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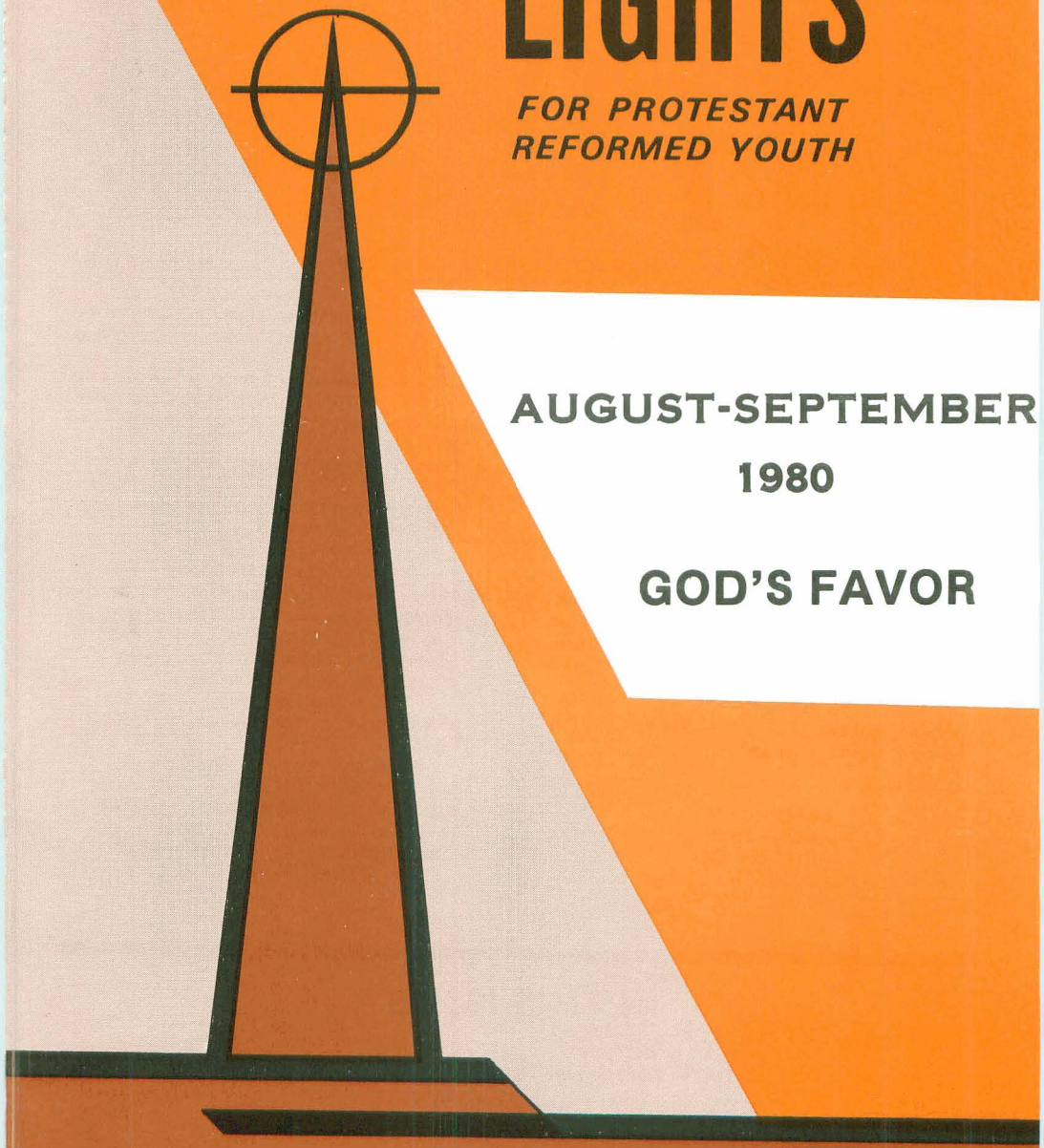

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GOD'S FAVOR

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Editorial

GOD'S FAVOR

by David Harbach

There was a minor prophet who lived in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel. He was a herdsman of Tekoa. He was called to the prophetical office two years before the earthquake during Uzziah's reign. His name was Amos.

Amos prophesied chiefly against Israel, against those that were at ease in Zion. Amos vividly describes the life of the people: people "that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments...." Amos 6:3-6. You can picture in your mind people who lived in the security of material things. The people of Zion had more than enough to satisfy their human needs and to care for the poor. But they were evil and oppressed the poor instead of supplying the needs of the poor. In their wickedness, they sought to satisfy their evil fleshly desires by drinking wine out of bowls, inventing musical instruments, singing in a tremulous voice to the sound of the viol, and putting on costly perfumes. The people of Zion lived for their own worldly gain. They lived to fulfill their selfish goals of luxury and ease.

Amos accurately calls the people who are at ease in Zion, kine of Bashan. Now, a kine can be cows or cattle. Kine of Bashan were a breed of cattle very strong, but also very wanton and unruly. These cattle were so unmanageable they often broke through the barriers which were meant to hold them in a particular place. They often were found grazing on other people's land. The kine of Bashan were strong cattle often attacking smaller cattle. David says this about them in Psalm 22:12: "Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round." The people at ease in Zion were very much like those cows of Bashan because they oppressed the poor and crushed the needy. They laughed at and mocked the poor and needy of Zion, their very own kinsmen. Oh, they had a high priest and they offered sacrifices, but God despised their feast days and did not accept their offerings because they also had their own gods, Moloch and Chiun, which they made by their own hands. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion! Woe to the kine of Bashan!

The people at ease in Zion did not live by true faith. They were not doers of God's Word. They were not free from the bondage of sin. They desired the day of the Lord, but to them that day would be a day of darkness and not light. The cows of Bashan would find the day of the Lord very dark with no brightness in it at all. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion! Woe to them that desire the day of the Lord! What shall you gain in the end?

Remember that Amos is a prophet of God. He not only points out the many sins of the people and the just judgments for those sins but includes the command to the people from the Lord; "Seek ye me, and ye shall live; seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; The LORD is his name...." Amos 5:4b & 8. Is there repentance from idol worship? Is there repentance from the oppression of the poor and needy? No, there is no repentance. Is there a seeking after the Lord? No. The Lord God intends to destroy the kingdom of Israel from off the face of the earth. However, with the command to seek the Lord, God preserves His righteous people. Among the house of Israel, the elect covenant people of God are preserved.

The young people of Zion could be characterized as without shame, without sorrow over sin, without repentance from sin. They reasoned: I'll do it just for the fun of it, because I feel like it. Besides, everyone else is doing it. They were at ease, too! They were the cows of Bashan, too! They committed the same sins their parents committed. They were rebellious and followed the worldly crowd. They were hooked on drugs: the drug of self first, the drug of the lusts of the flesh, and the drug of the pride of life. They were caught in the bondage of sin and were far from God. They may have called themselves the young people of Zion, but they were not the true righteous of Zion. Yet, among the young people of Zion, God preserved His righteous young people. In the midst of a perverse generation, God preserved and still preserves His righteous young people. But their lives were far different in character.

You may wonder why it was wrong to be without shame. Shame can mean dishonor or disgrace. We would not want to bring dishonor or disgrace upon ourselves. We would not want to bring shame upon ourselves. But this is not the meaning of shame as it is used in the first sentence of this paragraph. Shame can mean what a person feels inside of him when his conscience bothers him. He feels something. He has a disturbed or painful feeling of guilt, incompetence, indecency or blameworthiness. A person who knows shame feels guilty and blameworthy. Closely related to shame is the word ashamed which means to feel shame as from doing something bad, wrong, or foolish. The opposite in meaning to the word *ashamed* would be the word *proud*. We could say, then, that the young people of Zion did not feel any guilt for doing something wrong and this would lead them into the sin of being proud in the heart.

Perhaps a few examples will help us to understand the idea of being without shame. It happens sometimes that parents and teachers will confront

children of the covenant with a question such as, "Did you commit this shameful sin?" The answer comes back as, "No, I didn't," even when the parents and teacher know that he did do it. They are concerned that the child confess his sin, but the child does not confess the sin and does not show any shame or sorrow. Our children can be shameless liars, and lest we forget, we too can be shameless liars if we are not careful.

Another example of being without shame is our desire to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. An ever increasing plague or trouble with you, young people, is the flesh. Sometime in the past it was shameful (a violation of what was considered to be just, moral, or decent) for young people to hold hands or embrace in public. Today much more than holding hands and embracing is done in public. These fulfillments of lust are an everyday occurence in public. These fulfillments of lust are occuring repeatedly with people of a younger age which is very alarming. The trouble is you show no shame in doing these things. Now that bothers a lot of people who are concerned about you as being the covenant seed and the future church. In other words, from the viewpoint of the children of God who have much experience in the battle of faith, you lack shame in doing those things you should be ashamed to do as God's people in the midst of the world.

Closely related to being without shame is showing no sorrow over sin and showing no repentance from sin. Sorrow over sin and repentance from sin are two essential daily experiences each child of God knows as he walks his pilgrim's journey through this life. He must know them. Without them he does not know God's favor, the forgiveness of his sins through the precious blood of the Lamb, and the power of Christ's atonement. Without them he can only know God's displeasure.

When there is no shame, young people, in lusting in public; no sorrow over this sin, and no repentance from this sin, then you can only know God's displeasure. When there is no shame, young people, in telling a lie; no sorrow over this sin, and no repentance from this sin, then you can only know God's displeasure. Then your faith is said to be vain. When you are not ashamed of the sin of telling a lie and the sin of lusting, then you are ashamed of the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior. Then you do not know the righteousness of Christ. Then you are like those who are at ease in Zion. Then you are like the cows of Bashan. Woe unto you, saith the LORD!

The young person who does know God's favor and in whom true faith is being wrought by the hearing of the Word of God and the operation of the Holy Ghost is free from the bondage of sin. He does good works in this life out of a love to God. These good works do not merit him anything, nor is he justified by them. He does good works, but not to merit by them. He fights the good battle of faith as an obedient servant doing only what is his duty to do. He repents from telling lies and in no way satisfies the lusts of the flesh. (Read Articles XXIII and XXIV of the Belgic Confession, page 31 in the back of the Psalter.)

Soon you will be starting school again. These words are meant for you. Seek the LORD and you shall live.

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Our Heavenly Father's Care For Us

by Rev. G. Lubbers

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" Luke 12:32.

Have you, dear reader, ever noticed, prayerfully and believingly, how often the Bible speaks to us and exhorts us to be of good cheer?

In the text written above this little contribution, this is put in the negative form: fear not! Do you know why this is put in this *negative* manner to you and me? It is because basically we are full of fear; we are filled with the fear of death often, that last enemy which must still be conquered. However, we need not be. Death, too, has lost its sting! We have passed in Christ from death to life. That is the gospel of the resurrection.

The Gospel says: fear not!

This rebuke of all fear is rooted in the coming of the kingdom of God in Christ. That kingdom is: life, joy, and peace through the Holy Spirit. And the King of this kingdom says: fear not. Really it means: *stop* being afraid. Put away all your fear, and trust in your heavenly Father. That trust is then life, joy, and peace. It is a blessed peace that passes all understanding.

Young people, you do have your worries; you fret and ask anxious questions, don't you? You think about the future: work, job, marriage, hard times, war. It is the age-old question of what we shall eat and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed. It is now almost fifty years ago that I and Mrs. Lubbers stood before a great unknown future. We desired to be married very much. It was 1930, the time of the "Great Depression", the time of drought and dust storms, the time of bankruptsy and foreclosures. We stood together under the stars at night. And after thinking of all the sickening problems which would prevent our being joined in holy wedlock, we said: "But

we have God!''

Yes, later we often have had to say: we have God, who is the health of our countenance, and our God!

Jesus talks to His disciples and to all the church about our heavenly Father. Without saying it with so many words, He is saying: you are the Father's children of adoption, and are heirs of everlasting life! Yes, heirs of the kingdom of God, we are!

And at this point, Jesus brings in the comfort of the doctrine and truth of the Father's ''good-pleasure''. The teaching of election is very practical and comforting. It is the only rock-bottom assurance there is in the midst of the tremendous frettings of life. For here we are given to understand by Jesus, that if God planned to give to them the kindgom of God itself, shall he not give us all things which we need. Since He *has* decreed from all eternity, before the foundation of the world, to give you the kingdom in sovereign love and grace, he will give to you all that you need: food, clothing, and shelter. Yes, he gives us freely and never chides. He does not ever grow weary in caring for us.

Did you know that there are very foolish people in the world, who even call themselves Christians, who deny this word of Jesus concerning what the Father is eternally well-pleased to do? Do not allow them to rob you of this comforting truth concerning God's good-pleasure, which is the very heart-beat of the church, the very heart-beat and strength of our life. And those who would rob us of this comfort are legions, yes, the very armies of Satan himself.

God is a ''giving'' God. His giving is commensurate to His eternal good-pleasure. What God willed to do, He surely performs, and no one can say: what doest Thou! The Lord's arm will never be shortened so that He cannot reach us in our deepest woes. God's power knows no limit as our heavenly Father. His desire to bless His children remains eternally firm and strong. It is higher than heaven and deeper than hell as we see this in the death and ascension of Jesus Christ.

No need there is for us to do as the farmer in Jesus' parable who amazed all his wealth into large barns, and then said, ''Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'' Then we shall be like the man that layeth up treasure for himself, but is not rich more and more toward God.

I think here of the young girl who died at the age of about eighteen years old. From the hour of her birth she had been a total invalid; she never walked a step, was carried by mother and father all her life. She had no feeling and sensation below her hips. She was virtually paralyzed. She never attended school with other children. She never romped and played. At eighteen years of age, she still was less than eighty pounds. But she could sing well; she desired only to sing of redemption and of the love of her heavenly Father. She had a firm trust in her heavenly Father. And when the time drew near that she should depart and be with the Lord, she summed up her entire life in a few sentences: I don't have money, I don't have friends, I don't have the ability to walk (I must ever be carried), but I am rich in God!

And thus it is with all God's children in their helplessness in this world.

Jesus speaks of the Father's children under a figure of speech calling them "little flock". Now, this figure of speech is very appropriate here. For they are an elect flock, chosen sheep gathered into one flock, by God who is the great Shepherd of Israel. This is a very endearing term indeed. It is the term in which Jesus views the church, all the children of the promise, as he is their good Shepherd. The well-known twenty-third Psalm is a beautiful confession from the lips of the sheep, the little flock. Christ gave His life for the sheep, the little flock in the world, shall he not give us all things to enjoy richly. He will cause our cup to run over, as He does.

Fear not! Stop fearing! Look to the great Shepherd of Israel who thrones between the cherubim in the most holy place of God, and who ever lives to pray for us! You are Father's dear children, and are my little flock. Yes, I do have many, many sheep in history. They are really a numberless throng. And one day they shall ultimately be in heaven's glory, under David the great Shepherd in Israel: one fold and one Shepherd! But meanwhile, at any given time, the church in the world, compared with the hordes of the nations and unbelievers, is very small and insignificant. You would certainly be swallowed up were it not for the Father's good-pleasure. But His counsel shall stand, and He will perform all His good-pleasure. You are safe in the hand of your Father, who by His almighty power keeps you unto the salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last day.

Yes, fear not, little flock!

Do a little considering of the faithful works of your heavenly Father in the creature which is far less than you are. Consider for a moment the lily blooming in your backyard. Consider each blade of grass which you cut with your lawnmower. It is a marvel of God's care that the lily blooms more beautifully than Solomon in all his glory. Yet, this flower soon fades away. But, have no fear; it has demonstrated the Father's faithfulness to you, has it not? And then, think of all the birds as each sings his morning song, be it the cooing of the dove, or the song of the nightingale, as it sing's its song of ascending wing. What a kind and wise care of our heavenly Father for each of His creatures. Consider it with believing eyes, behold the flowers of the field and hear the voice of each bird, yea, of the chirping cricket. It is a lesson to take to heart.

And, then, do not fear, but believe.

And, when you see that awesome future loom before you, know that your heavenly Father has this "future" all in His plan, in the good-pleasure of His will to give to you the kingdom: joy, peace, and hope in the Holy Spirit.

Then we go forward step by step. His hand holds and enfolds ours. And He leads firmly beside the still waters of peace and contentment. And He leads safely, tenderly like a shepherd leads his flock. He gathers the lambs in His arms. And He gently leads those which are with young.

We must bathe in the pure love of God in Christ which banishes all fears.

Fear not, little flock. Only believe.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Following is a letter from Mr. Dewey Engelsma of Hope Church, Walker, Michigan. He has recently returned from Singapore where he and his wife aided Rev. den Hartog with his missionary labors on that island with the Gospel Literature and Tract Society (G.L.T.S.). His letter will prove very informative as to the scope of the work there, and also it should stimulate our young people to take an active part in the support of missions.

LETTER FROM G.L.T.S.

by Mr. Dewey Engelsma

Beloved Young People,

I am writing to you especially because I desire that you also know how your churches are heeding the command given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Our churches' foreign missionary, Reverend Arie den Hartog, arrived on the island with his wife, Sherry, and their four children and has been ministering to these youthful Christians for approximately six months. The Pastor, as he is addressed, has an overflowing load of work. He has become the hub of the group's activities and is busily engaged in every aspect of mission work. He is working closely with the leaders in the dissemination of Reformed truths and giving guidance as they make preparations toward the realization of an instituted church.

The majority of the members of the G.L.T.S. are of Chinese nationality; I know of only two from India, and probably there are that many Malays also. Without taking accurate count, I would estimate about one hundred persons attend the worship service each Lord's Day, with the scale tipping slightly in favor of the sisters. With the exception of two married couples, the entire membership consists of single persons. Truly a very unique situation. But I am happy to report that the prospects for future families are much more evident than in my previous visits.

The reason that these young people marry so much later in life is not due only to the Chinese culture. For this generation there are several other obstacles that hinder youthful marriages. First, as soon as a male Singaporean

finishes his secondary schooling, it is mandatory that he serves two and a half years in the country's national defense system. And today in order to find employment in the highly competitive work field, many young men are compelled to further their education after their release. Then, too, there is a drastic, almost acute shortage of living places available. If a flat could be obtained, the cost is unreal, especially for the average wagemaker. This country is experiencing the problems incurred when income is not comparable with spiraling living expenses. Finally, but surely not least, is the old Chinese tradition that to express filial love and obedience the man takes his bride into his family home. This is done to provide both physical and financial support for the aging parents, which is expected and often even demanded as a reward for raising children. Sometimes as many as three sons with their wives and children share the parents' living quarters. Now this presents a serious problem to some members of the group, especially to the eldest son. As children of God they realize the impossibility of establishing a Christian home within the confines of non-Christian parental homes. Yet, some do feel obligation to contribute aid to a widowed mother or aged father. So you can understand that most of these Chinese youths would be extremely cautious and hesitant in regard to marriage.

Because all come from homes where idols and ancestral gods are worshipped, there is continual opposition to their Christian faith. Many of the parents become very angry and voice their resentment for the time, money, and talents that these young saints expend in the cause of Christ. Beside the cruel persecution of being ridiculed and scorned by other members of their families, some have even suffered physical abuse for their belief in Jesus Christ.

In the several slide programs I have given for your societies, I have told you about many of these things. I'm repeating these facts for the benefit of those who missed the information, and also to refresh your memory.

On Sunday, June 8, I was privileged to commemorate with the G.L.T.S. the anniversary of their birth into Christianity. In the morning worship service Rev. den Hartog delivered an appropriate sermon from I Samuel 7:12: "Ebenezer, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." During the evening fellowship meeting we viewed the slides which pictured the various activities and growth of the group through the years. It was a day that resounded with thankfulness and praise to our Heavenly Father for His providential care.

Now let me review this history for you as best I can recall. Seventeen years ago, in one of Singapore's public schools, a Presbyterian teacher, as a faithful witness, taught some interested students the first basic principles of the Christian religion. Since he was not allowed to teach from the Scriptures, he held a Bible study class in the early morning hour before school began, and even instructed some pupils during class breaks. Through the efforts of this teacher a number of his students were brought into the Life Bible Presbyterian Church.

Like the Berean converts of Paul's time, these young Christians daily and

diligently searched the Scriptures. With this seeking came knowledge, and after a few years they became convinced that certain teachings and practices were not in harmony with the Word of God. The result was that the G.L.T.S. separated from the Presbyterian Church, although not without much pain and heartache, and have since 1976 continued to meet in their rented rooms on River Valley Road.

Even from that original R.V.O. (River Valley Outreach) organization, many members, either in groups or individually, left throughout the following years. But God in His grace preserved the faithful remnant who were His instruments in bringing others into the present existing membership.

The group is guided by leaders, the executive committee, chosen from the membership roll. These young men have assumed not only the responsibilities of instructing and counseling, but when the occasion arises, even the physical needs of a member are included. In every distressful circumstance of life, they extend to their brothers and sisters in the Lord the comfort and assurance of God's gracious love and care for them. So you see that the leaders, some from the early age of 18 years, have performed and are performing the necessary work that normally belongs to the service of elders and deacons. We can say from the point of view of experiences that they became old while still young. I surely agree with the sentiment expressed by a young brother that they gave up the carefree time of youth for the cause of Christ. Dear covenant youth, I ask you: Does God and His Kingdom have such a pre-eminent place in your life?

The G.L.T.S. operates much the same as in a church context. Under the direct supervision of the Executive Committee the work of the society is carried out by appointed committees. To give you an idea of the vast scope of their activities, let me list the several departments of their organization. At present there are five major committees: Outreach, Literature, Editorial, Finance, and Maintenance. From these five numerous departments branch out, each one functioning in a specific sphere. Taking the Outreach Committee for an example, under that general title five important sub-committees labor. These are: Sunday School, Gospel Meetings, Cell Groups, Saturday Meetings, and Follow-Up Committee.

Included under some of the other departments are their tape program, library, tract, general fund, weekly bulletin, and many others. One might be tempted to theorize that such a multiplication of committees tends to be cumbersome, but I can assure you that there is a great degree of efficiency evident in their operations.

Now, I would like you to follow with me as I proceed through the various "church" meetings which the average G.L.T.S. young person has the option to attend throughout a typical week. I'll begin with Sunday which is an exceptionally busy day. Sunday School classes begin at 8:45 and continue until 10 o'clock. The worship service starts at 10:15 and concludes at about 12:15. After services various committee meetings are held. This is to take advantage of the only day, the only free time, that it is possible for many of the members

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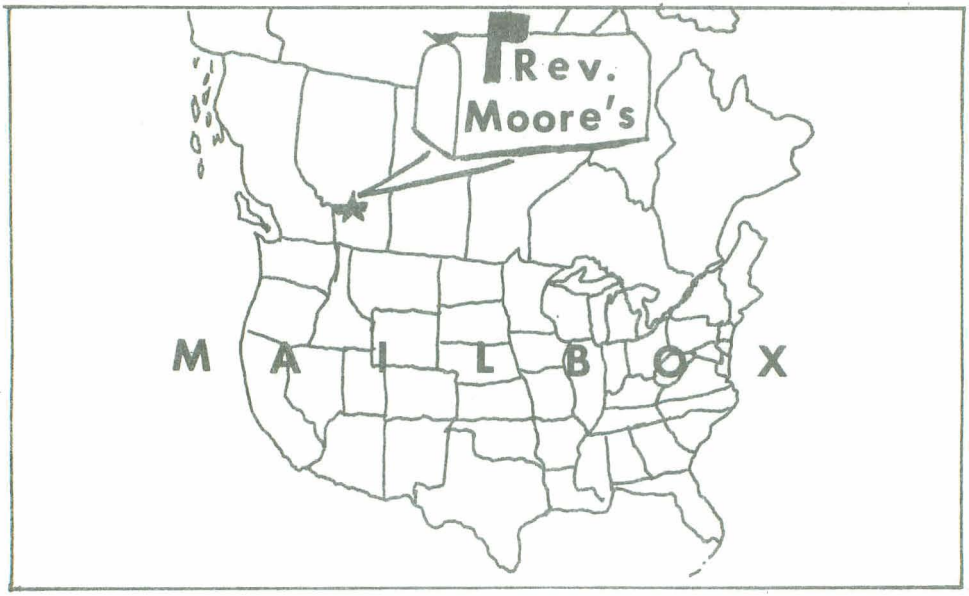

by Rev. R.G. Moore

In the first place in this article, I must apologize for being late in answering some of your questions. I believe I have all things sorted out, so that you should be receiving a steady stream of answers to your questions from now on. I have about five or six questions waiting for answers now, and I would encourage you to continue to send in your questions, to be answered on these pages.

The question for this Question Box is the following: "Was Mary also of the lineage of David, and was she and Joseph related, or was she of David's line only through her marriage to Joseph? And if Mary was of David's line, was she the only one left so Christ was born to her, or was she just the one out of many that God picked to bear the Christ?"

In answering these questions, let us turn directly to the Scripture, and answer in as far as the Scripture speaks to them. In Romans 1:3 we read the following: "concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." It is evident here that by Jesus' birth, He was of the line of David through His mother, Mary. For of Joseph He assumed nothing of the flesh, but through Mary alone. This is confirmed by the apostle in II Timothy 3:8: "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel." The account of the birth of Christ makes it clear this took place before Mary and Joseph were married, as the power of the Holy Ghost came upon the virgin and she conceived!

Hence we conclude, that indeed Mary was of the line of David. Further, it is evident from the simple reading of the Scripture that Joseph was also of the line of David. One cannot without changing the Scripture itself read the genealogy of Matthew 1 in any other way than it being the genealogy of Joseph, Jesus' legal father. For there we read without qualification, "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus." Besides we know that Joseph was required to go to Bethlehem for the taxing. As the head of the house this would be necessary only if Joseph, himself, was of the line of David. Thus, indeed, we would say that in their generations Joseph and Mary were related.

A study of the genealogies of Matthew and Luke 3 are interesting and I believe would add support to these conclusions, however, this is not the place for such a discussion.

As to the next question concerning the point of Mary's being the only one left of David's line to bear the Christ, we answer: that we know that Elizabeth was related to Mary and there may have been others. However, it is not important that we know this for the Scripture does not concern itself with this point. But the Bible does indicate that she was the last virgin in the line of David, in that the Scripture is fulfilled in the birth of Christ, that Christ is a root out of dry ground. We do know that Mary was chosen from eternity to bear the Christ. And this as a virgin she would conceive and bring forth the Christ. This is the wonder of wonders, that which is impossible for man is the exact place where God reveals His grace to His people. He assumes our flesh and blood in the virgin Mary to save us from our sin and iniquity. He, who is very God and very man, is born in the line of David, the fulfillment of God's covenant promise, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Praise God.

God's Purpose for Living Creatures

by Ruth Dykstra

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1. "And God made the beast of the earth...and everything that creepeth upon the earth...and God saw that it was good." Genesis 1:25. God created all things for himself. God saw what He created that it was good. God chose a people unto himself out of sovereign grace and according to His good pleasure for the praise of His own name. God placed that people He created in the midst of the

world to enjoy His creation and to praise His holy name. That is our purpose, God's covenant people, to praise His holy name.

But what purpose does God have for living creatures? He gave them to us as pictures. We can see and learn His way for us in the world of living creatures. Through His creation all men know God, that is, that there is a God. No man will be left without excuse. All men will have to admit that they saw Him in the created world. His works are all around us.

God's creation is marvelously and intrinsically endowed with creatural organisms both great and small. From the giant Redwoods of the west coast to the microscopic, glass-housed idatoms of the sea; from the mammoth whales of the ocean to the smallest animalia that roam the most distant deserts; all of these organisms, some astonishingly large, as well as, the seemingly insignificant microscopically small, all have their place in His creation.

The diatoms, a brown algae form, provide food for virtually all the aquatic life in the oceans and seas. They also provide a very large percentage of the oxygen that we breath. Tiny, but oh so important!

Solomon tells us in Proverbs 6:6, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." Even the tiny, seemingly insignificant ant is a picture lesson for us.

Think of the ugly caterpillar, a picture of us in our sins. Now watch as it spins its chrysalis, rests for a while, later to emerge a beautiful winged butterfly, a picture of our resurrection.

The birds, those little winged creatures, fly about without a burden of care. They trust their heavenly maker for all their needs. Do we? They also sing, sing praise to their heavenly maker. "Let the heavens and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moveth therein." Psalm 69:34.

"O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches." Psalm 104:24.

"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." Psalm 111:2.

'Tis not that I did choose thee, For, Lord, that could not be;
This heart would still refuse thee, hadst thou not chosen me.
Thou from the sin that stained me Hast cleansed and set me free;
Of old thou hast ordained me, That I should live to thee.

'Twas sov'reign mercy called me And taught my op'ning mind;
The world had else enthralled me, To heav'nly glories blind.
My heart owns none before thee, For thy rich grace I thrist;
This knowing, if I love thee, Thou must have loved me first.

(from John 15:16) Josiah Conder

Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

WOMEN AND WAR

"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered" (I Peter 3:7). The Word of God teaches here that each family should have its own separate home. Communal living is not substantiated by scripture. Families should dwell together in their own individual houses. The children must not be raised outside the home circle by the state. Husbands and wives must not be so occupied as both to be out and away from the home more than they are together in it. Where this divine arrangement is neglected or disrupted, many grave and degrading evils arise in the church and in society. The inspired Word requires that the wife should dwell in her own house, and not seek to be "liberated" from her home and her children. Wives are bound to be "keepers at home." The woman's principle scene of duty is the home. It is contrary to both scripture and nature for family members to live separately as many do for purely selfish and worldly reasons. Then family devotions, family instruction and family discipline are sacrificed. Many husbands and wives today are fonder of any company than that of each other. This is so in some cases because husbands do not honor their wives; in other instances, the wives, lowering themselves in the interest of an absolute equality with men, refuse that honor.

Husbands and wives must dwell together in their own homes "according to knowledge," that is, as Christians knowing the law of God and its directives for life in the family, in the church, in the school and in the state. But in the home where the husband is not recognized as the head of the woman and the

wife as subject to her husband, there can be no living together according to knowledge; then there is a lot of living ignorantly and foolishly. Living "women's lib" style is not living according to knowledge. Living according to Equal Rights Amendment principles is to live in utter folly, not according to knowledge. These feminist principles are destructive of the entire Christian social structure. It is to fail to live according to knowledge for husband, wife, daughter or son to meekly submit to the pressures of women's equal rights advocates, women's equal opportunity specialists and of the sex equality defenders. These pressure groups are not characterized by the knowledge of God and His holy law. Imbedded in them are horrible forms of folly lending to chaos and national judgment under the wrath of God.

One reason why the husband is to dwell with his wife according to knowledge is that the Lord God says she is "the weaker vessel." Both the man and the woman are weak, but the woman is the weaker. True, physically and intellectually, some women are stronger than some men; but generally the female is weaker than the male. The woman is not of an inferior mentality, but of a more delicate, sensitive mentality. Where this delicacy and sensitivity are not found in women, then the men of their sphere are likely of a very low order.

But neither is it according to knowledge for husbands to treat their wives as though they were children. It is true that many women today are acting childishly. Childish women in some countries rise to power to dominate the men, so that it must be said, "As for My people, children are their oppressors (as in Iran's holding of American hostages), and women rule over them" (Isaiah 3:12; cp. v. 2). The word "women" in this prophecy is not to be taken strictly literally. It is exactly fulfilled in male rulers so soft and effeminate, the poor "grannies" that they are, that they are more like women than men. But in many ways today women literally rule over men (and so do children). With the possibility of women being drafted, even to fight on the battlefield, we will have even more female military officers than we have now outranking the men.

It is to fly in the face of the Word of God to deny that woman is "the weaker vessel." The modern "equal rights" groups deny that God has spoken authoritatively on these issues. They deny that "that head of the woman is the man" and that "the head of every man is Christ." They deny that the woman's place is that of subservience to the man. They deny "he is the image and glory of God" and that the woman is "the glory of the man." On feminist principles, the woman does not shine with any glory. She is in God's eyes a shabby wretch. Modern men and women deny the truth that "the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man." Nor will the world accept it that "neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." According to these principles of true, spiritual knowledge, the man has the place of headship; the woman a subordinate place.

Is it true that scripture does not speak to the question as to whether women ought to be drafted, and ultimately with a view to the battlefield? Isn't it perfectly clear from the Old Testament, and just as clear from the New, that exclusively to the man belongs the profession of arms? The fighting forces of

Israel consisted of men. The civil law of Israel allowed a newlywed husband a honeymoon leave of one year before being required to go out to war (Deuteronomy 24:5). The profession of arms was his; not his and hers. John the Baptist's counsel was to real masculine soldiers. The Roman centurions were men, not an effeminate male and female amalgam with a T.V. M*A*S*H* mentality which thinks war is "fun and games."

Furthermore, our text requires the "giving of honor to the wife." Christian husbands, and also our young unmarried men, have it their high and holy purpose to conform to this word of God, to honor and esteem all respectable women, including our covenant daughters. This New Testament law means more than that the husband is to honor his wife with proper support (in the sense of I Timothy 5:17). He is also to honor her as a co-heir of the grace of life. This means he is supposed to have a Christian wife, and not be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever. He is to honor her as a Christian, as a child of God, as a daughter of the Father and Lord Almighty. Every Christian man must have honor and respect for all Christian women, and especially now today for Christian young unmarried women. Does the Christian man do this if he does not oppose the draft registration of women? Does he show this honor when in all these God-denying issues he cannot say, We (I) must obey God rather than men? It is not honoring to women to make them equal to men, and then on that basis, as it may soon come to, to conscript young mothers with small children and unmarried daughters as well. This dishonors the weaker vessel. The ERA and all that it stands for is an insult to God and to the Christian woman. The principles of feminism are demeaning to all womankind. The socialist's equalizing and levelling process is of the human race, and men, downward to the level of women. That propounded by N.O.W., the National Organization of Women, does not "honor the wife," or any woman; and these groups advocate women will one day come to see to be their loss, and that they shall have lost more than they shall have gained, or ever could regain. Men who back these ungodly family-destroying principles do not love their wives, nor their daughters; do not love them because Christ loves them, do not honor Christian women because they love Christ.

So Christian women are to be honored, whether married or single; honored as the weaker vessel, not with some mythical "equality." The Christian woman counts it an honor to be divinely appointed to a place of submission to the headship of the man. The Christian woman also is in the office of believer. She is a king, but not just as much as the man. She is such in the man and under the headship of the man. She has no "equal right" to rule. She is a prophet(ess), but not over against the man. She does not have the right to preach or to usurp authority over the man. The ecclesiastical office is not hers, according to the divine order. They insult the women of the Church who teach otherwise. Nor is the military office hers. To take it is to rebel against God and usurp authority over the man. She is not qualified to be a military leader. How in the world dare our armed forces entrust a real combat unit to the leadership of a female general! Where is there one woman who is a competent military

leader? one who could effectively command men under the stress and crisis of the battlefield? Such women look like dogs walking on their hind legs. It is difficult nowadays to find a real man for a military leader. Where is there a dynamic personality like General Patton? Men fight better than women. Men fight better without the presence of women. Ignore or deny this fact and the result can be in the horrors of the battlefield demoralization and disaster.

So of late we've been pestered with "women's lib" thinking; now with all kinds of war talk. Women and war is getting to mean "women *in* war." Ours "is the only country in the world where women are being pushed toward the battlefield." So far from honoring womankind, this rather shows contempt for the woman and hatred for God and His word. Nevertheless, God has sovereignly determined the place of the woman in the church, in the world and in her relation to the man. The principles of scripture as they apply to the latest trends of evil must be obeyed and upheld, whatever the cost. The exalted position that the Lord has given the woman is threatened as never before. She is an heir of the grace of life. The enemy is stranger to that favor of God. The enemy inherits everlasting flames. But in that grace of life, all Christian men and women are equal. Nothing can change that, war or no war. Then let us have no other rule but the Word of Christ.

NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

by Linda Kaiser

BIRTHS

Mr. & Mrs. Gary Bylsma — daughter, Amy Joy.
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Van Baren of South Holland — daughter, Kelly Ann.
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Van Baren of South Holland — son, Kyle Scott.
Mr. & Mrs. Phil Wiersma of South Holland — son, Philip.
Mr. & Mrs. Evert Van Maanen of Hull — son, Terry Allen.
Mr. & Mrs. David Abma of Pella — daughter, Bethanie Renae on May 1.
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Ezinga of Loveland — son, Richard Ray on May 3.
Mr. & Mrs. D. Kregel of Hope — daughter, Lisa Marie on May 13.
Mr. & Mrs. P. Baas of Hope — son, Andrew Philip on May 21.
Mr. & Mrs. Leon Uittenbogaard of Hull — son, Steven Todd on May 21.
Mr. & Mrs. D. Kuiper of Hope — daughter, Dawn Marie on May 22.
Mr. & Mrs. R. Ver Meer of Hope — son, David Alan on May 24.
Mr. & Mrs. Lewis De Jong of South Holland — daughter, Rachael Renae.
Mr. & Mrs. John Dykstra of South Holland — daughter, Brandyn Kaye.

Mr. & Mrs. Wesley Koops of Holland — daughter, Annise Elizabeth on June 24.
Mr. & Mrs. Russ Dykstra of Hull — son, Ryan Jon on June 30.
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Doezema, Jr. of First — son, Bruce Timothy on July 5.
Jon & Kristi Smith of Hope — daughter, Camey Sue on July 8.
Mr. & Mrs. Herm De Vries of Hope — son, John Herman on July 12.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Linda Vander Kolk of Holland on June 1.
Mark Allen Woudenberg of Houston on June 15.
Carla DeWald, Marcia Hanko, and Mike Lotterman of Hope on June 29.
Lynn Van Baren of South Holland on June 29.
Mr. & Mrs. Marion Cimo of Houston on March 1.
Tom Medema and Dan Zandstra of South Holland on April 27.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

The Young People of Redlands sponsored a Hymn Sing on March 16. The proceeds were for the 1980 Convention.
The Holland Young People's Society held a car wash at the Marathon Street on W. Main St. in Zeeland on May 3. Donations were for the Convention.
South Holland's Young People held a Pizza Party on May 14.
The Young People of Hull held a Request Program on May 25. The collection was used as patron money for the 1980 Convention.
The Federation Board sponsored a beach party on June 28 at Holland Beach.
A pre-convention singspiration was held at the Calvin College Fine Arts Center on July 13.
The Loveland Young People held a roller skating party on June 30.
The First Young People's Society went on a canoe trip on August 8-9.

MARRIAGES

Randy and Diana Meyer of First on May 24.
Steven Feenstra and Neva Doezema on June 10 in First.
Barbara Lynn Zandstra and Chester Edward Hunter, Jr. on June 13 in South Holland.
Dan Huizinga and Carol Kaptein on June 13 in Hudsonville.
Laurel Anne Mulder and Charles B. Reitsma on June 20 in First.
Pam Groeneweg and Lyle Kooiker on July 16 in First Christian Reformed Church of Rock Valley.
Robert Lenting and Linda Knoper on July 18 in South Holland.
Paul Scholten and Louise Prince on July 25 in North Holland.
Gladys Hoekstra and James Koole on August 1 in Hull.
Mary Pastoor and Rev. Carl Haak on August 12 in First.
Pam Offringa and Steve Straayer of Southeast on March 1.
David Griffioen and Phyllis Veltman in First Church on April 18.
Gretine Meelker and Tom Bodbyl in Highland Avenue Christian Reformed Church of Redlands on May 30.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Hope received Douglas John Vanden Berg's papers from Southeast.

Mrs. Gary (Karen) Vander Schaaf's papers were received from Plymouth Heights Christian Reformed Church.

First received Mrs. Chuck (Pamela) Booth from Cutlerville East Christian Reformed Church.

South Holland received Mr. Don Terpstra from Second Christian Reformed Church of Highland.

Faith received Mrs. Phyllis Griffioen from First; and Mr.'s Bill and Jim Karsemeyer from Redlands.

Hull received Mrs. Verna Westra from First Christian Reformed Church of Orange City.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

A retirement program and social hour was held for Rev. John Heys in Holland on May 30.