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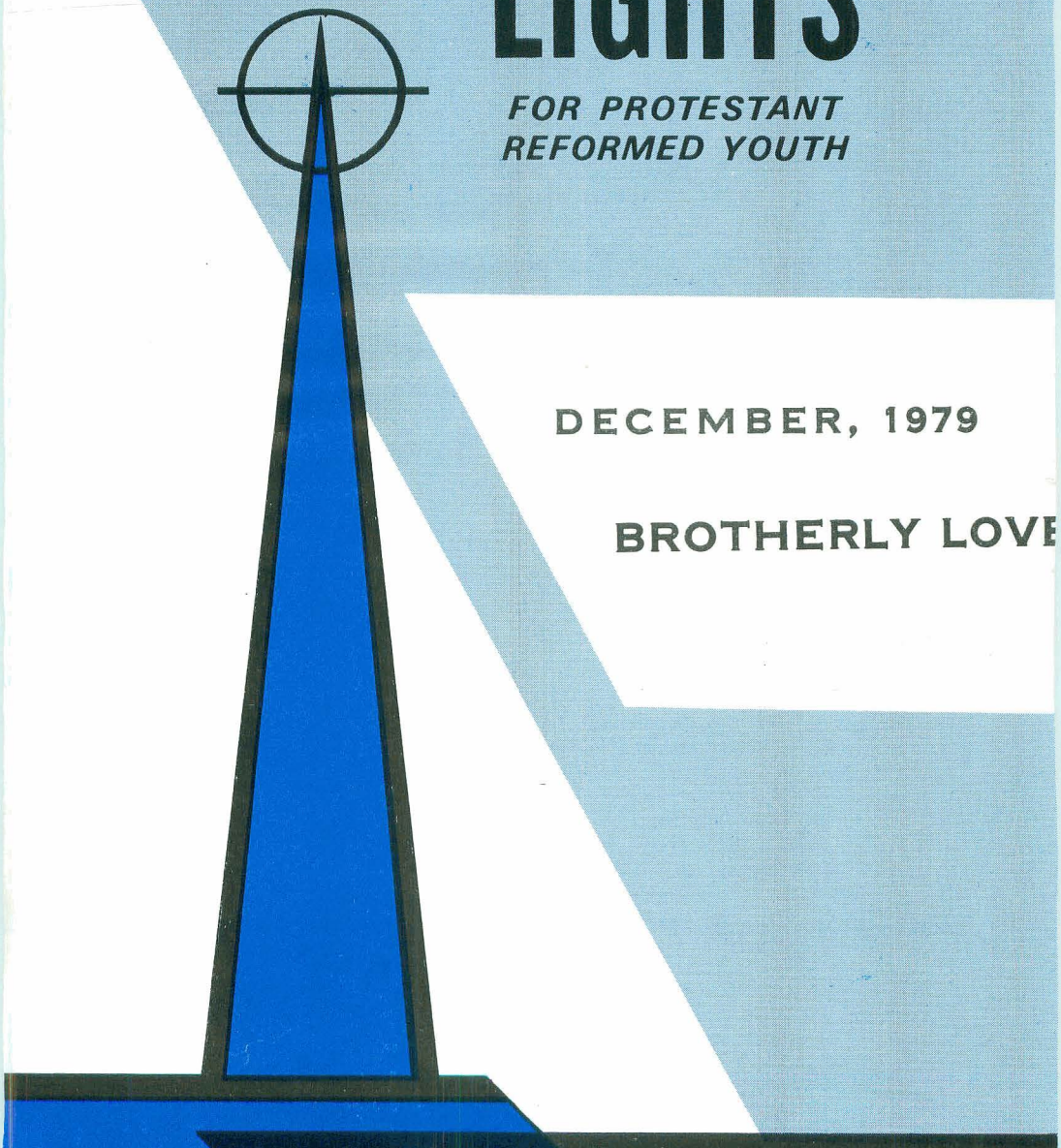
FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



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BROTHERLY LOVE

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Editorial

I AM JOE

by John M. Faber

You have been reading the reports of my anatomy, sounding off as though they were entities of themselves; as though they were autonomous; as though they walk, talk, or beat on their own. I am fed-up with all that yakkety yak going on in my house. I, Joe, am going to put a stop to that personification of my body parts: my feet saying, "I do this or that"; my tongue saying, "I speak thus or thus"; or my heart boasting how much of my blood he pumps; those tattle tales! From now on I shall censor all my outgoing mail so that there will be no over-the-fence prattling of my bodily functions. All such information will now come straight from me. Here goes, so pay close attention, you behind-the-scenes gossip listeners!

I am Joe. I am an eighteen year old human being. I have a soul and a body, but in such a manner that I *am* a soul-body. I am a self conscious created being who has received my existence from the Hand of God; and offspring from my first father, Adam, whom in turn was formed with the Hands of God, breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, so becoming a living soul.

After my conception, I was given a spirit that has remained my own (which is me) and will remain mine all my life, and into all eternity. It was "I" that was born; "I" live, "I" will die; "I" will be buried, and "I" will be raised from the grave. I, Joe, am indestructible. It is that spirit that (if I die in a conscious state) I will commit into the Hands of my Heavenly Father.

I am a very complex being. My body is composed of billions of atoms which make up all my parts: heart, lungs, liver, spleen, arteries, veins, skin and bones, which "in continuance were formed when as yet there were none of them". These became the soul-body named Joe. Oh, yes, I am fearfully and wonderfully made! Have you ever marvelled at a little baby's perfect little toe-nails, its perfect ears, its grasping hands? Marvelously complex, a handiwork of God! A living, willing, working, thinking, walking miracle. That's what I am.

But there is something complex about my being that is not so

evident. Let me tell you about that. When my great-great-grandfather, Adam, came from the creative hand of God, he was a perfect man capable of serving God in everything over which he was king, and in all his thinking and willing and doing. But then he fell from that royal, sinless state. He became a man of sin, "incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil."

That is the manhood I inherited from Adam. That is what the Bible speaks of as being "the old man". That word, "old" does not refer to age, but to that which existed before something "new" comes along. Something like the "old" President of the U.S. and the "new" President after his inauguration: Ford became the "old" President, and Carter became the "new" one. In something like that distinction of "old" and "new" I want to tell you about my old and new man. You must pay very close attention to this.

First: I, Joe, inherited my being from Adam, and that being, Joe, is a sinful man, the "old man of sin" which is corrupt in all its ways.

Second: Remember my feet telling you of taking me to the consistory room to confess my faith? Remember my feet saying that I had changed — that I had received a new life in my heart? Well, that new life is the "new man" in me.

Third: I am that new man. I have been re-born, regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

Fourth: But that "new man" is only a small principle of new life in me. I still have the "old" man in my members; my tongue, my mind, my feet, my will, and all my activities. We could say that the "old" president Ford is still influencing the "new" president Carter through the laws Ford enacted and which still are in effect.

Fifth: Now if all Ford's laws were bad, Carter would try to put them away. That is what I, Joe, as a "new man" must do to the laws that still remain in my old nature. (The Bible calls that, "the law of sin that still reigns.") I must tell my feet not to walk in sinful places, such as movie theaters or drinking parties or drug parlors. I must tell my tongue to stop telling lies and slandering, that I must always speak the truth. I must tell my will to stop wanting evil, and to only will the good. The Apostle Paul describes such walk of sanctification by saying, "I must *put under* my body."

Now stop a moment. Please open your Bible to the Book of Romans, the seventh chapter, reading especially the verses fifteen to the end. The Revised Standard Version is easier to understand than the King James version in this case. Did you notice how the Holy Apostle Paul described that battle he had to fight every day? Young people, that

is your daily battle too! Each of you is a warrior, a Christian warrior! But take heart young people, for that warfare is already principly won by the Second Adam, Jesus Christ, who came to do the Father's will. Because He died for us, we need never die for our sins. In our baptism, we were buried with Him. When He rose from the grave, He became the First-fruit of His chosen ones, so that we know that we will also rise from our graves in newness of life having left our "old" man in the grave. Now note what the risen and victorious Christ tells us in Revelations 2:10: "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the Crown of Life."

The words of Joe are ended.

BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES

by Mr. Don Doezema

The following article is the substance of a beginning-of-the-year chapel speech, delivered last September by Mr. Don Doezema, principal of Covenant Christian High School.

Some years ago I ran across a picture entitled "The Christ of the Snow." I have it here with me today. At first glance this picture appears to be nothing more than blotches on a white background. In fact, even after one reads that the artist intended to portray "the image of the bearded face that has become familiarly associated with the name of Jesus," he is hard pressed to discern any kind of a pattern in the picture. Once one sees it, of course, the face is as plain as can be. But before that time, the viewer is inclined to doubt that there's anything there at all. I must have stared at it for a good ten minutes before the face all of a sudden popped out at me.

It happens that there's a little script which accompanied this picture. The point of the writer is that all of life can be said to be like that — like our looking at a picture like this. "There are patterns," he says, "patterns in the snow of time, but what is seen depends almost entirely upon the eye of the viewer." That is, the eye of one observer sees in this picture the face of a man; the eye of another sees only black blotches on a white background. Likewise (and this is the point of the writer) what is seen in the things about us depends on the eye of the observer. One can, for example, observe the emergence of a butterfly or a moth, from a chrysalis or a cocoon — and see only one of the stages in the life cycle of the Lepidoptera. Or one can watch that butterfly come forth and be reminded of the wonder of the resurrection — the marvelous transformation of our mortal bodies, whereby they become like to the glorious body of our

risen Lord. Or, think, for another example, of an earthquake. Perhaps you have read in the newspapers about the recent earthquake in California. If you did, you would have learned that, at least as far as seismologists are concerned, a quake there was to be expected because of the great and active fault which runs through the area. It seems that the question was never really one of **whether** there would be an earthquake there, but **when** and how **strong**. You may have also read, concerning this earthquake, of the behavior of some zoo animals. Animals of the same species, reporter said, were seen to huddle together just prior to the quake. The Chinese, I understand, have been studying for some time the possibility of predicting earthquakes by observation of the behavior of animals. All sorts of interesting things one can learn by reading newspaper accounts. But never once would you read a United Press International reminder that the quake was a sign of **judgment**. For it is that, you know. "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven," says God through the writer to the Hebrews. And that shaking signifies "the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain" (Hebrews 12:26 & 27).

The point is that the eyes of different people "see" differently. Not, of course, in the **physical** sense. In looking at the picture I have here, the eyes that do not see the face see the same pattern of black and white as do the eyes that do see the face. And the eye of one who sees in the emergence of a butterfly nothing more than an interesting natural phenomenon. **sees** the same thing as does the eye of one who sees in it a **parable**. The "sight" to which we refer is that of the **understanding**.

What is it that makes the difference in what is seen? Jesus spoke of that to His disciples in the verses I read from Matthew 13. "Blessed are your eyes," Jesus told them, "for they see: *and your* ears, for they hear." And how is it according to our Lord, that those eyes see? "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." It isn't therefore because the disciples, or we, are smarter than other people. It has nothing whatever to do with IQ. It's because we have been given eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand the things of God. It's a gift, in other words, of God's grace.

Now, what I'd like to suggest, for your consideration this morning, is that all of this has a great deal to do with our purpose for being **here**. Let's look at that for a moment. Note, first of all, that the fact that we have been given eyes to see does not mean that, automatically as it were, we know everything that there is to know about God. For one thing, that kind of **exhaustive** knowledge of the Most High is forever impossible. But, for another, that which we **do** know about God comes only through effort on our part. It's kind of like looking at this picture, I guess. I doubt if there's one person in a thousand who would pick up this little leaflet, take one glance at the picture and say, "Why, that's the face of a man!" One has to study it for a bit, before it becomes clear to him what is represented in that picture. So is it with our knowledge of God. That knowledge doesn't simply drop out of the sky. It requires effort. It requires diligent use of the means God has given us to grow in our knowledge of Him.

According to our Confession of Faith, those means are two. One is "his holy and divine Word" — the idea being that we can learn to know God more clearly and fully by a careful study of the Scriptures. The other is "the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to

contemplate the invisible things of God, namely His power and divinity." Now, it is our duty, our **privilege**, as children of God, to use those means, to learn more about Him. That applies, of course, to children, to young people, and to adults. But the fact is that it's during the years of one's schooling that he has special opportunity for study and for increase in knowledge. And, as I said, that knowledge does not come easily. It takes effort. Just **reading** the Bible takes **time** — something which we are often unwilling to spend. But to **study** it — as those of you who have elected to take the new Bible course with Miss Lubbers are going to do this year — takes **work**. So does the studying of history and mathematics and English take work. It takes work, the proper motivation for which is that by it we grow in the knowledge of our God.

Sometimes we imagine that there are other, equally important, reasons for applying ourselves to our school work. If you were today beginning a new year of attendance at a public institution you would probably hear from your instructors some of those other reasons. They would remind you that nowadays many jobs are closed to young people who do not have at least a high school education. And they would perhaps tell you that prospective employers are sometimes interested in seeing a transcript of a student's high school records, or at least in obtaining some kind of an evaluation or recommendation from the school. So, the argument goes, if you want to enhance your chances of landing a high-paying position; if you want to make something of a **name** for yourself; if you want to lay the groundwork for a later enjoyment of the good things of life, then you ought by all means to take your school work most seriously.

Now, even if we were to admit that the quality of one's work in high school might very well have an effect on his later search for employment, the fact is that, if that consideration constitutes our **reason for applying ourselves to our schoolwork**, then, we've got our noses to the ground, when we should be looking **up**. And I'm afraid that some of us have been affected (or infected) a bit by that notion of the purpose of education. I'm suspicious of that when a student, in making his course selections for the year, will look at a list which includes Ancient History, English Literature, Speech, Physics, Psychology, Music Appreciation, Physiology — and complain that there's nothing there that's worth taking. The problem is, of course, that he's inclined to evaluate the worthwhileness of a course strictly in utilitarian terms — that is, how am I going to be able to **use** this knowledge, or skill, when I get out of high school. Now, it isn't wrong at all for you to expect to find your course work to be, in some sense, **useful**. In fact, I trust that your teachers will try today, and throughout the year, to make clear how the subject matter of the various courses is indeed **useful**. But if you restrict "usefulness" to "How will it help me get a **job**?" then I suspect that you'll find Physiology and Ancient History to be something of a disappointment. If, on the other hand, you view your study of Physiology and Ancient History as means by which to learn more about **Jehovah**, through a study of the works of His hands, and of His government of the universe, then I hope that you'll not be disappointed.

As I've already suggested, to keep that kind of perspective is no little trick. When we reach heaven, things will be different. Then our only desire will be to know God and to love and to praise Him forever. But **now** we find that we have many other desires. And, often, the least of our desires is to learn more about God. Very often we forget that education is serious business. And the result is a scandalous waste of time and effort. Some students, as you know, come to class in order to **hibernate** — that is, they make to

secret of catching up on their sleep during a "boring" lecture. Others remain indeed awake; but their behavior is such that I can hardly blame the instructor for wishing they **would** fall asleep. Others remain awake, appear to be dutifully attentive, but in fact hear precious little that the instructor says. Still others **do** listen, **do** take notes, **do** study those notes, and **do** get good marks — but are not, all the while, conscious of the fact that they must be seeing **God** in their study of Ancient History and Biology. A student, in other words, might appear to be a genuine scholar, but as long as he considers the subject matter of a science class to be a mere mass of data which must be committed to memory, more or less, till after the test, he is missing the whole point of education. He is failing to see God in the works of His hands.

We do well, I think, at the beginning of the year, to start out on the right foot. What foot is that? At the risk of appearing to belabor the obvious, I'd like to draw attention again to that picture. I mentioned that it took me about ten minutes to discover what now seems to me to be so very obvious. It happened that, before I saw the face myself, I showed the picture to my wife. She saw at first no design in it, but after I explained to her what it was supposed to represent, she saw the face immediately. I hate to admit it, but, even after that, it still took me a couple of minutes to find the face. She had to explain to me where the face was. As I reflected later on the message printed on this leaflet, I thought to myself, how very much like the purpose of education in our schools that was. I had to be **shown** the face in the picture before I could **discern** the design that was in it all the time. And that's the way it is also with a study of history, for example. One would be quite an unusual student were he to see "design" in the events of history, simply upon reading the record. To see things in their proper perspective takes a whole lot of study. It happens that Mr. Langerak, Miss Lubbers, and Mr. Van Der Schaaf, along with Mr. Hanko from Hope and Mr. Kalsbeek from Adams have been meeting two evenings per month for the last three years to study the matter of design in history. And they do that with a view to communicating that perspective to you. You have a right to expect that your teachers will do that, too. Not, of course, that a history teacher will be able to explain how every event of history is used by God to further the cause of His Kingdom. There **is** that kind of detailed design in history, but no man can ever understand it. We can only hope to see what we might call the trends, and be able to show how they relate to God's gathering of His Church in history. The same things holds true for other courses. One cannot expect a math teacher to be able to show how each separate mathematical concept somehow demonstrates an attribute of our God. But, at the end of the course, one should be able to say, "My conception of the Almighty God has been enriched by my study of geometry under Mr. Huber."

Since this is what education is all about, we do well to take it seriously — as teachers and as students. As teachers, we must have a deep appreciation for the fact that we have a calling to direct the attention of the young people who study under us, to **God**, Who reveals Himself through the works of His hands. And, as students, you should constantly bear in mind that you're not dealing with bare facts but with revelation. It's that fact alone that makes all your work not only **worthwhile**, but also vitally **important**. The more, I think, that we consider ourselves to be pilgrims and strangers who have here no abiding place, the more we will come to understand the importance of learning more fully to know God, and the more we will learn to take our work at this school seriously.

For it is serious business. And our

failure to consider it that, as teachers or students, is sin. A casual attitude toward our studies is really a failure to use the eyes with which, by the grace of God, we are able to see spiritual things. Jesus dealt with the same kind of failure in His disciples when He asked them, according to Mark 8:18, "Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears hear ye not?" Our prayer, at the beginning of this school year, is that God will enlighten the eyes of your understanding, that, through your training at this school you will be led to know Him more fully by seeing Him in His Word and works.

BROTHERLY LOVE

by Brian D. Dykstra

We live in an age which is marked by a lack of human compassion. This is seen in the fact that today one out of three marriages in our country ends in divorce. People who supposedly married out of mutual love, caring, and compassion, now find it impossible to live with each other. Also, newspapers report to us a world full of violence.

The Christian, however, is never separated from love. His all powerful God is always near to help him with His loving hand. The Christian is also a member of the body of Christ. As such he experiences brotherly love.

In the first place, what is brotherly love?

We must know what love is because, as the very name implies, love is an essential element. Love cannot be found in the world of the reprobate. The wicked give in order to receive again. The reprobate also do not have the Holy Spirit in their hearts. Because of this, they can act only according to their human nature which is to hate God and their neighbor.

To learn what love is we must look to God for God teaches us what love is by sending His only Son to suffer and die for us. God did this not on the basis of foreseen works, but only out of His sovereign grace. God also knew that the most precious gift He could give would be despised

and rejected by us, finally being put to death on the cross. God also sent His Son knowing that we, of ourselves, are not able to give anything good in return. Love, therefore, is the giving of one's all even when knowing that nothing will be given in return.

Now that we know what love is, we must know who our brother is. Our brother is more than our neighbor who is anyone we meet along life's path. Although we do enjoy the company of a brother, he is not merely him with whom we have a good time, for reprobate men also enjoy each other's company. But just as physical brothers share the same physical father, our spiritual brother is one with whom we share the spiritual Father. This Father is, of course, our God in heaven, who has adopted us to be His sons through Christ's blood.

Secondly, why must we love our brother?

Most importantly, to love our brother is a command of Christ given in John 15:12 where we read, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." We should also love our brother to make our calling and election sure. Brotherly love, through the grace of God in our hearts, is a good work. Reprobate men cannot do good works, therefore, when we bear the fruit of good works we know we are numbered among the elect of God.

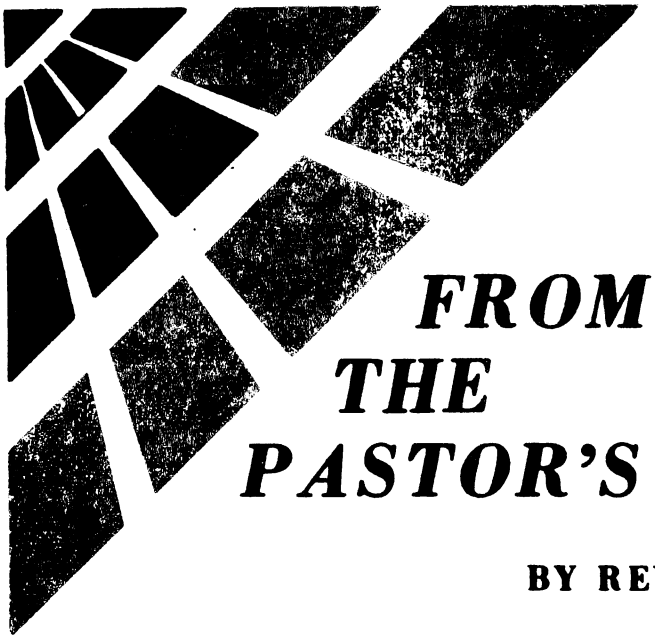
Finally, how do we love the brother? As a brother in Christ we will admonish our brother if we see him walking in sin. We do not, however, admonish with an attitude of pride. Rather, we admonish with a humble heart in service to God knowing that while he walks in sin, our brother cannot experience the love of God and the joy of salvation. We also love our brother all the time. We do not wait until we are not busy or have had enough sleep. But when the brother is in need of help, we help.

We, however, are still subject to sin. By nature we are proud, and self-centered. But our human nature can never be an excuse for sin. Then let us humbly ask God that He might grant us the grace to love our brother as we should.

We give thee but thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be:
All that we have is thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from thee.

May we thy bounties thus
As stewards true, receive,
And gladly, as thou blessest us,
To thee our first-fruits give.

W.W. How



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. G. LUBBERS

Fervant Prayers For Our Missionary - Ministers

". . . that ye strive together with me in your prayers for me . . . ."
Romans 15:30-32

I am of the settled convictic n that the time has come to call the attention of our covenant young people to their great part in the mission work in the church. Oftentimes the mission work of the congregation, young and old, is misunderstood or is totally ignored. The writer of these lines has spent some fourteen years or so as a missionary of our churches. Often people would write me as to how they could have a very active part in my missionary-ministry to which I was called of the Lord Himself. And not seldomly the young people had the mistaken notion that they could only help me, if in some way, they could accompany in the field itself. That was emphatically true when we were in the island of Jamaica, sometimes called "that little island in the sun."

The one great thing that stands out in the memory of me and of Mrs. Lubbers is that we were assured so often, that, in all our churches, we were remembered in the congregation prayers, in the prayers of the teachers in our schools, by high school students in the classes, as well as by little children on bended knee before they went

to sleep. In the midst of many perplexities and trials we felt that we were prayed for by the church of Jesus Christ. And, it seems to me, that none prayed so fervantly for us as did the churches on the island of Jamaica, elders, children in Sunday School and last but not least the students in our Seminary, as well as the Jamaican ministers. We were borne literally upon the wings of prayer, both at home and in the island of Jamaica.

And this was as it ought to be.

Thus was the will of Christ who said: "Pray without ceasing." It was the cry of the elect, day and night, whom the Lord heard speedily. The Lord proved to be an ever-ready helper in the time of need. And in obedience to the Lord's will I now would like to write a few thoughts for young and old in these columns concerning fervant prayers for our missionary-ministers. It takes more than money and planning to do mission work in Christ's great and blessed name. It requires strength from our risen Lord and Savior at the right hand of God through the Holy Spirit. Except the Lord Jesus builds the church, vainly do we build. And, where He builds His church upon the sure foundation, the very gates of hell attempt in vain to prevail. The Lord in heaven laughs at them and holds them in derision. Let us not forget it.

No doubt, Paul is always the great example of a worthy missionary of Jesus Christ. He must stand before princes and kings of the earth. That is the program to which he is to be dedicated, as one who is separated unto the Gospel of Christ. And what a zeal fills the heart of this great missionary, who is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. He also wills to preach this powerful, saving Gospel in mighty Rome. (Romans 1:15) And his prayer is that this may become a reality. (Romans 1:9-11)

There came a time when Paul had no more places to go and preach lest he would preach where others had preached Christ before him. Paul will lay the foundation everywhere which is Jesus Christ, besides which no one is able to lay any foundation. (Romans 15:17-21) Yes, Paul had fully preached the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum! Now Paul envisions preaching the Gospel also in Rome, the mighty capital of the world of his day, and he would pass on even into Spain. The love of Christ constrains him; yes, he is a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. What a preacher, in whom Jesus Christ was revealed, the chief of sinners, less than the least of all saints!

And now he will enlist the churches with him in his mighty labor and striving for the truth of the Gospel. More than once he speaks of this as being a mighty conflict, a great battle. He finds himself a contestant in the arena of God. He and the churches are veritable fellow-athletes in the Gospel. (Phil. 1:27) They must be this in one mind and one soul, a phalanx strong, which battles in close array! They are to with him have a fellowship in the Gospel consisting in assisting Paul on the right hand and on the left.

When Paul looks upon the great future to come to Rome he has no illusions concerning the difficulties which will beset him. Of these he speaks in the text written above this little contribution. Yes, before he comes to Jerusalem for the last time with the great collection collected in the Gentile churches, fruit of Paul's labors and fulfilment of his word to James, Peter and John, (Galatians 2:9, 10) he will have the testimony of the Spirit in every city that "bonds and imprisonments await him in Jerusalem." (Acts 2:23; 26:29) And so Paul has the agonizing prayer by which he prostrates himself before the Lord, his Sender. O, how fervantly he stormed the gates of heaven before the very throne of God. And thus, being weak, he is strong in the Lord and experiences that "My strength is made perfect in weakness." (II

Corinthians 12:9) He would fain have his work be blessed by the Lord, and desires the Gospel have a free and victorious course. Well may every one of our missionaries, ministers, professors, teachers be like Paul on their knees before the throne of God in fervant and mighty prayers, trusting that the prayer of a righteous man avails much as it did in the case of that lone and mighty prophet Elijah!

Now Paul exhorts, almost commands the "brethren" in Rome, the called saints, to join him in this mighty "agony" before the throne of God. For the infinitive in the Greek here is a composite verb which means: to agonize, do battle together with. This means that these brethren must have the same purpose with Paul for the triumph of the Gospel in Jerusalem over all the foes and in the midst of the saints. The Jews there will try to seek to kill Paul, and they nearly succeed. (Acts 21:27-40) Paul's prayer to be delivered forcefully out of the hands of the Jews is heard from heaven. God in Christ is in control in that terrible hour in Jerusalem, and so directs Paul's course that he will stand before the mighty Caesar of his day. Yes, in the inscrutible providence of God he will stand before none less than Nero! And this will be the **answer** to his prayer, and the fervant prayers of the saints at Rome, with Paul and for him. Yes, thus God was fulfilling his own word which He spoke to Ananias in Damascus, "Go thy way for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to hear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." (Acts 9:15) And gradually God was showing to Paul "how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (acts 9:16)

How wondrous are the ways of God.

God hears the prayers which cry for the fulfillment of his own wondrous plan!

Well may our missionaries take heart! They need not be faint-hearted but strong. I remember, when I was a bit perturbed in the Miami Airport concerning my ticket and visa to Jamaica at a critical time, that the man at the ticket office said, "Reverend, you need not fear. You are in the service of the great King." I was a bit ashamed and not a little comforted. And, no doubt, God was hearing the prayers of many saints who were agonizing with me and for me! O, I believe this, I believe this! How often Mrs. Lubbers and I went through dangers untold and always we knew that the same God in Christ, who sent us, would care for us.

Meanwhile, young people, do not forget to pray for your minister, elders, teachers and not least for your missionary-pastors. And let not our ministers fail to fervantly pray for them too. Our missionaries are what once was said to me "a special breed of men". And they are! They often seem to have so little going for them, and so much against them. May they know that they are borne on the wings of prayer.

Paul needs the prayers of these saints at Rome. He pleads: "Brethren, pray for us." Satan will too take notice. Satan trembles when he sees, weakest saints upon their knees. For upon the prayers of the saints fire is taken from the altar and cast on the earth, and there were "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings and earthquakes", and then there are headlines in the new-media of what God has done!

Our missionaries are in need of our fervant prayers.

Let us pray earnestly for them, not in a half-hearted perfunctory way, but with mighty earnestness that the Lord of harvest bless the work of those who preach the Gospel, far and wide.

†..†

Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

JESUS SAVING, NOT BEGGING

We consider the Word of God found in Matthew 1:21, and the great truth: "Jesus *Saving*, Not Begging"!

Most everyone is familiar with the words appearing in Matthew's gospel, chapter one, verse twenty-one: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." This is how Jesus is presented in the inspired Word of God. Usually, a different picture of Him is presented in the current popular pulpit orations. More often than not Jesus is sentimentally and emotionally pictured as a would-be savior who would save everybody. To this end, He does His best, offers all men a chance to be saved if only they will come to Him and believe in Him. Yet what can He do, to accomplish His will, if almighty men will not give *Him* a chance to do for them what He would? People who imagine such a Jesus do not understand the Scripture, nor do they understand that the Scripture cannot be changed, nor do they understand the way Jesus is objectively and truthfully presented in Scripture. So Jesus remains what He really is, despite all misrepresentations of Him!

I. *His Name Proclaims What He Is.* The angel of the Lord prophesied both His birth and name, commanding, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus." Yes, but who is this One to receive the name "Jesus"? The Bible tells us He is the Son of the Highest, the Son of God. His

virgin mother called Him "God my Savior." It had been prophesied seven hundred years before in the days of Isaiah that "they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, 'God With Us' ". This One, then, is God incarnate. Why is He, God in our flesh, called Jesus, that is, *Savior*? Because He saves. He is called Savior because He actually and really saves. He delivers His people from their sins, from spiritual death and hell. He is also called Jesus, or Savior, because we ought not to seek, neither can we find, salvation in any other. Besides, since He is Emmanuel, God With Us, it must be remembered that the name Jesus is the New Testament form of the Old Testament Joshua. There were two Joshua's in the Old Testament, both types of Christ. One Joshua was Israel's captain who led them into their promised land. The other Joshua was their high priest on return to their land after seventy years of exile. Jesus is our Joshua, the Captain of our salvation, and our Great High Priest. He is more than just Hoshea, as Joshua was first known. The name simply means Salvation. But Joshua means Jehovah Saves! It is not man who saves himself, but Jehovah who saves His people. So Jesus means Jehovah-Savior. Why is He called by this name? Because He *is* Jehovah! and in our flesh! Neither is there salvation in any other than Jehovah. Well, then, Jesus is called Jehovah-Savior because He is Jehovah Savior!

II.*His Actual Work is Saving.* That's the reason for His name: "*for* He shall save His people." Modern ideas of Jesus are not in keeping with this at all. The most popular misconception is that Jesus *provided* salvation for all men. It's much like a man who constructs a fire-escape on a downtown department store or office building. In case of fire, naturally, men are to use that fire-escape. If they choose not to, then the consequences are their own fault. So Jesus has made "accepting Him" the fire-escape which is attached to this Planet Earth. If men will only use that fire-escape, if they will only "accept Jesus," then He will save them. But if they choose not to take advantage of the fire-escape, choose rather to reject Him, then the terrible, inevitable consequences of eternal hell fire are their own fault. He can't help that! He did the best He could. You see, as most people, today at least, imply, Jesus does not *save* anybody. He merely provides salvation, leaving it up to us to avail ourselves of the provision. But if we do not take the way of escape offered, we, on our own responsibility, go lost.

To prevent this, so the usual "rescue-mission" thinking runs, Jesus gets busy and begs men to come to Him. All they need do is simply dive into the divine Fire-Escape and slide into the safety of Heaven. So Jesus is now offering everybody a free chance for Heaven. He is begging them to throw the ejection switch on the provided escape

module which will then activate and jet them up out of spiritual death into eternal life! This is what the modern revivalists and evangelists have been saying all along. This means that Jesus' death on the cross is no atoning satisfaction for sin, but is an atonement only in the sense of a proffered medical prescription, which really cures, but you, a dying terminal cancer patient, must go to the Great Physician, or to the ecclesiastical pharmacy He suggests, and pick up the remedy ready and waiting for you. Now, strictly, this means that the atonement does not atone; it only *provides* for atonement. And its efficacy depends upon whether people are good enough to respond to the begging Physician's pleas to come and accept His cure. Then the atonement is no satisfaction, and so, no atonement. But this "sawdust trail" savior, who must beg with offers and invitations to the free will of the spiritually dead sinner is not the Jesus presented in the gospel. For *He* actually made satisfaction for our sins. On that ground of His atonement, which "taketh away the sins of the world", of the world of "whosoever believeth," He *accomplishes* salvation. Therefore, from now to the end of the world, "He *shall* save."

Jesus does not beg men to let Him save them. He does not beg them to save themselves. It is often presented this way. Christ's salvation is a kind of government-supplied "immunization shots" program made available to the general public. But His name is not Jesus because He has brought about the *possibility* of salvation, but has effected the *actuality* of salvation. That is no salvation which is not an actuality. The possibility of escape is not actual escape. A mere proposed deliverance is a dream. Jesus did not say, "I have a dream!" He said, "I, that speak in righteousness, am mighty to save!" (Isaiah 63:1). Then, further, everyone knows that Jesus does not save all. But everyone ought to know that Scripture teaches that He saves His people. "He shall save His people." This means He does not *try* to save them. Yet He is said to be throwing out the life-line to men floundering on the verge of the Niagara Falls. This "city-mission" theology claims you may grip the life-line, then He will pull you to safety. Or you may stupidly or confusedly refuse it and drown in your own folly. But no; "He *shall* save His people." But what if His people are as the Bible says they are, dead in sins, and not just drowning, but drowned? What if they say, "I don't want to be saved! Who needs it?" They may say that. That's to be expected of those spiritually dead to God. But it's still true, that for His people, He *shall* save them. He shall not beg them to let Him do it. He shall *do* it. He shall not plead with men to give Him a chance to save them, and so make it possible for Him to live up to His name, Jesus. No, never! But He *is* Jesus for He shall save His people.

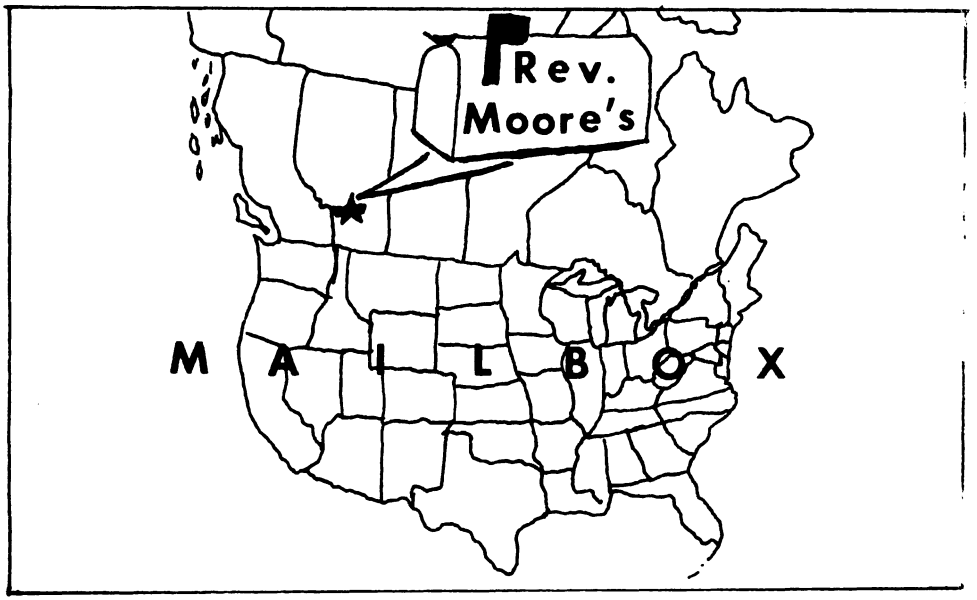
from their sins!

His people need saving. They are not just dying men. They are dead. To save them, He must more than "rescue the perishing, care for the dying;" He must be what He claimed to be, the Resurrection and the Life, and raise the dead. We are spiritually mute, deaf, blind and dead. We are alive to sin, but dead to righteousness. We are wise to do evil, but to do good we have no knowledge. We are not free to accept or reject Jesus. We are free only to do evil, to reject Him. As for His people dead in trespasses and sins, God, who raises the dead must resurrect them. He must create them anew, making them new creatures in Christ Jesus, being born again of His Spirit. In *that* way He shall save His people. On the cross Jesus died, and by His blood did more than to provide a crimson reservoir available to all men, if only they will come to it and wash. No, but by His blood He blotted out all the sin of all His people. When you look to the Cross, you see not a reservoir, nor a fire-escape, which after all *do* nothing. But you see the sins of His people *blotted out*. You see His sheep *bought* with a price. They are not their own, but belong to their faithful *Savior, Jesus* Christ, because He *saves* His people!

III. *His Proof of The Proposition*, "Jesus is Saving, Not Begging," lies in the words that He shall save them "from their sins." When Jesus saves people, He saves them *from* their sins. Then their sins are blotted out and they are escaped from their sins and the punishment due them. But today there are so many converts made in "evangelistic crusades" who are now saved, so they profess to be, who still continue in their old sins, as though they were saved *in* their sins. But that's not the way Jesus saves men; not *in* their sins, but *from* their sins. As a result, they make a complete break with sin. They do not go on in a life of sin. They begin to live in a new and holy life. That's the way it is with the salvation of the Jesus of the Gospel. His word is not the futile, frustrated word of man. His Gospel is the *power* of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth. *From* their sins He shall save His people! Are you one of them? Amen.

(Prayer) God our Heavenly Father, cause Thy glorious Word to be heard in the effectual calling of the Gospel, so that Jesus the only Savior may be exalted and honored. May His sheep hear His voice and follow Him. Fulfil Thine own Word and give to them eternal life so that they shall never perish. For His name's sake. Amen.

YOUNG PEOPLE!! — Send your questions to Rev. Moore's Mailbox.



Send questions to:
Rev. Richard G. Moore
12324 - 134th St.
Edmonton, Alta. T5L 1T9

From a reader in Michigan we have several questions related to the public confession of faith which God's people make before the church of Christ. We will attempt to answer these questions as to their essence, but suggest that our young people discuss these questions and answers in more detail with their pastors as they contemplate making confession of their faith.

The first question in this connection is, What is the purpose and reason for confession of faith?

In answer, in the first place, we should understand the purpose, for all things that the child of God does in the consciousness of his salvation in Christ, is the glory of the precious name of the God of his salvation. God's children of needs glorify their God! Also by our confession of faith we give glory unto God — the glory which alone is due unto His Name.

The child of God will so glorify God as the grace of God dwells in him. The grace of salvation worked in our hearts by God leads us to confess our God in Jesus Christ. This we are told by God's Word in a passage of Scripture, such as, I John 4:2-3; "Hereby know ye the Spirit

of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." And again, we are instructed in Romans 10:8-10 the following; "But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even on thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

God fills His children with the grace of salvation. He does so through the preaching of His Son, Jesus Christ, as is evident from the verses following the last quotation above. As God in Christ and by His Spirit applies His Word of salvation to the hearts of His own, they are brought to the dust in confession of sin; and they are made to confess their salvation is alone in Jesus Christ come in our stead — come in the flesh. This confession is the fruit of God's grace in them. So that, as we are given to see our sin and utter dependence upon God, and as we are given the testimony of God's great love and mercy over us, as revealed in Christ crucified and raised, the child of God filled so with grace of necessity praises his God, confessing God in faith which God hath worked in him. And Christ's Word is fulfilled, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid," Matthew 5:14.

Finally, for our purposes now, we note that as God's child is so powerfully called by Christ through His Word unto active faith, unto conscious trust and hope, he sees that the promises of the Lord are sure, and publicly rejoices to confess his faith before God and man. And he actively takes up the calling wherewith he has been called in standing as the child of God. Such promises as the one in Matthew 10:32-33 gird him on, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." In the strength of the Spirit confession of faith is made unto salvation.

Still in connection to our public confession of faith there were included some other questions. The next of which is the following: "When and how can one know when he is ready to make this confession of his faith?"

Of course, there is no legalistic way of answering this question, nor would that be right. There is no specific age at which confession must be made. Further, God does not write words upon our bedroom ceiling saying, "Make confession of faith!" But rather God instructs His

church by His Word, through the preaching, sacraments, and catechism, as well as by other secondary means of grace — the instruction of our parents, etc. And Christ efficaciously (powerfully) applies His Word to the hearts of His people. So that He gives us a consciousness of our sin and misery, and leads us to His cross and the forgiveness of sins; and He works in the hearts of His children, thankfulness and the desire to serve the living God.

When Christ so works in His children this knowledge, He activates their faith and He gives them the desire to confess Him and His Father. And Christ leads His own to actively stand with His church defending the faith and praising the living God. Thus we come to know in our hearts the desire to stand with the children of the living God also in our confession. And His covenant youth desire before God and His church to publicly confess the faith which God has worked in their hearts. Hence they make public confession of that faith.

This usually takes place in the latter teens or early twenties, but a set age there is not. And we ought not to make confession because everyone else of our age is, nor because of pressures brought by those near us. For a confession of faith to be true must be from the heart. On the other hand, if we have passed through many years of catechism and sat those same years under the true preaching of Christ and still refuse or neglect to make confession of our faith, there is something wrong with our faith. Sin lies there! And Christ through His officebearers would surely be right to exhort one, delinquent to express his faith, concerning those sins which prevent his confession. God's children *do* desire to express their faith and *do* desire to actively partake of the fellowship and communion of the living God with the saints. This is a matter of the quickened heart whose pleasure is to dwell with the saints in the service of God.

Finally, there is a practical question asked: "How do young people confessing their faith learn about their responsibilities as confessing members of the church?" That is, what is the meaning of partaking of communion for the confessing member? What is my responsibility to the church budget? What about voting in congregational meetings, serving in office, etc.? "Does one learn the answers from his minister, consistory, parents, or from whom?"

The three parties mentioned above all have a part in answering these questions. Especially is this so with respect to questions like the first above. For each — consistory, minister, parent — is a means in Christ's hand to instruct the covenant seed in the Word. And it is by the proclamation of the Word and the instruction based and founded upon

the same which alone is able to answer the first type of question. The Word of Christ instructs us in the meaning of communion, the calling of officebearers and other essential truths concerning Christ's children and His church.

However, with respect to the church budget, the meaning of belonging to the church as a baptized member and as a confessing member, voting and other such questions, the consistory through the pastor should see that these are answered in the pre-confession instruction. This does not mean that we cannot learn a great deal about these things also from our parents, for they too are a blessed means for our growth in understanding these matters also.

Christ gives this instruction to His people, and by grace they receive it with gladness.

May we all be mindful of our calling in this instruction of the covenant youth is our prayer as ministers, consistories and parents.

LEAVING FATHER AND MOTHER

The above title appeared as a series of articles written by Rev. Cornelius Hanko in the *Beacon Lights* in 1978. Because of many requests, the Federation Board of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies has put these articles together in booklet form and is now publicizing the fact that they can be purchased for the nominal fee of $1.50. (Those outside Metropolitan Grand Rapids add 10% for mailing.)

A sample copy and order forms are available in each church and may be sent to *Leaving Father and Mother*, 4190 Burton S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

This book is a valuable addition to any book shelf but especially those of our homes where there are covenant youth. The Federation Board feels that rather than let valuable articles such as these be forgotten, they are willing to mobilize their manpower and resources to accomplish the task of preserving them. Support them by ordering your copy soon.

DEFINITION OF CHRISTMAS

by Linda Feenstra

Who needs a definition of Christmas? Even young children know that Christmas is the day we celebrate the birth of Christ. One only needs to look "Christmas" up in the dictionary to find that much of a definition. But certainly there is more to Christmas! Can't we find a fuller definition?

The world around us obviously has its own definition of Christmas — with its Santa Claus and glittering lights, tinsel and profit making. But that is *not* our Christmas! The shallow Christmas of the world takes us far from the true meaning of Christmas!

Let us go back to the origin of the word "Christmas" to rediscover that true meaning. "Christmas" comes from the early English phrase "Christes Masse", which means "Christ's Mass", and Mass is the commemoration of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary. Thus, within the very word "Christmas", we find not only the birth of Jesus, but also His death and resurrection — the fulfillment of God's Promise — our Salvation! Herein must we celebrate Christmas! In praise and thanksgiving to God for delivering unto us His only begotten Son! This Son, Christ Jesus, who became flesh that He might atone for our sins. For we, Christ's elect, are justified on the basis of His shed blood.

Christmas! Truly it is an occasion for great rejoicing! And lest we forget the meaning of Christmas, we need only think upon the word "Christmas" and its origin. Then, secure in the knowledge of what Christmas means to us — let our hearts overflow with the wonder of it all!

NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

by Linda Kaiser

BIRTHS

Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Ringnalda of Southwest became the parents of a baby girl, Vicki Jo.

Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Osterink of Southwest were blessed with the birth of a baby girl, Emily Jean.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Ondersma of Hope rejoice in the birth of a daughter, Amanda Joy, on June 22.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Zandstra of Hope rejoice in the birth of a son, Greg Alan, on June 23.

Mr. and Mrs. Al Karsemeyer of Faith rejoice in the birth of a son, Clint Alan, on August 12.

Mr. and Mrs. William Clason of Faith rejoice in the birth of a son, Monty William, on August 19.

Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Terpstra of Hope rejoice in the birth of a son, Corey Jon, on October 10.

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Braaksma of Randolph were blessed with the birth of Peter Albert on October 20.

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Kamps of Hope were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Esther Louise, on October 30.

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Corson of First became the parents of a baby boy, Chad William, born November 1.

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Lanting of Loveland became the parents of a daughter, Melissa Nichole, on November 2.

Mr. and Mrs. Rich Campbell of Loveland were blessed with a daughter, Alicia Dawn, on November 7.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Cheryl Buiter and Janet De Jong made public confession of their faith in South Holland on October 7.

Miss Amy Mensch, Mr. James Mol, and Mr. David Griffioen made confession of faith in Faith Church on November 4.

The public confession of faith of Don De Vries, Brian A. Dykstra, Mark Dykstra, Tim Koole, Dave Rau, and Steve Van Dyke took place in Hope on October 28.

MARRIAGES

Lewis De Jong and Janet Boer were united in the bond of holy marriage on September 2 in South Holland.

Daniel Wiersma and Jessica Portinga were united in the bond of holy marriage on October 12 in South Holland.

The marriage of Don De Jong and Cindi Dykstra took place on October 26 at Hope Church.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

A singspiration was held on October 21 in Southeast Church.

The Federation Board sponsored a hayride for area young people on October 26.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

A Reformation Day Lecture was held on October 30 at the Calvin College Fine Arts Center. Rev. D. Engelsma spoke on the subject, "Evangelism and the Reformed Faith."

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The membership papers of Laurel Buiter have been sent from Loveland to Redlands.

The membership papers of Wilbur and Nona Postma and two baptized sons have been received in Loveland from Southwest; the membership papers of Steve Hanko have been received from Hope; and the membership papers of Rev. and Mrs. Kortering and children from Redlands.

The consistory of Faith has received the membership papers of Mr. Gerald Koning from Southeast Church.

The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Bartelds have been transferred from First to Southwest.

South Holland has received the membership papers of Mrs. Robert Van Baren as a confessing member from the First Christian Reformed Church of Redlands and the membership papers of Rev. and Mrs. R. Van Overloop and five baptized children from Hope.

The membership papers of Rev. Carl Haak have been transferred from South Holland to Southeast.

Southwest has received the membership of Mr. and Mrs. Jack De Vries and two baptized children from First; the membership of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Feenstra and three baptized children from Seventh Reformed Church; and the membership of Mr. and Mrs. Hilbert Boverhof from Ivanrest Christian Reformed Church.

Southwest has sent the membership papers of Rev. and Mrs. Ronald Cammenga and three baptized children to Hull.

SINGSPIRATION DATES
For Greater Grand Rapids Area

1979

Dec. 23 - Christmas - Hudsonville

1980

Feb. 17 - Southeast
March 16 - Hope
April 6 - Easter - Hudsonville
May 4 - Faith
June 1 - Southwest
Aug. 17 - Preconvention
Sept. 21 - Faith
Oct. 19 - Southwest
Nov. 23 - Thanksgiving - Hope
Dec. 21 - Christmas - Hudsonville