: If God is for us, who shall be against us! We shall boldly say: The Lord is my helper in every time of need. He is my God, Who hears my cry in the hour of need, and Who hastens to rescue me. Yes, the LORD is on my side. I will not fear! O, I would be petrified with fright and trembling were it not that this great Jehovah is near to help, to succour me in my need.

Now we can be bold in our speech. We will not need to eat our words in shame! O, young people, trust in the Lord at all times, pour out your hearts before Him. Yes, now we speak with courage in our breasts. We lift up the battle-cry in the midst of the conflict: the Lord hath said, the Lord hath said, and He cannot and does not lie; He will never leave us nor forsake us. He is as a Father who has tender love, lovingkindness to us, His children.

Take that diploma in your hand now. Let this be commencement for you, a dedication and rededication to the LORD. Walk into the future with the firm tread of faith and hope, and in the midst of all fears that would assail your heart say: He hath said, He hath said, and His Word shall not fail. Yes, it seemed to fail at Calvary when Jesus was nailed to the Cross by wicked hands. But in that darkest hour, God said to us: See, I have not failed you. I came through water and through blood to save you and to assure you of the promise rest. I make a way for you through the sea, through death and hell.

Lo, I am with you even unto the end of the world.

I will never leave you nor forsake you!

Let us be very careful of thinking, on the one hand, that we have no work assigned us to do, or, on the other hand, that what we have assigned to us is not the right thing for us. If ever we can say in our heart to God, in reference to any daily duty, "This is not my place; I would choose something dearer; I am capable of something higher"; we are guilty not only of rebellion, but of blasphemy. It is equivalent to saying, not only, "My heart revolts against Thy commands," but "Thy commands are unwise; Thine Almighty guidance is unskilful; Thine omniscient eye has mistaken the capacities of Thy creature; Thine infinite love is indifferent to the welfare of Thy child."

Elizabeth Charles

THE PLACE OF THE SINGLE WOMAN IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

by Miss H.J. Kulper

A single woman. Who is she? Is she a "loner" who prefers to be aloof from all personal relationships, living only for herself? Is she one who has been offered a husband, home and family and refused them? Or if not offered this, has she been "left" because of unavailability of men for husbands? Is she one who prefers what she calls "single blessedness" and a career to being "tied down" with a family and its obligations? Could one also call a widow a single woman—as long as she does not remarry? I can imagine that for every single woman there is a certain applicatory reason of one or more of these descriptions. But this I know: her position in life has been just as determined, most assuredly, by the almighty, all-knowing, purposeful God as has the position of her married counterpart. For her there is a unique place that no married woman can occupy, even as a married woman has a position that no single woman can hope to fill.

What then is the place of the single woman in God's church? Where does she fit in this body of Christ (Romans 12:5)? What are her obligations within the church? Certainly she must follow the mandate of Scripture, stated in I Timothy 2:9-11: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection." Peter exhorts wives with unbelieving husbands to live in such a way that by their "chaste conversation" they may be won. Even so a single woman must live that all who see and hear her may know that of her Peter says, almost quoting Paul to Timothy: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." (I Peter 3:3, 4). In this respect she does not differ from her sisters who marry.

Is this unmarried state to be condemned, criticized, made the object of scorn and ridicule, considered "wrong"? Paul does not condemn, but rather praises the unmarried state: "It is good for them to abide even as I" but hastens to add: "But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" (I Corinthians 7:8, 9). After speaking to the married, he further states in the same chapter, vs. 34: "There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." Jesus, in Matthew 19:11-12, after condemning the evil of divorce, answers His disciples who concluded that it was not good to marry: "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is

able to receive it, let him receive it."

And Rev. D. Engelsma says in his book **Marriage: the Mystery of Christ and the Church**, Page 64: "The basic thing in the Christian's life is his own personal marriage to God by a true and living faith. If God should prevent marriage for one of His children, as He sometimes does, the reality of marriage is still his because he enjoys the covenant friendship of God in Christ. If God makes one a eunuch for the kingdom's sake, he is not hopelessly deprived or impoverished, but still rich, for he has God. Not sex, not earthly marriage, not any creature, but God is God."

There is then a definite place in God's church for the unmarried woman. She is not encumbered with the care of home and little ones although she has her own home to maintain....and that in a proper, godly way. Her time, however, can be profitably spent in other ways: Titus 2:3-5 urges her to teach the younger women, and Luke tells us in Acts of Dorcas who busied herself with work for others. The unmarried woman can labor with those who work in the gospel as did those who helped Paul (Philippians 4:3) and as Lydia helped him in Thyatira by hospitably opening her home to the apostles and providing for their daily needs. Phebe too was recommended as a helper of many in the early church. The single woman is given more time and strength for helping in the church; her calling then is to do so for the benefit of the community of believers.

There are many of the "older" young women who have no prospects for marriage, who suffer and sometimes rebel against God's obvious plan for not providing a life's mate. They must spend hours in prayer for grace to help meet this disappointment and for eyes to see His better plan for them (I Corinthians 10:13—"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"). It is not easy for them to see their friends date, marry, have families—all the joys which they crave but which again, God has withheld from them for His purpose. Their calling still remains to lead an upright, goodly, God-fearing, pure, exemplary life before Him and His church.

The single woman learns in silence as does her married sisters submitting herself "one to another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21). Her work within the community of believers does not usurp that of minister, elder or deacon; but supplements, complements it as did the godly women of the early church and as mothers do in the home. She may then, teach in the Sunday School, the Christian day school, those children of the covenant —not her flesh and blood, but those of the spirit. She may love them and be concerned for them, as members of the body of Christ. She may counsel and instruct them in the ways pleasing to the Lord. She seeks out those in need and in pain; she helps provide for them, providing food and clothing if necessary as did Dorcas, who was "full of good works and alms deeds" (Acts 9:36). Her home becomes a haven of rest, a place of spiritual contentment, where weary mothers may rest, children may delight, young people talk in confidence, all find a refuge of spiritual rest and peace. Whether then she has been blessed by gifts and talents of teaching, sewing, music, writing, counselling, speaking, listening, etc.,—she is used by the Lord in a special way in the service of His kingdom.

A word yet for the rest of the saints in their regard for the unmarried woman. For this woman, the church can pray. I think that we, inadvertently though it may be, often omit this, in our personal as well as congregational prayers. Perhaps we think she has no problems, needs or

special cares. Perhaps we simply forget, are not aware of her as such. We pray for infants, children, teenagers, parents and older members of the congregation—forgetting her who often has the welfare of so many at heart, especially the children and teenagers of the church. Let us as one body of Christ, therefore, "pray for one another." (James 5:16)

The wise man sings forth the praise of a virtuous wife in Proverbs 31 but concludes with a doxology for all women, married or single: "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

THOUGHTS ON OUR WORSHIP

THE APOSTLES CREED

There is no text in Scripture which says we must read the Apostolic Creed. There is no text which says that we must read some set form of confession of faith. It arises as part of the freedom of the worship service on the basis of general injunctions of Scripture.

Its inclusion in worship services has a long and distinguished history. As far as the idea of recitation of a confession is concerned, Scripture is explicit; the Church has as the most fundamental principle of her unity, her faith in Christ. Therefore, it is a very important part of her unity that she confess this faith together as the body of Christ. Romans 10:9, 10.

The Apostolic Confession is ideal for this because: 1) It is brief. 2) It includes all the fundamental, basic doctrines of the Christian faith. 3) It is ecumenical in the true sense of the word, mainly because of its age and its use throughout the world.

Its place in the liturgy must be an integral part of the worship service, not attached in an artificial way. It is best near the beginning, as an expression of unity and as an expression of praise to God that the Church may come together and worship Him.

JUST A REMINDER:

Please send in your subscription renewal if you haven't already done so.

"FEED MY SHEEP" "BUT I AM WEAK"

by Rev. Richard Flikkema

A few weeks ago, I had the honor of receiving a letter from the *Beacon Lights* staff, asking me to write an article for the *Beacon Lights* on the subject of my "new pastoral work". Usually, when one is asked to write an article or give a speech on some subject, he naturally turns to his library. He scans the shelves of his library to find reference material that addresses itself to the subject on which he is supposed to write. Well, young people, I have no reference material in my library that addresses itself to this subject on which I have been asked to write. The only reference material that I have on this subject is my *heart*. And what I have to say, therefore, in this article; you may be assured, comes exactly from my heart.

I am a Pastor. I am the Pastor of a small flock of Christ's sheep in Isabel, South Dakota. This flock of Christ's sheep consists of some twenty individuals to whom Christ sees fit to bring His Word through me twice each Lord's Day. I teach two Catechism classes consisting of a total of five children. And in addition to that, I lead two Bible Societies. A small flock, isn't it? But I want to emphasize that small though it may be, it is *a flock* of Christ's sheep. The sheep that are gathered here are God's covenant seed who have been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light. And as they are that, they are sheep who are not one bit different from the sheep of Christ's pasture in our other congregations. They are sheep who need and who desire by God's grace to be fed. They are sheep who long to hear the pure preaching of the Word. It is their testimony that that longing for the Word is necessary for them. And, too, as true sheep of Jesus Christ, it is their confession that that is important for them, for without the pure preaching of the Word, they will certainly go astray. They are Christ's sheep just like any other of Christ's sheep who need to be led in the midst of the darkness of this world. They need to be defended overagainst the many temptations of this world and overagainst the lie of the devil. And they are Christ's sheep just like any other of Christ's sheep who need to be

comforted; comforted when they are on beds of sickness and pain; comforted when they suffer the loss of loved ones; and comforted when they are troubled by their sins. Of this flock of Christ's sheep, I am a Pastor.

I am *a Pastor.* That too I want to emphasize. I am a shepherd. I am an undershepherd of *the* Shepherd of the sheep: our Lord Jesus Christ. I have been called by Christ to be His undershepherd. Christ has placed the desire in my heart to serve Him in the midst of His flock. And having placed this desire in my heart, Christ has called me to serve Him in this particular flock here in Isabel. From Christ, I have been given the command, "Feed My sheep." Young people, that is Christ's command to me. As really as Christ spoke those words to Peter in John 21, so really has Christ spoken those words to me. As a Pastor, Christ has come to me and He has said to me, "Feed My Sheep; Feed them. Nourish them with My Word. Remind them of My love for them. Bring them to the foot of My Cross in order that they might behold the wondrous salvation that I have merited for them. Instruct them concerning the way in which they must walk in this life. Defend them overagainst the wolves who seek to destroy them. And comfort them. Do not forget to comfort them." That is Christ's command to me as His undershepherd.

And as that is Christ's command, that is also my task and work as a Pastor. Do you want to know what my "new pastoral work" is? That is my work. I have been given the awesome task of feeding Christ's sheep. That I must do on the pulpit each Sunday. I must preach the Word. *The Word* I must preach—not just part of the Word, not just bits and pieces of the Word, but the whole Word of God. And too, it is my task to preach that Word to God's people in all its purity. In no way am I obedient to Christ's command, in no way do I perform my work properly, if I try to feed Christ's sheep with less than the Word of God in all its purity. Even as it is true that sheep will die if they are fed watered-down milk, so also is it true that Christ's sheep here in Isabel will die if they are not fed the pure milk of the Word. It is my task and work to bring that Word to Christ's sheep in the Catechism and in Society. It is my task to bring that Word when Christ's sheep are sorrowing. Always and in all my work as a Pastor, it is my task to be obedient to Christ's command to "Feed My sheep."

When I reflect on that, when I search my heart, then I can only say, "But I am weak." I am weak. So weak I am. I have been given the task to feed Christ's sheep, but with Paul I also say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" I am not. I am not sufficient at all. I am a sinner. I am but dust and ashes. I am not qualified of myself to feed Christ's sheep.

Every Sunday morning when I must face the awesome task of preaching the Word, I am vividly reminded of that fact. Always the same questions arise in my mind: "But how? How can I do that? I am not qualified of myself to do that. I am so very weak. I am not worthy or able to feed Christ's sheep."

And yet, young people, the wonder of it all is that Christ's sheep are fed. As a Pastor, Christ comes to me and He says to me, "Yes, you are weak. Yes, you are not qualified of yourself to feed My sheep. But do not fear. I will qualify you. I will sustain you. And I will do that by My grace. My grace is sufficient for thee." Oh, how true that is. I am not qualified to feed Christ's sheep of myself. But Christ qualifies me. He gives me strength. He enables me to carry on in the work which He has given unto me.

What is my response to all of that? You may be sure, young people, that it is one of thanksgiving. As a Pastor I cry out to my Savior, "Thanks! Thanks for Thy sheep. Thanks for the task which thou hast been pleased to give to me. And thanks, thanks for thy grace which enables me to carry on in my new pastoral work."

DEBORAH

by Mrs. Phil Dykstra

written as after-recess
for Ladies Society

Under a palm tree between the cities of Ramah and Bethel, in the hill country of Ephraim was a tent. A tent to which the children of Israel came to be judged. The person to whom they came was Deborah, a woman whom God chose to be prophetess and judge over His people.

Many times God had told the children of Israel of their promised land. In the wilderness, God had told them once again, through Moses, that they would receive a land flowing with milk and honey as a blessing from Him. The children of Israel were to obey God alone, worship God

alone, and drive out all the inhabitants of their promised land **completely**. In Exodus 23:31-33 God says "For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and shalt drive them out before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee."

The children of Israel **vowed** they would obey. Exodus 24:3 & 8 read: "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments, and all the people answered with one voice and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said: Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

The children of Israel were not in the promised land long and they broke their promise. While Joshua still lived they disobeyed God's command. Judges 1 is full of instances where individual tribes did **not** drive out the inhabitants of the land, but made them their servants or dwelt with them. Before Joshua died, he showed them their sin and they saw it and repented. But, God now told them He would **not** utterly drive out the inhabitants, but that they would be as thorns in their sides and their gods would be a snare unto them. And the children of Israel wept.

Not long after Joshua died, and his generation with him, a generation arose that knew not Jehovah nor the works that He wrought. We know that does not mean they knew nothing about Jehovah or their wonderful deliverance from Egypt, but that they chose to forget about Him and live easy, self-pleasing lives; dwelling with the inhabitants of the land, taking their daughters to be their wives, and serving their gods.

That time, and each time after that, when God sold them into the hands of a heathen king, and the pressures came hard upon them, the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah. He heard their cries and raised them up judges or saviors to save them from their enemies.

The fourth such judge scripture tells us about is the prophetess, Deborah. The children of Israel just could not remain true to Jehovah but after each judge died, they again turned away. At the time of Deborah, because of their sin, God had sold them into the hand of the Canaanites and their King Jabin, and his Captain, Sisera, with his great army. For twenty years God's hand used Jabin and Sisera to oppress His people.

The little we read about Deborah, herself, is that she is a prophetess, a judge, and the wife of Lappidoth. She dwelt in a tent under the palm tree of Deborah. The way God's Word tells us, she must have been well known to the children of Israel and well honored in her ability to judge. It must have been hard to judge in those years when every man did what was right in his own eyes and almost all were serving idols and seeking self.

When the children of Israel again felt the heaviness of their oppression, they again turned to God. God came to Deborah and used her to inspire Barak, an Israelite from Kedesh-Naphtali, to lead the children of Israel to fight the Canaanites. Barak **was** inspired but would not go to the battle without Deborah. **Perhaps** he held Deborah's prophetic office in such high esteem that he was afraid to go without her. We should remember, a prophet is an authoritative teacher of God's will. Barak knew God put words into Deborah's mouth and perhaps he did not dare to be far from that power in this great thing he was about to do.

Deborah returned with Barak to his home in Kedesh. A great army was gathered from Zebulun, Naphtali, and Issachar and all went to Mt. Tabor. Deborah announced the day which the Lord had chosen, and the battle was soon

over. God gave a great victory to the children of Israel through Barak's sword and through rains and floods. However, God chose to teach the children of Israel yet another lesson. He allowed the Canaanites' great captain, Sisera, to escape. Sisera fled into the hill country, and there a Kenite woman, Jael, had the final victory of killing him. From this day Jabin and the Canaanites were subdued and the children of Israel fought more and more until they had wholly conquered.

Deborah's song is one that begins and ends in praise to God. We so often hear and remember the phrase: Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake. And she does include this command from God to her in her song, but the song begins: Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel. Deborah then traces the steps of the victory. She tells us that after the days of Shamgar (the previous judge) THE RULERS CEASED—until God chose a **woman** to lead them out of their sin (vs 7). She then tells us of the battle to show us it was God who delivered His people out of their oppression. She tells us of some tribes of Israel who had excuses not to fight and of others who simply didn't come and were cursed for it. She then tells of those who did come willingly to fight, of the God-given victory, and of the enemies who perished.

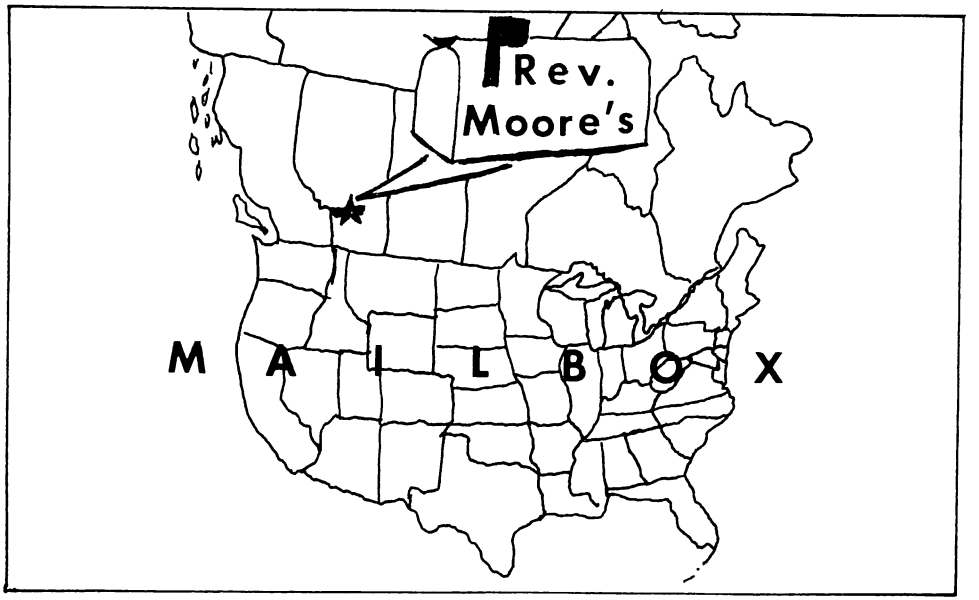
What do these two chapters in scripture have to say to us today? Did Deborah see something was needed and decide to do something about it? Did men step aside because Deborah was such a great and capable leader with so much power? Does this example in Holy Scripture perhaps strengthen today's push for women preachers or office bearers? Why **did** God use a woman where everywhere else in scripture this is not the case?

First of all, Israel was now at about the lowest ebb spiritually that it had ever been. God placed Deborah there to the shame of the spiritually weak men of Israel. There simply was no man to rule. Deborah herself says this in chapter 5:7: "The rulers of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel." Isaiah speaks of just such a spiritually weak time in Isaiah 3:12, where he warned the people they would eat of the fruit of their doings, that children would be their oppressors and women would rule over them. God used Deborah simply because there was no man spiritually strong enough. But notice how God used Deborah. She was used **to inspire** Barak. Deborah herself did not look down on Barak, or lord it over him, but delegated **all** her authority to him and took no glory to herself.

Deborah's goal was **not** simply freedom from oppression for Israel, but obedience to God. We should remember Deborah not for her leadership over men, but for her closeness to God. Faith, obedience and trust came first in Deborah's life. May we have the grace to follow **this** example.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of Barak being mentioned in Hebrews 11:32 and not Deborah? Wasn't Deborah's faith stronger than Barak's?
2. Is there a possibility that in days to come the spiritual life of the church again becomes so weak that a woman might be used of God?
3. When we live a self-pleasing life, seeking only ourselves, are we forgetting God and our vows as the Israelites did?
4. Just as God "sold" the Israelites into the hand of the emeny to bring them back to Him, does God give us over in our prosperity to our selfmindedness and then bring us back to be closer to Him?
5. Did the "prophetess" hold the same office that the "prophets" did?



How do we know in what field we are called to labor? A student nurse asks this question in the following way. She believed that it was God's will for her to enter the field of nursing, but there are many things which now have arisen to make her question whether she has placed her will above that of God's.

In the first place, she finds that **all** of her instructors are worldly men and women, who easily take God's name in vain. Most of the students she finds are the same. And she finds this is making it increasingly difficult to live the Christian life.

Yet, on the other hand, while she questions continuing on in nursing, she feels that there are many of God's children who become ill. And implied is the fact that a Christian nurse could be a strength as a means of God to them.

The problem indeed is a complex one, which in such a letter as this, cannot be thoroughly answered. My first advice is to talk these things over with your parents and pastor. And consider these talks with much prayer in your soul.

However, I shall attempt to reflect on some of the questions raised. In the first place, our God does not write His will for us on the ceiling of our bedroom, so that all of a sudden we know exactly what we are to do in any one occasion or even of a life's calling. And thus it is indeed true that we must struggle with the questions of whether it be God's will or mine. Because of the flesh, it is often that we seek our own will, and then try to rationalize our way to be one that is really God's way. Hence the child of God in the way of much prayer must consider his own reasons for undertaking any way of life. In doing this, it is important that the Bible becomes worn by our study for it is our guide in life's pathway, graciously given us by our Lord. While this may seem difficult or hard to discern, nevertheless, we have the promise of God that He will graciously and perfectly lead us, whithersoever we shall go. And He will give His children grace to submit to His will.

With respect to some of your specific questions and remarks; in the first place, the child of God **is** a stranger and pilgrim

in this life—it is as such that Peter addresses the church of Christ in his first epistle. This means that we live in a world that stands opposed to God, and as we take up vocations in the midst of this world, it is often that we stand almost alone or actually alone in the place we must work. The point being, that even if we work in a factory or as a secretary, etc.—the largest portion of those who surround us stand in carnal enmity towards God. This is not alone true of nursing.

Also in this connection it, therefore, becomes very difficult and the temptations are great to compromise our Christian faith and walk. The Lord does not make the child of God's life easy in terms of the flesh. But we have the promise of our God that He faithfully shall sustain His children in that battle of faith. And, if indeed God calls you to labor in the field of nursing, He shall also sustain you in your faith.

Yet there are things which we should consider concerning the question, whether we are called to a particular field of labor. Not every Christian can enter the field of nursing, or dairy farming, etc. It certainly is a work of necessity, which is right before God to be a dairy farmer, and to milk cows on Sunday. Nonetheless, for myself personally, I don't believe I could have ever been a dairy farmer. It would detract too much from the day of rest, that in my particular frailties I so deeply need. Or to be a nurse and of needs dwell in the midst of so much ungodly philosophy, amongst so many ungodly co-workers; and on top of this to be absent from several worship services in any one month, for me, this would be next to impossible. The reason is that for my faith to be sustained, because of my weakness I have need of the spiritual feeding of Christ to the fullest measure He makes possible. This is not to say that if God forced me by persecution or froward government to be separated from regular preaching, Bible study, etc., that I believe I would fall. No! I have His promise that He would then surely also sustain me. But I have the assurance of God, that it is not my portion to willingly choose this way, but in my weakness it is needful to be in a way that will not separate me from His Word preached, nor keep me in contact so directly with the world. In other words, what I am saying in this above paragraph is that it will take a very strong faith to labor in the field of nursing. For there are many temptations that will be too great for some. Of course, there is trial and temptation in any field of labor, even in the blessed calling of being a house-wife, but they are of a different nature. Not all of us have the spiritual strength to truly walk as a faithful **Christian** nurse, lawyer, or minister, etc. These things it behooves us before God in prayer to consider.

Finally, I would mention one other point you raise, that being that God's children become sick and the Christian nurse would be a blessing to them. This indeed would be a rich blessing for the Christian nurse, to be able to bring spiritual comfort to those that are suffering physical distress. However, remember that through your nursing duties, you shall also be caring for the enemies of God. And that through the means of your labors, they are sustained in life, who will destroy your faith and that of God's people, if at all possible. Therefore, your labor of love with them shall be a means of God for their greater damnation. This we must also face honestly for the glory of our God.

Of course, I have not specifically given you an answer to what you should do. I can't do this. It is a matter of reflecting on some of these things and many other factors in the way of prayer and with Christ's Word, and God shall assure you of His will. May He give us all grace to so spiritually consider our life's calling before Him.

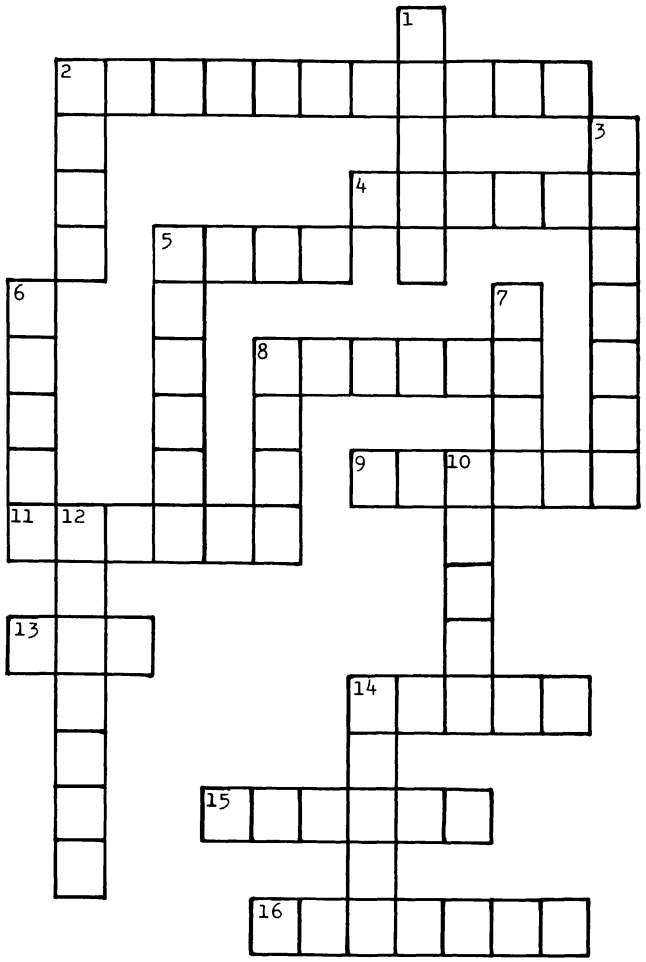
WHO'S WHO IN THE BIBLE

ACROSS

2. The man to whom Abraham paid a tithe. (Heb. 7:1, 2)
4. Man stricken with leprosy because of greed. (2 Kings 5:20-27)
5. When He was on the cross Jesus asked this man to take care of His mother. (John 19:26, 27)
8. What governor's wife had a bad dream? (Matt. 27:17-19)
9. A boy who heard God's voice. (1 Sam. 3:1-10)
11. A young man who was a swift runner. (2 Sam. 2:18)
13. A son of Noah who went on the ark. (Gen. 7:13)
14. A kind man who received Paul in Thessalonica. (Acts 17:7)
15. A kind woman who made clothes for the needy. (Acts 9:39)
16. The angel who announced the births of John and Jesus. (Luke 1:19, 26)

DOWN

1. A man who was released from prison by an angel. (Acts 12:6-19)
2. A woman whose sister was angry with her for listening to Jesus. (Luke 10:39, 40)
3. Name of the angel who is spoken of as the great prince. (Dan. 12:1)
5. A boy who wore a coat of many colors. (Gen. 37:23)
6. The servant who was not believed when she announced Peter's presence at the gate. (Acts 12:13)
7. A soldier who was a fast driver. (2 Kings 9:20)
8. Revived a dead man in church. (Acts 20:9)
10. A man who had good vision at 120 years. (Deut. 34:7)
12. Killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad. (Judg. 3:31)
14. Worked fourteen years for the bride of his choice. (Gen. 29:25-28)



A FUTURE FOR FAMILIES?

by Ben Wigger

You are the Church of the future. With you lies the responsibility of preserving the truth of God's Word as it has been taught to you by your family.

You will also make up the Christian families of the future. And the question which we as the spiritual seed of Abraham must face is: Are we ready for that responsibility? In today's world it is becoming increasingly more difficult to maintain any kind of a family. And, perhaps soon it will become almost impossible to maintain a Christian family.

Just what the future does hold for the family unit is indeed quite a question. We can be assured that for the Church the times will get increasingly more wicked; unless "Those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matthew 24:22.

But it is interesting to read what the world sees as the future for the family. Perhaps we as Church can even take a note of warning as to what to expect.

A very serious attempt at looking at just what the future does hold for the family is undertaken by Edward Cornish who is the editor of the leading publication in the field of predicting the future, "The Futurist", a bi-monthly publication of the World Future Society. He looks at just what is happening to the basic family unit—mother, father and offspring—and can civilization survive if the family unit does not?

The symptoms are not very good to look at. Cornish points out that divorce now ends one marriage in three and may, since the rate is still increasing, one day be the "normal" way for a marriage to end. Children are running away from home in increasing numbers, or are being pushed out by their parents. The extended family—uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents— who once sustained and nourished the nuclear family has scattered far and wide in an age of easy mobility and the employment demands of a world-interlocked technology. Older people are finding themselves increasingly alone and friendless including even those who sought self-exile from family situations in retirement communities. Alternatives to traditional marriage and family have gained respectability, such as living together without benefit of ceremony, and married couples deliberately choosing not to have children. The women's liberation movement which encourages women to seek careers and fulfillment outside the home hasn't helped the image or the institution of the family. Cornish quotes feminist leader Roxanne Dunbar, "The family is what destroys people. Women take on the slave role in the family when they have children. It's a trap."

Cornish also finds television to be a major threat to the family. He is not concerned about depiction of crime and violence. He believes the entire concept is anti-family. Television, he says, presents an unreal world and reinforces it with endless repetition. It has provided models of what a house should look like, what a kitchen should look like, what a dinner party should look like, what a person should look like. The implication is there must be something wrong with a home, or family, or person where such standards do not exist.

Then there is television's glorification of consumer goods, which Cornish believes has contributed to a growing hedonism, an emphasis on personal pleasure as the "be all" of living. Even the institution of marriage becomes after a while just another means of furthering one's own personal pleasure which is of course inconsistent with the commitment and discipline involved in building a permanent marriage.

Cornish also offers an outline of how things might work out. His most frightening speculation is what the world would be like if the family unit dies, taking with it the sound organization of which it has been the model and building block. If present trends do continue, Cornish feels the age of the family unit will give way to the age of the individual. "Most people will live alone. They will do their own thing, unhindered by family obligations. The group will be tolerated only as a means of helping individuals to realize their private goals. They will lavish money on themselves and they will travel constantly in search of excitement."

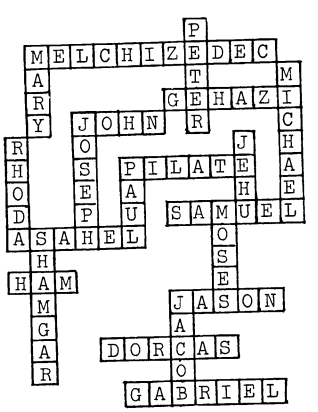
Needless to say, no one will find the perfect happiness he seeks and "unbound by any religious or group restrictions, people will kill themselves in record numbers, starting with children not yet into their teens. At the same time, the use or abuse of drugs will reach incredible heights. The crime rate will soar...."

There is not too much doubt that Edward Cornish does not see much of a future for the world's families. Now remember that this man is looking into the future minus the eve of faith. And if this is what the world considers to be possible, how much more shouldn't we be anticipating these things? For as believers we understand that God does indeed have all of these events under His control.

For men like Cornish there is no hope, no light at the end of the tunnel. And, of course, we do not know just what the future will hold for us or just what we will have to endure. But one advantage that we do have is the Word of God.

The more one becomes aware of the depths to which the world is sinking, the more the Christian should put his trust in His Heavenly Father. Cornish perhaps sees no future. For us, however, there is a future; we can look for the reward of Eternal Life. And I also believe that God will preserve unto Himself Christian families up until the very end of this present age. For the Church is built on the foundation of the family unit. And as long as God has His people here on earth, He will also have families.

WHO'S WHO IN THE BIBLE



RULES FOR DAILY LIFE

Begin the Day with God
  Kneel down to Him in prayer;
Lift up thy heart to His abode,
  And seek His love to share.

Open the Book of God.
  And read a portion there;
That it may hallow all thy thoughts,
  And sweeten all thy care.

Go through the day with God.
  Whate'er thy work may be;
Where'er thou art—at home, abroad,
  He still is near to thee.

Converse in mind with God.
  Thy spirit heavenward raise:
Acknowledge every good bestowed,
  And offer grateful praise.

Conclude the day with God.
  Thy sins to Him confess;
Trust in the Lord's atoning blood,
  And plead His righteousness.

Lie down at night with God.
  Who gives His stewarts sleep;
And when thou tread'st the vale of death,
  He will thee guard and keep.

Beacon Lights Vol. 15 No. 2

TEST YOUR MEMORY

1. Whose food consisted of locusts and wild honey? Matthew 3:4
2. What two men were called Sons of Thunder? Mark 3:17
3. In what are false prophets dressed? Matthew 7:15
4. How many sparrows were sold for a farthing? Matthew 10:29
5. What did Jesus tell the rich young ruler to do? Mark 10:21
6. Who was referred to as Barjona? Matthew 16:17
7. In the question the Sadducees asked Jesus, how many brothers married the same woman? Mark 12:20-22
8. What city did Jesus accuse of killing the prophets? Matthew 23:37
9. To whom did Jesus tell the cleansed leper to show himself? Matthew 8:1-4
10. What prophet did Jesus refer to when the Pharisees asked for a sign? Matthew 12:38-39

Bible Baseball No. 2 *Howard A. Fischer*

FUTURE PROTESTANT REFORMED TEACHERS AND MINISTERS

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

Deb Buiter
1551 Wilson S.W.
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49504
Ph: 453-8402

Applications due August 31, 1979

NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

by Cindi Dykstra

BIRTHS

Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Schipper of Faith rejoice in the birth of Jeremy Ross on March 28.

Mr. & Mrs. Steve Oosterhouse of Randolph were blessed with the birth of Elizabeth Marie on April 17.

Mr. & Mrs. Randall Poortinga of South Holland were blessed with the birth of Rebecca Jo.

Mr. & Mrs. Phil Wiersma of South Holland rejoice in the birth of Amanda.

Mr. & Mrs. James Hoogendoorn of Doon were blessed with the birth of a daughter.

Rev. & Mrs. Ken Koole of Randolph rejoice in the birth of Bruce Jasper on May 20.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Faith has received the membership of Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Bomers and daughter from Southeast and the membership of Mr. Harold Veldman from Baldwin Street Christian Reformed Church.

First, Grand Rapids, has sent the membership of Mrs. Gary Bylsma (nee Marilyn Reitsma) to Faith.

Hope, Grand Rapids, has sent the membership of Mr. & Mrs. Pete Schipper and Christian Joy to Faith, and the membership of Miss Jeanne Lanting to Loveland.

MARRIAGE

Greg Van Overloop and Vicki Brower were united in marriage on May 11 in Hudsonville Church.

Mark Engelsma and Debra Miedema were united in marriage on May 18 in Hudsonville Church.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

South Holland's Young People sponsored a Pancake Breakfast and a carwash on April 28 at the school. Proceeds were for the 1979 convention.

The Ministers' Night Singspiration was held on May 6 in Hudsonville Church. Special numbers were given by the seminarians, ministers and professors.

First's Young People held a carwash and baked goods sale at Adams School on May 12, a Talent Program in their church on May 23, and a Roller Skating Party at Woodland Roller Rink on May 29. Proceeds went for the 1979 convention.

A chicken barbeque was held at Hope School on June 2 to help defray costs of the Redlands Convention.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Doug Pastoor of our First Church, Grand Rapids, for gladly giving of his time to mail the *Beacon Lights*. His time, incidently, amounted to once a month, ten months a year, for seven years!

REDLAND'S YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY

REDLAND'S STEERING COMMITTEE

GREETINGS FROM CALIFORNIA

The time has finally arrived for the 1979 Convention. The Lord willing we will see many of you in July. We are glad that so many of you can come to make this Convention a fulfilling experience for all, as together we join in praising God's name.

The

Redlands

Young Peoples Society