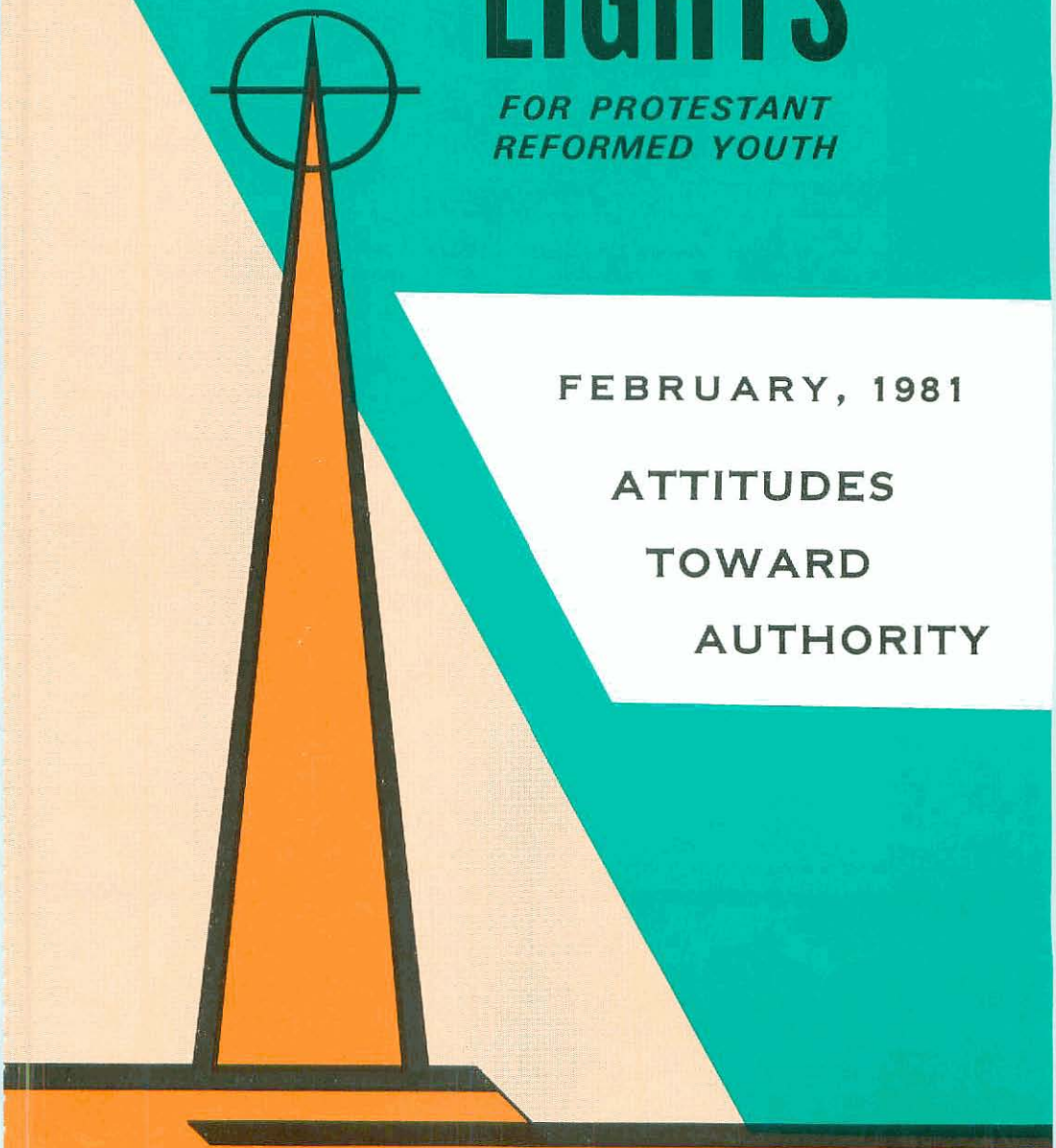
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



FEBRUARY, 1981

ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY

BEACON LIGHTS

VOLUME XL FEBRUARY, 1981 NUMBER 2

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

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P. O. Box 2289
Christchurch, New Zealand

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BEACON LIGHTS
4625 Juleon S.W., Grnad Rapids, MI 49504
Second Class Postage paid at
Jenison, Michigan (USPS 046-840)
Subscription Price $5.00

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Editorial

A Whatcanwedo Letter To My Grandchildren

by J. M. Faber

Am wondering if all of you read the November issue of the *Beacon Lights*. Try to remember back three months and ask yourself if you read the article by Rev. Engelsma on, "Remembering the Lord's Day". Or, did you read the first page and then glance ahead to realize that it was *so* long! And did you then say, I'll finish it some other time when I am not so busy?

I can remember in the olden times when the late Rev. Ophoff wrote in the *Standard Bearer*, and how, when he was delving into the dark recesses of the Old Testament, that his articles were so terribly long! My father was adamant in his rule in the family that all of us had to read all the English articles in our Church Paper. It is no secret that we young people did not like those long pieces at all. There were two very good reasons for their great length. The first was the Rev. Ophoff and Rev. Hoeksema were often the only two writers that had to keep the magazine full, they *had* to write so much. The second reason Rev. Ophoff's material was so long was that he never ran out of things he had to say about those Old Testament heroes of faith. But now that I am old, (so old that I can remember that postage on a letter was only three cents; and better yet, when one penny into a peanut machine gave me a handful of salted peanuts!) I go back to those long articles for Bible study for society lessons and for catechism lessons, I find that I could wish they were still longer.

Now lets go back to that November article. The writer told you that one way of remembering the Sabbath Day was to rest from our usual work and do something positive—engage in a special behavior—that of frequenting the House of God as often as there were services to attend.

"Well", you say, "I always go to church twice each Sunday. Besides, I go to catechism class, and have always gone to Sunday School until I got too old." Good, that's very good. That is truly "resting" on the Lord's Day.

"But", you say, "there are still so many hours left in our Sundays. Even after I have learned my catechism lesson, and have studied for society, there is still time left. Sunday afternoons are not yet all used up. And my folks are so strict they won't let me do *this* or do *that. What can we do?*"

If you are still asking that question it tells me that you did not read the entire article in November. The writer answered that question for you. Among other things, he said, "We can call on old folks languishing in Rest Homes or

institutions." There: finally I am coming to the point. That type of positive "resting" on the Lord's Day is the reason why I am writing this whatcanwedo letter. Let me tell you why this "resting" activity was brought to my mind.

Last Sunday I was urged to pay a visit to an elderly blind lady in the Holland Home on Fulton Street in Grand Rapids. She always was a very active lady in the church, and was an avid reader of the Bible, study material, and other religious papers. But, sad to say, she is now blind and cannot read anything any more. She feels so lost without her pleasurable pastime. Like Eli of old, her eyes have become dim through old age, and has to depend on kind friends for that pleasure. Very wistfully she said, "Oh, how I wish that some young boy or girl would read the Meditation in the *Standard Bearer* to me! I would enjoy that so very much." She said that it would be fine to her if such visitors would come in pairs to encourage one another. She clearly revealed to me her strong desire for that exercise of the communion of saints. She said, "You know that our Holland Home is always open for visitors who want to help others."

Probably you never thought that old people would like to have young people visit them. But, oh, they do. That same Sunday afternoon that blind lady did have two visitors while I was there. One was the lady's niece, and the other her grand-niece. The old lady, though she could not see the young girl, wanted her to sit on the edge of the bed so she could put her hand on the girl's knee, just to feel her presence.

The old enjoy your youthful exhuberance in a short visit. It reminds them of their own youth and brings back pleasant memories of the time when they were full of pep. You see when people are living in a rest home or retirement home they are surrounded by other old people. So it is like a ray of sunshine in a gloomy place when you youngsters come in to say hello. And I can tell you that the young girl who was with her mother paying a visit to her grand-aunt was really pleased when she saw the smile and heard the thanks for making that visit. So there were four people in that room that were happy. It reminds me of the motto, "To receive a gift is truly a pleasure, but isn't the giver receiving the treasure?"

As I am writing this letter the calendar tells me that it is the first of January when many people make New Year's resolutions. Have you made any? How about a new twist: make a February resolution. Like this: "I resolve to pay a visit to an elderly person and read to him or her if they so desire NEXT Sunday. And if I see that they enjoy it, I will try to do it oftener, and get some other young person to do so too." Maybe you will hear what I heard when the blind lady said to her young visitor, "Thank you, dear for coming with your mother. I enjoyed it so much!"

Finally that is what Jesus was talking about when he said, "In as much as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Look it up in Matthew 25 and see the context of Jesus' remark, How about it?

Love, Gramps

HOW DO YOU LOVE YOUR ENEMY?

by Pauline Hoekstra
Member of Hull P.R. Church

God's people are and were always surrounded by enemies; people who are servants of the devil and therefore who have one goal—"destroy God's people!" How easy it is for us to be filled with hatred toward these people. Yet God's command comes to us in Matthew 5:44 & 45a, "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven...."

In order to answer the question, "How do you love your enemy?", I would like to try to answer the question, "Why does God send us these enemies?" Surely God does not will for His elect to be destroyed by enemies, there must be some other reason.

God sends these enemies to try our faith. Through these trials, God's people are not made weak but strengthened more and more in their faith and love for God. God brings His people closer to Himself when they become weary and makes them realize their full dependence on Him.

When we withstand these trials of our enemies God will richly bless us as He says in Matthew 5:11 & 12, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." We truly benefit from these trials. God takes evil and turns it to our profit.

Considering then that these trials strengthen us, how must we love our enemies? We must be very careful. Loving your enemies cannot be partaking of their evil ways and actions along with them. That certainly would be falling into the enemy's trap. There is nothing the devil would wish for more, than to see God's people become friends of the world. The devil's will is strong! Put all your trust in God and flee from the enemy's wicked ways.

True love for your enemy is praising God that all things, both good and evil, are used for the well-being and salvation of His people. True love for your enemy is witnessing to them by your every day walk of life that we are children of the living God and that nothing, not even the trials and temptations of the enemy can separate us from that living God. True love for your enemy is also praying for them which persecute you, that if it be God's will they may see

their evil ways and turn from them.

(The enemy think that by tempting and persecuting God's people they will destroy them. But how wrong and ignorant they are! They are only digging their own graves and strengthening the elect)

Christ set an example for us when He showed that He loved His enemies while He hung on the accursed cross. He said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." What terrible agony Christ must have been suffering and yet He forgave His enemies!

"How do you love your enemy?" Do you love them for the trials they bring upon you and forgive them as Christ did? Or do you love their evil ways and partake of those ways with them? Partaking of their evil ways is certainly a temptation for us as young people today. Pray for God's guidance in these evil days. We cannot stand on our own. It is only with God's guiding hand that we will be able to love our enemies as He has commanded us.

(Let us remember that God's truth is everlasting but the paths of the enemy will be destroyed in a moment) Stand fast in the Lord and love your enemies—your reward shall be great!

SPIRITUAL NUTRITION

by Gord Schipper
Member of Southwest P.R. Church

In America recently, there has been a rising concern over what we as a country eat. Many schools have prohibited the sale of junk food before the noon lunch period. Doctors all over the country are warning us against the dangers of a poor diet. High cholesterol, sodium, and sugar in diets are associated with any number of diseases. These groups, however, are faced with a great problem, because they are attempting to change the American lifestyle. The prevalent lifestyle of overindulging in chips, softdrinks, hamburgers, pizza, and candybars has created the curious problem of people being overweight but undernourished. One can easily see that this is surely an important problem, but I would like to call your attention to a similar problem with much more significance.

Spiritual nutrition. What is it? We could say that it is the process whereby we take in spiritual nutrients and utilize them. What are these spiritual nutrients? Without question, the most basic nutrient is the Word of God. The inspired Scripture, in its fulness, surely comprises the nutrient by which all

others are judged. The Bible is supplemented, however, by various other nutrients. The preaching of the word is the principle means God has chosen to apply the words of Scripture to our hearts. Other sources are catechism, society, prayer, and others that are available to fill our spiritual needs.

With all these nutrients available to us, we should all be spiritually healthy persons. But sadly we must admit that we do not use these means as we ought. More importantly, I think we are in danger of moving even farther away from these sources that supply our spiritual life. We are tempted on all sides with spiritual junk food. We have only to look around us to see the results. Some of the modern Bible versions that "read like a newspaper" are popular today. Many churches advertise not preaching, but special speakers, singing groups, athletes, and movies. Prayer by many is carried out not with the Most High God in mind, but with someone on a level with our friendly next door neighbor. Catechetical instruction in many circles is simply passed by. In the name of Christian liberty, dancing is being encouraged, women are ordained as office bearers, and "Jesus rock" is set forth as a legitimate Christian expression.

While the above symptoms may not be characteristic of Protestant Reformed circles, we are not free from spiritual malnourishment. I sense among young people a lessened desire to seek after the things of the kingdom of heaven. We must remember that any nutrition is an active process. Its goal is growth and development. An arrest of spiritual nutrients results in the retardation of spiritual development. We will cease to grow spiritually. The dangers of a poor physical diet are well known, but how much more significant are the dangers of a poor spiritual diet! We will not have the strength to fight that spiritual battle against the old man of sin in us. A lessened spiritual development can lead to spiritual stagnation, and even to spiritual death.

As covenant young people in the Protestant Reformed Churches, we have available to us the richest diet in the world. But, are we interested? Are we attentive to matters in the church world? Do we understand our doctrine and can we defend it? For instance, do we know the place reprobation has in our theology? Can we discuss infra- and supralapsarianism? Do we appreciate the doctrine of the Covenant in all its richness? Are we actively engaged in becoming familiar with the Scriptures? Do we pray? Surely, we can use a lot of improvement.

We would think that a person who ignores his physical requirements is foolish. A much more serious matter is the ignoring of our spiritual needs. We have both the calling and the means to grow spiritually. We should never stagnate. Hebrews 5:13, 14 tells us "For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." We are called not to eat a children's diet, but to partake of those things that support an older actively growing spiritual life. In this day, we need more than ever, good spiritual health. Let us resolve by God's grace, to take advantage of the means we have to maintain our spiritual growth and development.

ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY

by Rev. G. Van Baren

Authority and its related truth: obedience, is a subject which has provoked much discussion through the ages, and continues to do so today. There is in our own day a growing resentment against authority. The underlying opinion is that none ought to be over others. There ought not be authority. Each, rather, has his "rights". We hear of the "rights" of women, the "rights" of children, the "rights" of citizens. Even members of the church tend to follow the leadership of the world in this. One sees, not only in the world but also in the church, growing disregard to authority. One might well examine himself with respect to his own position towards all in authority.

Authority is of God.

The Christian proceeds from that basic and Scriptural assumption that God is the Sovereign Authority. (Daniel 4:35, "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him: what doest Thou?") All authority finds its Source in God alone.

God has, further, been pleased to reveal this authority to moral, rational creatures. Also, it is His pleasure to show His authority by establishing in His creation relationships of authority. God is pleased to do this centrally in the sending of His only-begotten Son. Christ, in the way of suffering and death under God's wrath for His people, is exalted to the right hand of God. There, He exercises all authority over all things. (Phil. 2:9-11).

Authority now is shown through Christ Who gives it. He exercises dominion over all powers. He controls the very forces of creation. He directs all things that He may soon come again on the clouds of glory.

We commonly distinguish at least three distinct areas of authority among men. God created man with Adam as representative head (Romams 5:18). Adam was also created before his wife Eve, and as her head. The wife is called to submit (Ephesians 5:22). Children are likewise called to live in obedience to father not only, but also to mother (Ephesians 6:1).

There is a second realm of authority seen within the church. Under the direction of Christ, the church was established with elders to rule over her.

This rule was not such that elders can physically punish or restrain, but it is of a spiritual sort. They possess the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:19). With these keys, these open and close the kingdom. The members of the church are called to walk in obedience to those whom God has placed in authority (Hebrews 13:17).

Finally, there is that rule of government. God has appointed rulers and powers. These must be properly obeyed. Romans 13 makes this very plain.

Wrong attitudes towards authority.

We can properly recall that rebellion to authority began with the devil. Though the details are not given, Satan fell from his high estate when in pride he would elevate himself above God. This same sin he proposed to Eve and then to Adam through Eve. Our first parents need not listen to God. They could determine for themselves the good and evil. These needed not to rely on the rule or authority of God in this regard. Satan speaks boldly the lie, "Ye shall not surely die." Not only does he renounce all authority, but denies that there is any possibility of punishment from that Authority. From that first act of disobedience, all rebellion has originated.

But especially in our lifetimes, authority has been undermined. Perhaps part of this is the fruit of "democracy". We've heard repeatedly that government is "of the people, for the people, by the people." We have instilled into us that idea that the rulers govern because of the appointment of the governed. The majority appoints its own government. With this, there is the idea that there is the right even to displace the authority if it does not remain subject to the will of the majority. Revolution, under certain circumstances, is condoned. Whatever one might say about the form of government known as democracy, he must understand that the authority is ultimately of God—not of the majority.

Another cry often heard in our day is that of one's "rights". Without entering into details, I would point out that all too often these "rights" apparently are exercised in a manner that proper authority is denied. Children are said to have "rights" so that parents might not be allowed to train them religiously nor punish them. So it goes.

Commonly, too, there is the idea that authority can be ignored if we are convinced that we will not be caught. Children can disobey parents or teachers—provided they make sure they are not caught. Adults can break speeding laws, can violate the other laws of the land—provided they are not caught. How much have you observed such attitudes?

Spiritual attitudes towards authority.

First, children of God must recognize and confess that authority exists in harmony with the teachings of Scripture. We believe that authority is of God and that He requires submission to that authority. Where there is firm agreement on this point, there can be no doubt that we would also desire to obey properly instituted authority. If it is of God, if His Word says so, we must

obey.

Then we obey God Himself. God is the Sovereign Authority. In obeying those in authority we are obeying God. Scripture allows only one exception. Where one violates the law of God in obeying men in authority, he sins. We must obey God rather than men. Where does Scripture teach that?

But if we obey God rather than men, we are also likely to have to submit to the consequences. Often there is imprisonment and perhaps death. But the Christian rather suffers at the hands of wicked men, than to disobey the Authority of his God.

We are, then, to obey parents and teachers. We do so not because they are infallible. They are not. (What does the Heidelberg Catechism say about this in its treatment of the fifth commandment?) We obey them not because they are bigger than we are and therefore able to inflict punishment. We do not obey because otherwise we will be "grounded". But obedience follows from God's commandment.

In the way of obedience we also experience continued blessing and favor of God. Rebellion against authority has its sure consequences. Nations are destroyed. Homes are disrupted. Schooling becomes virtually impossible. Churches crumble. But where there is proper authority and obedience, there is seen the favor of God. Children—parent relationships flourish. Schooling almost becomes fun. A nation would prosper and be strong. We, children of God's covenant, are to remember the demands of God's Word. And we will, by grace, obey though all others walk in disobedience.

Discussion questions:

1. Children and young people often can find ways of mocking those in authority. How does this kind of action undermine proper authority?

2. We often speak of "peer pressure", i.e., young people want to gain the approval of fellow young people. Is it easier to rebel against proper authority when one is in a group of friends rather than when alone? If so, why?

3. How can Christian youth promote the spirit of proper respect to authority?

4. Some schools insist on proper respect shown in ways to which we are not accustomed. Students rise at the entrance of the teacher into the room and politely express greetings. Should this idea be promoted in our schools?

5. Do parents always insist on the exercise of their authority? Should they?

6. Cartoons often portray especially the President as a humorous, bumbling sort of person. Does this contribute toward lack of respect toward governmental authority?

7. You've heard, perhaps, of the expression, "My country, right or wrong." What must we say of such an attitude?

8. You've heard, too, of the expression, "Crime does not pay." Is it strictly true? Does not this statement present a wrong reason for being submissive to authority?

9. Can a true Christian deliberately walk in disobedience?

An Attempt of Man to Add Length Of Days On Earth: Organ Donation

by Miss B.B. Hoekstra
Member of Edgerton P.R. Church

For many years much research has been conducted to attempt to find ways to relieve and preserve many people from the physical miseries of health defects, and some of them from facing, from a human viewpoint, premature and imminent death. Most of the research is essentially the result of man's fear of death, his desire to put it off for a while, and finally, according to his own thinking, his hope that some day man will have control of life so that he will not have to think about death. Much of this research, then, is a result of a humanistic longing or drive to live long, and if possible, forever on Earth to give better assurance for man to plan his own ordered way in life and to carry it out. By faith we know and may be thankful that this is not possible.

This well-known trend in medical history also has an influence on how we think and what we do. It is appropriate that we set aside a little time to consider this trend, focusing on a particular phase that may affect us in our lives. The purpose of this article is an attempt to present some scriptural guide-lines to influence us in our thinking about donating body organs for the purpose of transplanting them into other persons. First, we will consider why man wishes to live for many days and years in the Earth. Then we will view what man has been doing in an attempt to preserve longer life in many individuals. Finally, in particular, we wish to consider how we should think about donating or appropriating our body organs for the purpose of transplanting them into other persons to attempt to extend longer life in them, thus helping to promote one of the modern methods used as an attempt to preserve longer life in certain individuals. The desire of man to live long in the Earth is not new and will continue. The attempt of man to transplant body organs into other persons is relatively new and may prove to be a passing fad, but only time will tell.

God did make man capable to live forever on the Earth. But Adam, the first man and representative head of the human race, forfeited his right to live forever on the Earth by his own willful disobedience and fall from perfection. In Adam, then, all men fell. As a result of his disobedience, fallen man had to begin to deal with his self-inflicted problem, namely death. He had been warned by God Himself, but he gave no heed. God had said, "...of the tree of

the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:17).'' Yes, man remembered and did know, it was death, and included therein, the many miseries that lead to death, including sickness, with which we deal in this particular article. But it is also after the fall that we received the promise of the coming of the second Adam, Christ, Who is now gathering up His chosen in His loving arms to carry them through the wrecks of time, and Who sent His Spirit to dwell in and among them, even to help us at this time, to help us to understand that though we should take an interest in promoting and preserving human life on Earth, we have no abiding and everlasting country or city on this Earth, but we have a promise, not only that He will restore something to us again, but a promise that He will give His chosen a better life in a better country and city hereafter, better than that which Adam even knew in Paradise before he fell.

Since the fall, then, the days and years of the earthly existence of man are limited. Some people never live to see the light of day. Methuselah lived to be 969 years old. The general pattern of the life span of an old man has tended to shorten, maintaining somewhat of a level preceding the days of the beloved Psalmist David. After the fall and before the flood, the ages of many men proximated a thousand years. After the flood the age of man was soon cut to a hundred years with the average tendency to lessen. In the days of the famous Psalmist, it is evident from Psalm 90:10 that seventy years was considered to be the expected age of an old person because David states that it is unusual strength that characterizes a person who lives to be four score years, and that additional days will usually be in much labor and sorrow.

But man often does not live for seventy years. Furthermore, man was created an earthly creature. His will and desire are for the things of this Earth. Also, he was created a creature of order. He wants order in his life and want to order it. He wants to make plans for the future. He wants to carry out his plans and do that in health and happiness. He does not want sickness and, humanly thinking, untimely death to stand in his way, at least not for a long time.

Man without the promise would want to live as long as possible. All his will and desire can only be for the Earth alone. He loves and desires his way of the Earth. He is little troubled and would prefer to keep it that way, forever, if possible. He always fears death. It troubles him. He, in almost every case, would want to put off his everlasting doom. Besides, there might be something of renown that he might be able to accomplish, if he only would have the time to perform it.

Man with the promise also desires to live long. He has his conscious inclinations in the place that he knows best. He is on this Earth and in a sense desires it too. But he is not of this Earth. This Earth is not his end or his goal. His deepest and greatest desire is in the land of promise, a better and permanent dwelling. Yet, while he is here he wants to tell his children about the promise and how to keep the way of the promise. He wants to discuss the promise in his home, with his neighbor, and among the brethren. He also feels a calling to perform many other tasks as well. He wishes for time to perform

them. And yet, he is much troubled with a lot of sorrow. Disease afflicts his body and sin troubles his soul. His body fears death, but his soul longs for deliverance. Death is the passage to that deliverance. His heart is on the promised land. Thus, he thrives in the realm of the covenant of grace.

In the realm of the covenant of grace there have been those who have desired long life. The Israelites portray an outstanding example. We find this out especially when they were about to leave their bondage of Egypt and were bound for freedom in Canaan, the promised land. First, long life was desired so Israel could get into the land of promise, which was to them a picture of heaven, the land of everlasting rest. They looked forward to a happy and restful life in a land where they could reap that which they did not sow, a land that would be flowing with milk and with honey, a land where their enemies would flee from before them, a land where peace and happiness would dominate, they thought. And then, long life was desired so Israel could live happily and restfully for many days and years in Canaan. It was a privilege for Caleb and Joshua to live long to get into Canaan, to be there for a while, and then to be delivered to their everlasting rest. For them long life was the reward for having obeyed the commandments of God and having witnessed and spoken by faith the truth.

We too desire this life and wish to live long and happily. We look forward to the remainder of the day, month, year, and even to the next. We all make plans for the future. Children look forward to growing up. Young people make plans for a career and marriage. Even the old make plans for tomorrow and maybe next year. Not only do we make these plans, but we also desire many days and years in happiness without the inconvenience of ill health to hinder us from carrying them out. Should we become ill, we want health restored so we can continue to carry out our plans. We must use the means available to improve or restore health, if possible. We must also have some plan of order in our lives, though we may not think that our plans are the final word on what will be carried out, nor may our final desire be this life. God also has His plan, complete and perfect, in our lives. His plan is above our plan.

Throughout the ages, man saw that life is not often happy and long. He thought that it appeared that his dream for happier and longer life would never be realized if he did not attempt to do something about it himself. Therefore, throughout the ages in appropriate times and places there were men who busied themselves in some laboratory to experiment on many things, groping about in frustration, driving themselves to find a way to repair the defective human body in an attempt to get control of the human body to promote longer life, at least to get more people to live to the age of seventy years, and if possible, if a reasonably healthy body can be maintained, to attain to a longer life. Among them, there was also the man without the promise hoping to find the possibility of an endless life on Earth without God.

For many years and in many places knowledge of most diseases together with their cures was rather narrowly limited. Many diseases were left undiagnosed. Some diseases were diagnosed by Grandma, a neighbor lady, a

medicine man, or an itinerant physician, almost alike. The so-called simple disease probably could be cured by eating a certain plant that would commonly be called a weed or by drinking the right water, whether it be sun or stone purified, or maybe mineral. Some of these remedies did suffice as cures. Every now and then we find out that Grandmother was right when she prescribed this or that remedy that many modern people would frown upon. Sometimes her remedies worked when the physician was proven to be mistaken. The so-called serious diseases which might involve a major or vital organ of the body were dreaded if realized because it was known that death would have to be impending and imminent.

Since the turn of the last century, many cures have been found for many diseases which were previously a great mystery and misery to man. But cures were not always effective and possible. Some people lived better with less blood, and some lived better or were cured with more of it. Some people lived better when diseased organs were removed. Some had diseased organs that required replacing. In some cases a part of a body could be replaced by rearranging the cells of a person's own body. In other cases replacements would require a vital organ from another body to restore partial or enjoyable health. This is to imply that a body organ replacement would never restore what can be called normal or optimal health which one could probably enjoy if it were possible to keep the original organ and restore it to health in one's own body.

In the last fifteen years or so, organ replacement by transplanting has become a major field for laboratory research. Tests, experiments, and trials in animals have been conducted, and in some cases, in persons as well, in the case that a person's life was considered to be nearly expired anyway, hoping that this could be the possible solution to restore partial health so that the person could then lead a relatively happy and productive life, with, hopefully, many years added to it. This has led to a small amount of success.

In order to have the appropriate organ for a particular transplant, there must be the donation or appropriation of such organs. Eyes, hearts, kidneys, and perhaps other organs as well, are sometimes used for this purpose. The organs of young people proximating twenty years of age are usually considered the best contributions. Then we must ask ourselves the important and pertinent question: May or should we donate or appropriate parts of our bodies for the use of experimentation and the implantation into other persons?

Before we answer this question, let us state a certain premise. As it was stated before, the purpose of our lives is not for the Earth alone. We must keep the way of the promises. We have been instructed in them and know them. We must love God above all else, and we must love our neighbor as ourselves. God has poured out of Himself to us. We are in our bodies. Our bodies, then, are the temples or dwelling of God, the Holy Spirit. We must love them, first because we love God, and then also, because we love the neighbor and ourselves. We must not love the neighbor more than ourselves, but as ourselves. That means that we allow the neighbor and ourselves as much

happiness as God will allow and also that we, the neighbor and ourselves, live as long as it is the will of God that we should live. This also means that we may not deliberately or unnecessarily harm, tamper, or interfere with the functioning of the body to cause infections or other diseases to set in and to invade or even to destroy the body. It also means that we may not interfere with the health and life of our own bodies for the love of another man, or to the respect of a fellow man in contrast to the love and respect of God above Who gave the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves.

If we should ever come face to face with the question, whether we should donate or appropriate an organ while we are still in the body, then we should ask ourselves the following questions:

1. May the risk of giving this organ seriously hurt me or shorten my life?
2. Am I deliberately promoting deficient functioning of my own body?
3. Am I by this act helping some other man to attempt to preserve the life of another at the expense of the one that God gave to me?
4. Is the possibility that the other person's body will reject my organ rather great, that the donation or appropriation be of no benefit to either person and probably detrimental to both?
5. Is my love for my neighbor greater than my love for God?
6. Is my love for my neighbor greater than my love for myself?
7. Do I have special respect or favor for persons who are considered to be superior in leading productive lives for the social and economic and political benefit of society over against those who are humanly considered to be less productive or advantageous for the general welfare of society and humanity?

The question is open for each saint to answer for himself before God in his own situation. If the answer to any of the questions above is yes, surely our answer before God and man must be no. It could only be pleasing to God if all the answers can be answered no. For, before God we must also answer these questions:

1. Do I sincerely believe it to be pleasing to God to do this?
2. Is it in the keeping of the commandments of God to love Him above all, and therefore, my neighbor and myself?

These questions also demand an answer, the answer of yes, with all the heart where the commandments are written. May our decisions in regard to this question be sanctified in Christ Who purchased everlasting life and happiness for us.

Perhaps it may usually be more acceptable to arrange donating or appropriating our organs at the time of our death if there are favorable conditions for this. Then we are finished with them and some of the above considerations do not enter in. But in the case that we are appropriating them, we still may not show respect of persons, but we may appropriate them to relatives and friends or the spiritual brotherhood in contrast to donating them to the general public. In the grave the body decays. In the resurrection we will be made new, not for this Earth, but fit for New Jerusalem in the new Earth

and Heaven.

However, it currently appears that artificial organs meet with better success in prolonging life than the organs of other persons do. If this should be proven to be true, the question of organ donations may become antiquated and forgotten.

In conclusion, our drive or fight for earthly life must be in the keeping of the commandments of God and must portray the principle of fighting sinful humanistic methods or characteristics or drives to show we are the chosen vessels to be made fit for everlasting life above in the New Jerusalem in the mansions beyond, where happiness will abound and life will not end. We are weak, but God is strong to help. Seek Him.

LOVERS OF PLEASURE

by Doug Boone

II Timothy 3:1-5

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: From such turn away."

After reading this, I was reminded of a remark I heard which stated that religion should not get in the way of having some fun and restrict us. Paul speaks very strongly here to such an opinion.

I was glad to think that such a view is not that of our people in the Protestant Reformed churches, but I thought I would look a little deeper. I remembered how we are often disappointed at the Protestant Reformed stand on movies. Movies look very interesting, entertaining, and we could even say intellectual, but we are forbidden to watch them. Television is even thought badly of, but fortunately most of us have at least two. Rock music is constantly attacked but we have our stereos, records, and tapes. Dancing looks like fun, and is "the way" to pick up girls at the bars, but we are not allowed to go. We are turned down from jobs because we can't work Sundays, even if it were only once a month. Dating has all its do's and don'ts and we sure seem to hear enough about that.

It seems that every time we want to have some fun our Protestant Reformed rules are always holding us back. It isn't so much our respect for our faith, as the fear of punishment that keeps us in line. We certainly would not say that religion ought not interfere with our fun, but it looks like we live that way. Our faith seems to keep getting in our way. But which do we follow? After all, what are a few movies, T.V., and some bars? We don't steal and are not on drugs. We don't do anything that bad. Let's look at the positive points. We go to our Christian schools, even if we think they take all that religious stuff and Christian discipline a little too seriously. We go to society and sleep, or sometimes discuss the material. Of course we don't prepare for society, but nobody does. We go to church twice every Sunday, even if it is a little long and sometimes boring. Take last Sunday for instance, the sermon was about...oh, well, it was boring anyhow.

We say it is important to have all our doctrines and are proud to boast about them. We say we work hard to follow our church laws and seem to keep our doctrines clean by dusting and polishing them as trophies. But then again the Pharisees were proud of their law-keeping too.

We can only ask and answer for ourselves. Are we lovers of pleasure and that which we want for ourselves? Or are we truly lovers of God who not only know His ways but strive to walk in them?

1981 SINGSPIRATION SCHEDULE

February 15	Hope
April 19	Hudsonville
May 17	Faith
Summer	Pre-convention
September 20	Hope
November 22	Faith
December 20	Hudsonville

Copies of *Leaving Father and Mother* by Rev. Cornelius Hanko are still available. Send orders to Grace Faber

4190 Burton S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Enclose $1.50 check or money order.

CREATIVE WRITING

(Continued)

The following poems are a continuation of the poems by Covenant Chr. High students for their *Interim*.

Poets react to the conditions of their environment. We Christians say that we respond to God and His works. A walk through a wooded land on a frosty day provided motivation for many of the following poems.

Morning in a Meadow - Amy Huisken

The creek in the meadow rushed rapidly past me
As I stood there, surrounded by sweet spring sounds.
The cheerily chirping and chatting birds made me want to sing
While the crickets coarsely croaked in time with their music.
The whispering weeds and rushes gossiped in the wind,
Speaking of nature's beauty.
The bright, burning sun shone high in the sky;
Everywhere I looked there was movement.
The grass was swaying slowly, trying to lull me to sleep;
Rocks and pebbles glistened as the clear creek water spilled
and sparkled over them;
Bees bustled around the daises, looking for food.
The morning dew danced on every blade of grass,
And spring came into my heart.

The Wind Whispers - Linda Pastoor

I can see the beauty of winter.
It surrounds me.
The mass of lacy particles glint
Like a golden pond
Or silver sea.
The air, so blue and crisp
Coldly bites my nose and cheeks.
"I'm not cruel," the wind whispers
"But this majesty can't exist
without my icy breath."

A Winter-Wonder Land - Jill Dykstra

The sun shone brightly through the trees
Catching the diamond glint in the snow.
My breath hung vaporized in the air;
A squirrel scurried across the path.

The snow hung on the bare tree limbs
Making each a different character,
From the big, tall, smiling tree
To the small, skinny tree, barely surviving.

I looked around and saw the wonderful nature
That God had so long ago created.
I saw the snowflakes fall to the ground
So many, yet no two alike.

I wondered why, in this busy, uncaring world
People don't take some time
To look around at all the wonderful creation
And see the glory of God.

Winter - Kristi Peters

Summer's glow is gone
Autumn fantasies have fled
A cold chill reaches out
To touch each corner of the world.
The trees and ground are bare
Frozen by the icy wind.
The sky, no longer blue,
Is filled with angry clouds,
Ready to relinguish their worst
On the weaponless world below.
But, instead of roaring thunder
And streaks of lightening in the sky,
Small white flakes of snow
Fall gently from the stormy clouds.
The snow comes softly, quietly,
Landing on the leafless branches,
Covering up the lifeless ground,
And spreading a beautiful blanket of white
Over a sleeping town.

Winter Trees
- Carol Mol

The trees
standing stately
in a park
bear snow covered
branches.
Their bark is
a deep ebony
from the dampness
of the snow.
They point
their heads
toward the crystal
clear blue sky.
I watch them;
they are
beautiful and
strong,
but some day
they
will
fall.

Food for Life - Carol Mol

A sleek black cat
sat on a stump
spying on a helpless mouse
and waiting to jump.

The cat crouched low
and took one big leap
onto the poor mouse
and put him to sleep.

Licking his chops,
the cat scurried away
feeling very satisfied
with his food for the day.

A Winter Day - Jill Dykstra

On that cold, wintry, blustry day
I sat with the wind reddening my nose and cheeks
And watched a group of children,
Dressed in brilliant colors,
Playing in the snow.

They were running, racing, and laughing,
Having the kind of fun that only children know.
But one by one the group got smaller
As each one left for home.

Finally stood one lone child
With sorrow in his eyes.
What good was the snow
If you have no one to share it with?
He turned away, and slowly trudged on home.
But there was no need for sorrow, for tomorrow was another day.

The Tree Stump
- Pat Schut

In the middle of the field
Solitary, alone
Waiting for nothing
Sits an old tree stump.

What once proudly upheld a beautiful tree
Is now nothing--
Desolate, weather-beaten
Rejected by those who took away its life.

Lonely and forgotten
It remains forever,
Warming itself with the dim memory
Of its first life.

A Solo Flight - Laurie Kuiper

The wind howled and snow blew
Fiercely upon a little forest.
The night was a haunting black
And the lazy moon shed no light.

The old, wrinkled trees of birch and oak,
Finally released their brown autumn leaves
That clinged so tightly to the branch
And cast them shivering upon the ground.

The cold cut through like a sharp silver knife;
The animals fled to escape the bitter wind
Leaving only a faintly pressed track in the snow.
Everything lay frozen and bare.

The sky was now calmly blue
And the trees stately still.
The sun danced on the crystals of snow,
As a lonely sparrow ventured into the world.

He graced high in the windless air;
A fresh, crisp feeling splashed through his feathers.
The little bird swooped down to land
On a swaying, thin, pine tree.

His eyes roamed and wandered
Over his home now frozen and stiff.
The treetops looked like hazy mountains
From where this brown sparrow sat.

The bird shivered as he looked upon
The barren trees scaled with snow;
And upon the cold, deserted land,
Which now showed no sign of life.

But the sun shone just then (on his small back)
Casting shadows of light upon his forest friend--
And then the sparrow broke out in singing
Of the hope and happiness that a new day will bring.

Summer's Longing
- Linda Pastoor

See outside!
The sun is shining;
Feel the heat
On your back.
I want to go out
there, where
the children play
In the spray
Of the hydrant.
And touch the ticklish smell
Of fresh-cut grass
As I pass
the Mothers,
Iced coffee sipping
While sitting
On their porches,
Catching the breeze
That eases
The heat of summer,
As I had once enjoyed.
But now,
These tired old legs
And walker
Confine me.

That the Lord establishes His covenant with believers and their seed in the line of continued generations, and that therefore the little children of believers, as well as the adults, are comprehended in the covenant and Church of God and ought to receive the sign of the Covenant; that, moreover, this sign of the Covenant under the Old Testament was circumcision, but that this sign has been replaced in the new dispensation by that of holy baptism,—all this is confessed by the Reformed churches and constitutes one of the fundamentals of the Reformed faith.

Believers and Their Seed Chapter 7, p. 84.

NEWS from, for and about our churches

by Linda Zandstra

BIRTHS

—Mr. & Mrs. Dan Schimmel of Southeast: daughter, Amy Ruth.
—Mr. & Mrs. John Van Dyke of Hope: son, John Philip.
—Mr. & Mrs. William Lenting of South Holland: daughter, Melissa Jean.
—Mr. & Mrs. Duane Alsum of Southwest: daughter, Eryn Joy, on Oct. 24.
—Mr. & Mrs. Howard Pastoor, Jr., of First: daughter, Rachel Anne, on Nov. 9.
—Mr. & Mrs. Dale Bartelds of Southwest: son, Stephen Dale, on Nov. 10.
—Mr. & Mrs. R. Kooienga of First: son, Joel David, on Nov. 18.
—Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Bleyenburg of Edgerton: son, Kyle Lee, on Nov. 21.
—Mr. & Mrs. Barry Gritters of Hope: son, Curtis Evan, on Nov. 21.
—Mr. & Mrs. C. Kuiper of Hope: son, Kevin Ross, on Nov. 24.
—Mr. & Mrs. Alan Karsemeyer: girl and boy, Ronda Sue and Kirk Alan, on Dec. 23.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

—Carol De Vries, Thomas and Sharon Faber, Eric Gleason, Jerry Koop and Beth Vanden Berg in Southeast.
—Francine Overmire in Southwest on Sept. 21.
—Steve Groenendyke, Linda De Kraker, Carla De Vries, and Lindy Schipper in Southwest on Oct. 5.
—Carlyle Dale Miersma in Pella on Nov. 30.
—Darlene and Sandra Brunsting in Hull on Nov. 30.

MARRIAGES

—Dave Van Baren and Nancy Van Dyke in Hudsonville on Oct. 3.
—Jay Kuiper and Jone Teitsma in Southeast on Oct. 12.
—Randy Looyenga and Lindy Schipper in Hope on Oct. 17.
—Gary Boverhof and Deb Elzinga in Holland on Oct. 17.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

—First received Mr. Bern Zandstra from Hope.
—Southeast received Mr. & Mrs. Jack Feenstra and three baptized children from First; Mrs. Mary Haak from First; Mrs. Henrietta Kamminga from Southwest and her baptized daughter Beth from the Orthodox Reformed Church; and Clarice Newhof from First.

—Southwest received Mrs. Nancy Feenstra from First; Mr. & Mrs. Mark Hoeksema and three baptized children from First; Francine Overmire from Holy Name of Jesus Church; and Mrs. Deb Boverhof from Holland.
—Hope received Mr. John Van Baren from Hudsonville.
—Loveland received Mr. & Mrs. Doug De Boer from First.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES
—A singspiration was held in Loveland on Nov. 16 for the 1981 Convention.
—A Mass Meeting for Thanksgiving was held in Faith on Nov. 23.
—On Nov. 23 a Thanksgiving Singspiration was held in Hope.
—First Young People sponsored a breakfast on Nov. 29 for the 1981 Convention.
—A rollerskating party was held on Dec. 17 at Woodland Sports Center sponsored by First's Young People.

OTHER ACTIVITIES
—Lau Chin Kwee showed pictures of Singapore on Nov. 14 in Southeast.
—Holland Choral Society had a program on Nov. 16.
—Faith Choral Society gave a program on Dec. 7.

Bulletins and worthwhile news items should be sent to:
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Grand Rapids, Michigan 49509

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1392 SU-LEW DRIVE, S.W.
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