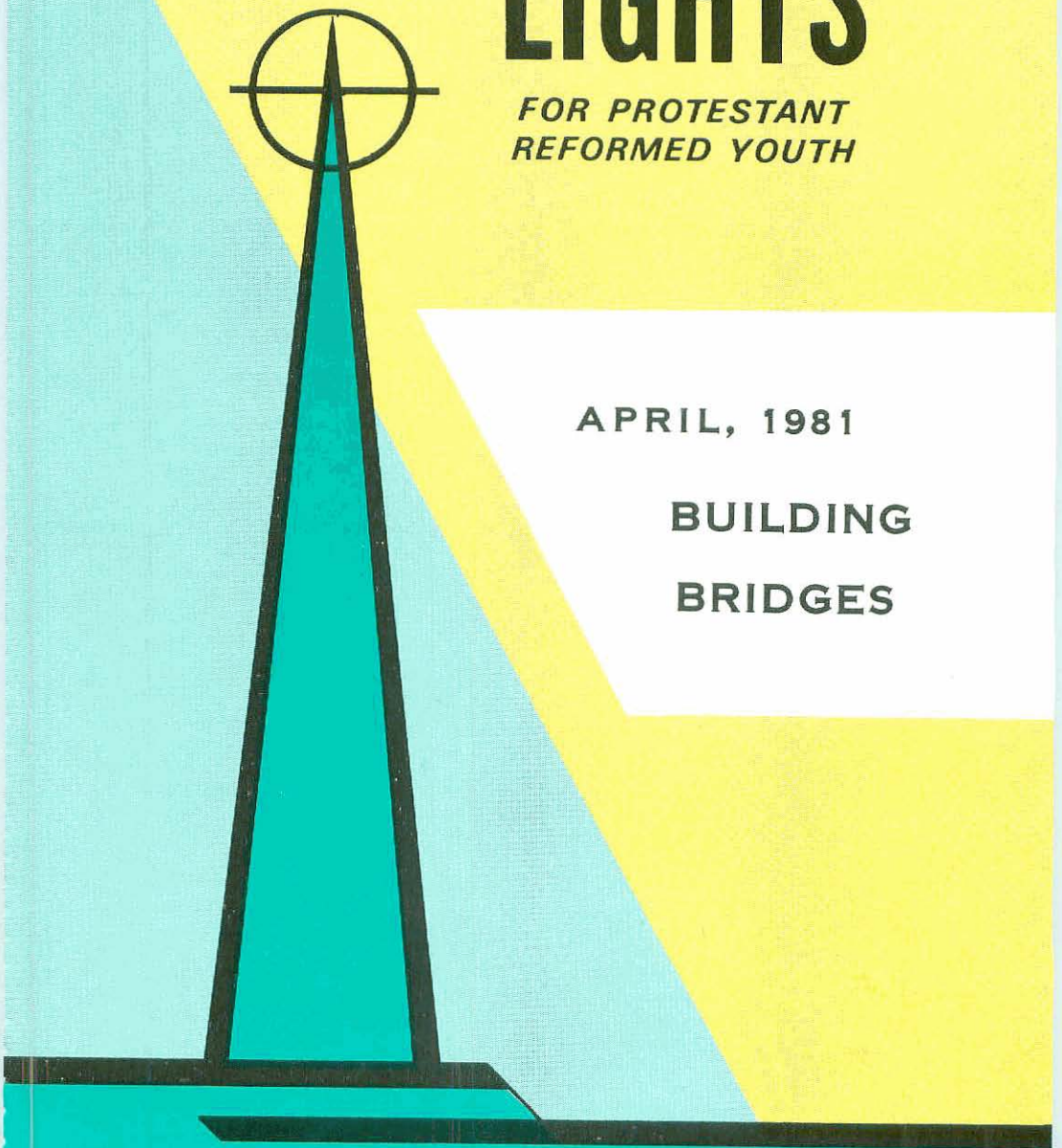
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



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BUILDING BRIDGES

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Editorial

Proverbs for Young Pilgrims: THE GOLDEN RULE

by Ed Lotterman

Young Pilgrim, when we walk as strangers in the world, we observe how the ungodly violate the Golden Rule. There is among the nations in this place, an extreme amount of pride, covetousness and greed. There are various contributing factors involved in this evil which is so widespread. Materialism, for one, has made the worldly to feel independent to the extent that they are not even dependent upon their Creator. They, in fact and in deed, deny Him Who gave them their very existence. Even now, for example, with the present recessed economic situation, there is a mad scramble to "get something for nothing". Lack of production of material goods coupled with unemployment drives this greedy, covetous society to demand from the government dollars which are not earned. As they make a wild dash toward the head of the line when the handouts are given, they care not upon whom they trample, and meanwhile find anyone other than "self" to blame for all of life's troubles and so the "me first syndrome" develops.

Because we are pilgrims and strangers, we rapidly identify this evil which is so common among the natives. On occasion, we observe pilgrims in pursuit of the same evil, and one wonders if the natives do indeed recognize us as strangers who are merely passing through the land.

Young Pilgrims, beware! The evil of violating the Golden Rule manifests itself in many ways. Even among us we find the giving less of ourselves, and the demanding more of others.

The Golden Rule as it is commonly stated is, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Scripture presents the Golden Rule to us in Proverbs 24:29, "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work."

Now, of course we are dealing here with the second table of the Law, and Jesus teaches us, Matthew 22:39, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

In this and in a succeeding editorial, we will attempt to discover how the Golden Rule and the second table of the Law relate to our lives.

First of all, we are called to honor those in authority. The apostle Paul develops the concept of authority in Romans 13. (Please read that passage now) In a brief statement what Paul has to say here is that those who have authority over us are given that authority by God to be used in His service.

We often set ourselves up to be judges over authorities. We refuse to do what is required of us and put forth great effort to find valid reasons for rebelling. When we reason that "the cause is right" (as we lie to ourselves) "valid reasons" pop out all over the place. Some reasons for rebellion have been with us for so long and are now so commonly accepted that we do not even think about what we are doing.

Young Pilgrim do you need examples?

"I don't know why the stupid speed limit has to be 35 mph anyway." The point is that the limit has been set by the authorities. The limit must be obeyed. We may not judge the limit to be a minimum speed. Neither may we judge the limit to be "stupid". We must simply unquestioningly obey!

"It isn't fair. What right does he have. . . ?" This is an example of an all too familiar cry which is promoted by the natives and adopted by the pilgrims. It is the result of an attempt to make all people equal even to the extent of destroying authority. What is "fair"? What is "right"? Think about that for a while, young pilgrim! Remember that serpent in the garden? He tempted by saying, "And ye shall be as gods." (Genesis 3:5) And man readily agrees, saying in effect: "What right does God have to be God alone?"

And although it is true that this objection "What right does he have?" could be used in a proper way perhaps, it is only because of a third example of common rebellion. And that would be the usurping of authority.

There is one final item I wish to mention. This concerns our relationship with our parents. "The old man ain't never listened to me! He don't know what he's talking about!" I hear this type of thing now and again. I wish each of you would consider the proper response to parental authority. In light of our proverb and the Golden Rule, could the proper response be: "listen to your parents as you would have them listen to you"?

FUTURE PROTESTANT REFORMED TEACHERS AND MINISTERS

The Scholarship Fund Committee is offering scholarships for the 1981-1982 school year. An essay of 300 words written on the topic, "My responsibility and calling to redeem the time as a prospective teacher or minister", is required along with a record of high school and/or college grades, and a recommendation from your consistory. If you are interested in an application contact:

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THE EFFECTS OF PARENTS ATTITUDES ON THEIR CHILDREN

by Rev. Wayne Bekkering

Would you please take time to answer the following questions?
What make of car or truck do you think is best?
What is your opinion on teen age drinking?
Do you prefer urban or rural living?
Does the janitor of your church do a good job?
What political party do you think is best?
Do you plan to go to college after high school or find a job?
What is your opinion of the sports program of your school?
Which church denomination do you think is best?
Which college if any do you plan to attend?
How much of the money that you earn do you put in church collections?
Do you think that the principal of your school is a wise and competent man?
Which brand of snowmobile is best?
Which career do you plan to pursue?
Is your minister a good preacher?
Do you prefer a large family or a small family?
Do you presently smoke or do you plan to smoke?
Should the use of marijuana be legalized?
Do you prefer outdoor or indoor employment?
What is your opinion of vocational education?
How old do you think a person ought to be before he or she makes profession of faith?
Do you believe that President Reagan is going to be able to help America?
Do you think that the tuition in your school is too high?
Do you think that your congregation ought to build a new church or a new parsonage?
Do you think that women ought to be drafted?

* * * * * * * * * *

As you answered these questions what factors affected your choices, preferences and convictions? How do you think your parents would answer all these questions for themselves? Perhaps you could give the answers that you think they would give and then just for fun ask them to answer all the questions

for you. How many of your answers reflect your parents' attitudes in these areas? How many times did you find yourself in disagreement with your parents? How many times in agreement?

If you are honest with yourself, I believe that you will have to admit that the attitudes of your parents affect you quite a bit. In fact, if you reflect on this matter I believe that you will see that your parents' attitudes exert a tremendous influence on your choices and life style.

As young people we like to be as independent from our parents as possible, but we also see that what we think and do in large part reflects the attitudes of our parents.

So what?! Does that make everything that our parents think and do right? Is there no room for us to make decisions on certain matters? Answer this question please! Are you as young people able to appreciate the tremendous influence for good that the attitudes of your parents can have on you? Are you thankful to God for Godly parents with godly attitudes? Do you appreciate the sacrifice that they make for your Christian education? Are you able to see that their Godly concern for you guides you in your thinking and your actions? Young people, please do not underestimate the effect that your parents' attitudes have on you!

Again we ask: Does that make everything that our parents think and do right? Certainly not! We recognize that our parents are wrong in many things that they think, say and do. We see that they have wrong attitudes on many things. Should we despise them for that? Should we come to the conclusion that they are unworthy to be our parents?

What does God require in the fifth commandment? The answer: That I show all honor, love and fidelity, to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; and also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand. (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 39).

If our parents have wrong attitudes does that give us the right to have the same attitudes? Sometimes we would like to think so, but God by His Holy Spirit testifies within each one of us what is right and pleasing to Him. Proverbs 20:11 says that, Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right. God holds us personally responsible for all that we do, think and say.

As young people we like to show that we are becoming mature. Spiritual maturity is spiritual responsibility. Spiritual immaturity is to reason that since my parents do wrong, therefore I may do wrong. Spiritual immaturity is to say that everybody is doing it, therefore I can do it. Spiritual maturity is forming proper and Godly attitudes to the questions that we face in life (and the questions above).

Where do we get help in forming proper attitudes? God's Word, of course, but do not forget the tremendous effect that the attitudes of our parents have on us. Thank God for Godly parents with godly attitudes!

THE HAZZARD OF DUKES

by Mr. Bill Joostens

Mr. Joostens teaches in the Northeast Iowa Protestant Reformed School, Doon, Iowa. This article was first printed in their school magazine.

Today is a rather usual day, the children are outside playing in the snow and romping about. Many of the usual noises are to be heard—yelling, screaming and other sounds of jubilation-a joy just to be able to be alive and free in play. But wait, a late luncher is speaking to another of his kind in the hall as they get ready to join the jubilant horde outside; my ear just happens to pick up some of the conversation as the two immerse themselves in their winter garb, some argumentation it seems! Oh yes, I can hear it clearer now. The talk of one to the other becomes somewhat more heated and as the two begin to exit through the rear door, the word "dipstick" is suddenly used in a not too kosher fashion. It seems to me that I have heard this before, somewhere. But where? It is suddenly clear to me now, I have heard it as part of the lingo used on a popular television program. Yes, on that horrid beast—the television. The tentacles of the beast are far reaching; they are long and slender, nearly impossible to see till it is almost too late. Long stealthily waving appendages with inherent suction (or is it seduction?), so one in its grasp can hardly wriggle free.

In spite of the threat, it seems we allow ourselves to be allured into its grasp. This yet is not the most serious, but it is that children are being taken hold upon by this beast. The looming disaster is just over the horizon....the question seems to echo in from a distance....What disaster?

Have the tentacles of the beast also clenched upon us that we should be unaware of the impending threat? What is that monster doing with our children, the covenant seed? The answer is simple... It is teaching them. Its ideals are appealing to the human nature—defy authority, treat it with disdain, show its stupidity...justice in the end in unjust...do your own thing, have your own space, follow your sinful desires...worship money, cherish the things of the earth, give vent to the pride of life and the lusts of the flesh...be reckless because this earthly vessel is not the temple of the Lord, squander the things God has given...need we continue?

It is easy to see that all of these things for the conscientious should not be appealing but appalling. Should we allow the world to have its foot in our door, not the door of our home but the door of our hearts? Will we approach the fire so nearly as to become burned or will we flee away from it? Will we immerse our children in the teaching of evil or teach them of the evils and to seek the right. Our duty-bound course is plain. May we pray for strength and wisdom to tread in the ways of the Lord.

QUESTIONS FOR A MISSIONARY

Rev. Ron Van Overloop is missionary pastor of the Protestant Reformed Churches' Birmingham, Alabama, Mission. The following questions were prepared and given to him by the editor in the hope that his answers to them would be informative to our readers. Often questions such as these arise and sometimes go unanswered or are answered inadequately. We think that you will find his responses to them of interest.

by Rev. R. Van Overloop

Q. You have been a missionary pastor for almost two years. You have also spent time in New Zealand. Is there a growing interest in the historic Reformed faith?

A. This is not an easy question to answer. At times, it does seem that there is more interest in that faith we hold so dear. I pray that this will be so. However, I am inclined to think that not the interest itself has increased as much as our knowledge in general of other churches around the world has increased. Within the last ten years, our churches have had an increasing amount of contact with others who have expressed themselves as being Reformed. Just think of Singapore, New Zealand, Australia as examples of this increased contact. This broader contact has shown us that there are other pockets of interest in the historic Reformed faith.

Q. What need do you see the Protestant Reformed Churches filling in the church world today?

A. It is without doubt that as churches we do have a role in the Reformed church world. But it is almost impossible for anyone to fix that role for every situation. What I have in mind is this. The relationship which the hand has to the eye is different from the relationship it has to the foot. To define specifically the role our churches can fill in any given contact is determined by the one with whom we have that contact. Generally, there are some principles which I believe must lie behind the idea of our role. First, it is not only that we can help, but that we also can be helped by other parts of the Body of Christ. Secondly, this contact must be only on the basis of doctrinal unity. And thirdly, this contact need not be of a strict formal nature, but can and often is an informal contact which any individual has with people of other Reformed churches.

Q. Do you think that mission work interferes with our established congregations? i.e., is it right that an established congregation with many families be vacant while our missionaries work with only a few people?

A. This too is not an easy question to answer because it is an emotional one. My heart truly bleeds for a vacant congregation and the struggles it has being without a pastor. In answering the question, there are some factors which we must consider. First, the Lord commands us to do mission work (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16). This is not a matter of choice or convenience. We MUST do it. And we must do it regardless of the numbers involved overagainst a pastorless congregation. Secondly, I personally find that often mission fields are evaluated only on the basis of the number who are in attendance at the worship services. This, in my opinion, should not be the only factor in evaluating. A much broader witness is usually being given than is evidenced by a Sunday's attendance. Simply stated, when it comes down to it, it is not a question of what is fair or nice, but a question of the will of God.

Q. When you preach and teach among those outside the sphere of Reformed thinking, what reaction do you get most often from them?

A. I have found that generally speaking the first thing necessary is to explain what "Reformed" means. This just is not well known, especially in the south. I have found it best to point out that our historical connection is with the great Reformation of the 16th century under Luther and Calvin. We are able to point out that our name indicates our relationship to the Protestant Reformation. Next, I have found it best to speak of the sinfulness of man under the ideas of the bondage of the will and then of justification by faith alone in Jesus Christ the only Savior.

The reaction then is varied, as varied as personalities. But generally the reactions fall into the categories of rejection and interest.

Q. What reaction do you receive from those of Calvinistic background?

A. First, you must understand that the number of those that I meet who are of Calvinistic background is not very large. I have found that most of the clergy who are Calvinistic do have a little knowledge of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Generally their conception of us is that we are like the proverbial ostrich with its head in the sand.

Q. Do you think there is enough enthusiasm for missions in the Protestant Reformed Churches?

A. Among many I have seen a desire for the extension of our churches, not out of the motivation of the flesh for growth and numbers, but out of the motive of the extension of the truth and the gathering of the Body of Christ. There is

generally a consciousness of the command of Christ to do mission work and the desire to be obedient to this command.

At the same time I sense among some a fear of missions; that somehow it will lead us into heresy and that we will lose our distinctiveness. Our history prior to 1953 feeds this fear. I can understand this, but am saddened at the same time. We must see that it is possible to be zealous for the extension of God's kingdom in missions without any fear of doctrinal errors creeping into our midst. That other denominations have fallen from doctrinal purity through missions should caution us, but never give us reason to deter from or even hesitate to perform this calling and to perform it with zeal.

Q. How can we increase our enthusiasm as a denomination?

A. If enthusiasm and zeal for anything must be increased, it seems to me that the proper way to do that is to increase the knowledge of that thing.

There is no better way to increase zeal for missions than to study the passages of Scripture which deal with evangelism and missions. I think it is especially important to learn what the Scriptures teach on the proper motive for this work. Then, as with everything spiritual, there must be the prayer for the continued blessing of a sustained proper motivation.

Also, enthusiasm comes from knowing more about the work itself. Often, it seems, the general conception of mission work is rather simplistic. Some would think it to be merely preaching in our established congregations, believing that if anyone is interested they will come and join them. Others think that all that it consists of is setting up preaching services and advertising them in the local newspaper. Much, much, much more work is involved both in the work and in the evaluation of the work. It strikes me that we must gain more intimate knowledge of the nature of the work as well as possessing the proper motivation.

Q. Do you think working alone as a missionary limits mission activity in a given place in light of the fact that the apostle Paul was accompanied in his mission work?

A. It is almost impossible for me to pass final judgment on this question. I do not know what it is to work with another for a period of time in a field. However, there have been times when I have thought it would be good to find out what it is like to work with another. I can conceive of more reasons for Christ sending out His disciples two by two than the amount of work. In fact, I do not believe that the amount of work is the major reason for Christ sending them out two by two. I am thinking of the real, but rather intangible benefits of constant encouragement, of confidence that someone is near to help, and of the fact that the work would be expedited because of a constant conferring one with another. A pastor in an established congregation always has his elders with whom he can do this. I certainly know the encouragement of Rev.

Engelsma along with the South Holland Council and of the Mission Committee, but I wonder if that can compare with the daily presence of a fellow-missionary. This subject is worthy of further consideration some time.

Q. Is the establishment of a congregation the primary purpose in the work of missions?

A. It is true that the establishment of a congregation is definitely a final result or goal in the work of missions. However, there is much more involved. Missions is the giving of a witness of the praises of God in the way of the preaching of His Word. We pray that the Lord will bless the work so that a permanent witness may be established. Also we must be conscious of the fact that there is much blessing and benefit which the Lord gives to our mission work which does not have to do with the establishment of a local Protestant Reformed congregation. The seeds sown often yield positive fruit among those children of God who are ministers or members of other churches. For example, through the distribution of literature, the truth is spread. It seems to me that this too must play a role when one considers the purpose of the work of missions. Closely related to this is the purpose of bringing lost souls to the knowledge of God in Christ.

Q. What time table, if any, do missionaries set as to whether your work is bearing fruit?

A. I have not been in the work of missions long enough to be able to say much about a time table. However, I have found that there is a general lack of patience in our mission work. If the group which gathers for worship services does not grow to sufficient size (whatever that is) within a few years, then the work is a failure and should cease. We must remember that it takes a long time to develop an orchard before any fruit is seen. I certainly am not in a position to say just how long the work must take, but in general, I would urge more patience. At the same time, we must evaluate each field on its own merits and according to its own unique situation. It is impossible to set time tables which will apply to every mission field.

Interestingly, I came across the following quote from a Presbyterian missionary who long labored in China at the turn of the century. With regard to that field (not unlike the situation in Jamaica) he said, "It will be early fifty years hence to determine with positive certainty what any individual life has or has not accomplished." (J. L. Nevius, *Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, p. 83)

I have attempted to answer the questions as best I can. If you or the readers have any questions or comments, I would be interested in trying to answer them as well. Thank you for this opportunity.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ROCK?

Terri Garvelink is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Walker, Michigan. She has studied music at Grand Valley State College for two years; she has been a piano teacher for fourteen year; and she has been a church organist for seven years. She begins a series of articles in this issue of Beacon Lights *which will deal with rock music and what it really is.*

by Terri Garvelink
member of Hope Prot. Ref. Church

"Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." (I John 2:18). We as Christians cannot help but stand aghast at the culmination of evil we are witnessing in the last several decades. We are living in an age when anything goes: abortion, sexual "freedom", homosexuality and other perversions, pornography, profane and obscene language, drug abuse; the age of a "new" morality—if it feels good, do it; the age of the breakdown of the family and the highest divorce rate ever, when women must do their own thing rather than fulfill the God-given calling of wife and mother in the home; the age of an ever-madder pursuit of "things" to have and to do;; the age of ever-increasing self-indulgence. Surely this is Satan's golden age.

But you and I are kidding ourselves if we think that all this evil is only "out there—in the world." More than ever before, Satan has many and effective means to expose the Christian to all the anti-christian forces of evil. Think of TV, radio, and the printed page, for instance. There is one means of communication in particular which may well be the devil's most powerful and effective weapon in the spiritual weakening of Christian young people: the popular music of our day.

In the last three decades, popular music has undergone a tremendous change. Prior to the 1950's, there were basically three distinct areas of popular music: rhythm 'n blues, pop, and country. But in the fifties, rock'n roll was born and, by taking on elements from all these musical types, caused a breakdown of the barriers between them. Rock'n roll represented the amalgamation or coming together of black (rhythm 'n blues) and white (pop and country) popular music. This unholy union produced a string of equally unholy offspring: rock-a-billy, hard rock, soft rock, acid rock, folk rock, country rock, disco, punk, reggae, new wave, to mention some.

However, rock 'n roll brought about not only a musical revoluation but, more significantly, a cultural and social revolution.

In a pamphlet about rock music entitled "They're Out To Steal Your Children", the Rev. Ray Allen states: "What all too few realized...was that rock 'n roll was the major force responsible for reshaping the moral fibre of the world's youth.... Parents have been literally "rocked" to sleep while their children have been slowly drowned in filth scarcely imaginable to the normal healthy adult." The Rev. Allen quotes rock star David Crosby, "I figured the only thing to do was to swipe their kids. I still think it's the only thing to do. By saying that, I'm not talking about kidnapping, I'm just talking about changing their value systems which removes them from their parents' world very effectively."

One would be hard put to find anyone with some knowledge on the subject, whether Christian or non-Christian, who would deny that the influence of rock music has been one for evil.

Consider the opinions of these very *divergent* sources:

David Ewen, referred to by *Time* magazine as "music's interpreter to the American people" writes "rock...is an open endorsement of sex permissiveness, perversion, drugs, disobedience to parents, hostility to society."

Aida Pavletich in the book *Rock-a-bye Baby*: "The rock 'n roll woman was the opposite of a 'nice girl'. Carnal knowledge is hers, she curses, drinks, and may wear a tattoo", and "The Population Council in the U.S. blames rock lyrics for the unmarried teen baby boom of the seventies."

Frank Sinatra: "rancid-smelling aphrodisiac".

Pablo Casals: "poison put to music".

Garrett Byrne, a Massachusetts district attorney: "Tin Pan Alley has unleashed a new monster, a sort of nightmare of rhythm. Some of our disc-jockeys have put emotional TNT on their turntables. Rock 'n' roll inflames teenagers and is obscenely objective."*

The New York Daily News accused recording companies and disc-jockeys of "pandering to the worst juvenile taste."*

A.M. Merrio, associate professor of psychiatry at Columbia University: "If we cannot stem the tide of rock 'n' roll with its waves of rhythmic narcosis, we are preparing our downfall in the midst of pandemic funeral dances."*

Professor Hanko in *The Standard Bearer*: "a particularly horrible manifestation of the sinful heart of man...there is the smell of hell about it."

Professor Calvin Stapert of Calvin College music department: frenzied, violent, angry, sensuous, vulgar."

Bob Larson, converted rock band leader: "themes of drugs, sex, perversion, and blasphemy...the occult."

These are for the most part general remarks, not dealing with the specific aspects of rock such as lyrics, beat or performers. And so the question remains: What, in particular, is wrong with rock? Is it the beat that makes it evil, or the lyrics; or should we put the blame on the origin of the music; or on the performers? In subsequent articles in the *Beacon Lights*, we hope to write

something about the various aspects of rock music, considering, in approximate order, the term, origin, beat, lyrics and performers.

*David Ewen, *All the Years of American Popular Music*

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. G. LUBBERS

Proper Spiritual Narrowmindedness

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord."

Ephesians 5:18, 19

My dear covenant young people. You are living in days which are evil. The days when I was a boy more than fifty years ago were evil too! However, some of the temptations which constantly confront you, as sin which does so easily beset, I did not have. I did not have the temptations of high school life. My family was poor and I was necessitated to work on a farm from morning till night. If I did go forth once a week during the summer to play some cow-pasture soft-ball, it was running there for a mile to the "ball-diamond" the way the crow flies. Afterwards, we would go to the store, and more often than not I feigned that I was not hungry; I did not have even a dime to buy a

dish of ice cream! Hence, I was not tempted to buy wines and hard liquors in the stores. Fact is, that the little store where I went did not stock these commodities. There was no demand for them; and where no demand is, the business man soon no longer stocks the item. However, we now live in an affluent society; we have all that it takes to live it up a bit, and, in the realm of the sociable, to ape the world, pattern our life after the world!

Worldlimindedness is the sin of many in the church in our day, I fear! However, the Bible tells us not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewal of our minds, that we may approve what is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

Worldlimindedness leads to world-conformity as sure as night follows day! God is not mocked!

It was necessary for Paul to write to the church in Ephesus, *"And be not drunken with wine wherein is excess"*.

Paul takes the bull by the horns; he meets sin head-on by not mincing any words. This becoming drunk with wine must come to a complete halt; it must be utterly banished from their lives by the crucifixion of the flesh, by the mortifying of their members which are upon the earth, knowing that their life is hid with God in Christ. (Colossians 3:1, 2) This exalted knowledge alone can pluck our feet out of the devil's clutches. It is quite clear from the Greek text that Paul does not merely warn against possible drunkenness in the church; he is warning them against *actual drunkenness* with wine. It was an actual sin of these Ephesians, who professed to be Christians, anointed with the Spirit of grace! They were not walking in the good works which God has before prepared for them to walk in. If they lived by the Spirit, they did in this regard not walk by the Spirit; they did not walk in the straight and narrow course of God's precepts. They were turning to the broad way which leads to destruction. Paul therefore writes: stop becoming drunk with wine, where in is excess!

Here Paul advocates a holy narrow-mindedness!

The evil of wine and becoming drunk with it is exposed for what it truly is. Yes, wine has a good usage too. It is a good gift of God. Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected when it is received with thanksgiving. But the Ephesians could not give thanks and did not actually give thanks to God for His good gift at the end of an evening and (God forbid) a night! of excessive living, due to drinking too much wine. God was not in all their thoughts in their excesses. The Word of God did not dwell in them richly at all; out of mind were all the good and precious words of the ministers' sermons. They are like the prodigal, who consumed his substance with riotous living. It was a living it up in debauchery which brings a man to "Skid-row". Yes, wine is a good creature of God. We must ever drink a "little wine" if drink we can in thankfulness of redemption from sin. Nevertheless, the Bible also teaches that wine is a mocker; that whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. Wine is ever associated in sinful, worldly use with excessive living. And excessive living is a life of debauchery, extreme indulgence in sensuality, a profligate behavior which is unbecoming to those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb of God,

and who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection; those who are not under law but who are under grace. It is in a word: trifling with the grace of election!

The washed sow has returned to her wallowing in the mire!

The dog has returned to his vomit!

Psychologically there is a strong resemblance between being drunk and satiated with wine, and the singing which is the effect of the Spirit. In both cases, men are carried away by other powers. In the one case, a man possesses his soul in patience; in the other, he is the victim of sin, which stimulates the fleshly lusts. And both have a song to sing, the drunkard and the man who is Spirit-filled. Both are in an exalted and in a stimulated state of mind. The one is on the door-step of hell where he has the delusions of seeing serpents; the other sings on the door-step of heaven, within the portals of the eternal city in the living hope which is his by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Yes, psychologically these two states have some outward resemblance, but spiritual-ethically they are as far apart as East is from West!

The term which Paul employs for the term "excess" is in the Greek "*asootia*". The Greek in their ethics called such a man "unsaveable". He fits nowhere constructively in the society of men, even conceived of in the Greek-Roman humanistic terms. He is a "losel" a "hopelost" a worthless person. He cannot spare, cannot save, he is a *prodigus*, a scatterling. His life is one grandiose squandering of means. (Trench Synonyms) The learned Trench continues "He is waster of goods and he will often be a waster of everything. He lives for his own sensual desires, he lives in a dissolute, debauched and profligate manner: He is a very loathsome person!"

Such a one will waste himself, his time, his faculties, his powers; yea, he will himself be laid waste. He loses himself and is lost!

Paul knows the Ephesian church is fully aware of the implications of this term translated "excess". They must know, and we with them, that such excess cannot be and is not a part of the Christian life of the liberty of the royal law in Christ. It is in no sense of the term a being clothed with Christ, neither is it a buying out the time in the midst of the days which are evil. It is really the walking of the broad way which leads to destruction. Jesus says: and many go in thereat.

Now all such flirting with sin and with the world must stop!

Paul is not advocating a sickly narrow-mindedness which enroaches on our liberty in Christ. Perish the thought! He is speaking here of that healthy narrow-mindedness which may well be carefully and thoroughly cultivated in our day too; parents, teachers and ministers are to be good examples unto the flock of God, and particularly, to the young people in the church. We must not be deceived by flattering speech which deceives. God is not mocked: no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God! Today men would rather speak of an "alcoholic" than of a drunkard. This lie is constantly dinned into our ears by the world, which cannot receive the Spirit, by radio, television and the printed page universally. This is the siren-song of the liar from the beginning, Satan.

Now the Holy Spirit chose the term "drunkard", both for spiritual and physical drunkenness and stupor. He speaks here of "becoming drunken with wine, wherein is excess."

Let us take good notice of this and let this truth sink deep into your heart, young covenant people of God!

When a confessing Christian becomes guilty of this *sin*, he needs not merely some medical attention (which he does!) but he needs far more. His soul must be saved from the paths of sin, and he needs a cleansing of his defiled conscience before God. He needs forgiveness of sins which the lies of unbelieving psychiatric treatment cannot afford him. He needs more than some sinful rationalization of his "alcoholism". He must confess his sin on bended knee, repent in dust and ashes, be converted, and then be healed in his tormenting conscience from the pain of sin and the anguish of hell, and the deep sense of the wrath and holy displeasure of God. He must return with the prayer of the Prodigal: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against thee"!

In so doing , he will flee all sin. He will be putting off the old man, crucifying the flesh and all his members which are upon the earth. And, if he is sorry for this particular sin, he will not simply admit that he performed some bad deeds, change his manner of conduct, but will confess that there was an evil way in him; he will pray: lead me in the way everlasting!

No doubt there is great need in our day to warn our children, our young people by word and by example. Such is our reasonable service. It is the spiritual logic of the Spirit of God in Christ. This truth the simple understand, do they not? This is the word which is sweeter than honey and the honey-comb. But they, who do not heed this word, and who continue to flirt with the powers of hell, trifling with the grace of election, come to ruin!

In our text this is presented as a constant battle with all sin. Eternal vigilance is the price of spiritual liberty in Christ. Paul says: *keep on stopping* becoming drunk with wine. This requires much spiritual sobriety. Sin bears sin: excessive living, riotous living, drunkenness, debauchery. It eats like the cancer, invading all of life.

This is a worldlimindedness which we must flee.

We must abhor this world-conformity, and become transformed by the renewing of our mind.

Yes, be narrow-minded on this narrow way which leads to life. Few there be that find. Be with the blessed few! Listen to wisdom which cries aloud in the streets.

Be imitators of God as dear children!

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

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE

by Harold Tilma

The name Gethsemane in the Aramaic means "Olive Press". There was one located there. This reminds us what the form for the Lord's Supper says: ". . . when the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of Him the bloody sweat in the garden." After instituting the sacrament of communion and before Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus in the garden, our Savior spent that intervening time in Gethsemane.

Here in deepest agony, in exceeding sorrow, in inexpressible grief, in heart heaviness in contemplation of soon coming events, in painful anguish of being forsaken of God on the cross, in intense mental and soul suffering, he fell upon His face and began to pray to His Father. The expressions He used in His prayers such as Father, Father; and Oh, My Father, indicate His desperate deep need of deliverance from His awful, terrible suffering in being overburdened with such great sorrow and grief which had brought Him to the point of death.

What was the content of His prayer? That if it be the Father's will that His cup and hour of suffering in Gethsemane might be removed, might be taken from Him, that it might pass from Him. Even so, He prayed not My will but Thine be done.

Some interpreters of this prayer of Jesus explain that He sought the Father for another way than that of the cross to save His people. These also must say then that the Father said No to Jesus. But Jesus already before said: Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, I knew that Thou hearest Me always, John 11:41, 42, always, so also in Gethsemane.

Did the Father answer the prayer of the Lord Jesus for deliverance in Gethsemane? Yes, He surely did. An angel from heaven from the presence of the Father came to Him and strengthened Him. He was so revived in physical and spiritual strength that He returned to His disciples with renewed courage and said triumphantly, "Rise, Let us Go: behold he is at hand that doth betray Me."

May the truth-revealing Holy Spirit allow us to see more fully what suffering, horror and fear our precious Lord Jesus did bear for us in Gethsemani and upon the cross where He went to hell — God-forsaken hell — for our sins and to save us to be with Him forever in Glory in the new heaven and new earth where there will be no more sin and where in righteousness we will praise and glorify our great Savior God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God for such great salvation!

BUILDING BRIDGES

by Ben Wigger

Young people, are you aware of the subtle changes that are taking place around you today? Now anyone knows that this world is a very fast paced place. Things around us change almost faster than we can comprehend. But I would like to consider with you just for a few minutes the ever increasing changes that are seemingly sweeping the church world of today toward the end of the ages.

Today there is a relentless tide of ecumenical movement which, without any doubt, will lead to the creation of the false church which will give its support to the anti-christ. We are in effect living during one of the signs of the times we often hear about.

One does not have to look very far in any direction to be able to see that this world and all the wickedness which it contains will soon fill its cup, and our Heavenly Father will bring down judgment against it.

But there is more than signs of the world's wickedness which point to the fast approaching end of this world.

The church world is caught up with the idea that bridges must be built between all differing denominations as well as different beliefs. The idea of churches uniting together is emerging as one of the most important callings of the church; and it does seem quite possible that perhaps if success were achieved in one particular area of the church world, it could very well touch off a movement to unite the churches worldwide.

All of these calls for unity among the churches does indeed present problems for us. After all, we have ties established with different groups around the world, and there is nothing wrong with that; we must share the truth of God's Word as He has given it to us. But today's calls for unity stress unity as being more important than maintaining the truth of God's Word.

The churches seem all too willing to seek compromise on basic beliefs if only it can somehow lead to the much sought after unity. The churches must be willing to give up some of what they hold as true in order to build bridges between themselves and the neighboring church world.

Churches spend much time and effort in an attempt to develop a dialogue which will result in a sound basis of union between them. Each side seems somewhat reluctant to get the ball rolling, and for now, that may be the case; however, once the ball does start to roll, the effect will be similar to a row of dominoes; all the churches will fall into line.

One thing no one wants to bring up anymore is any differences between churches. All attempts are made to steer clear of any negative comments. Everything has to be up-beat and positive. Any differences which do exist between churches are toned down.

The areas of common ground are stressed. After all, with the church world united as one super church it is easy to imagine, or so they say, the good that could come from that. We could quite possibly have a heaven on earth.

Dr. Ronald Runcie in his sermon on the occasion of his enthronement as 102nd Archbishop of Canterbury declared that his archiepiscopate would be dedicated to building bridges between God and man, between the secular and the spiritual in society, and between the churches of divided Christendom.

And as if to prove that last point, a wider spectrum of Christian churches were present in Canterbury Cathedral than at any previous enthronement ceremony since the Reformation. There were also five Roman Catholic cardinals, a large group from the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental churches, together with leaders of the Lutheran and Reformed churches, the Free Churches of Britain, and even representatives of the Jewish, Moslem, Buddhist, Hindu, and Sikh faiths.

Perhaps there is no one in the church world today who seems to be advocating unity more than the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II. He is fast moving to the forefront in this regard.

The Grand Rapids Press of February 21, 1981, quotes parts of a speech given by Pope John Paul II in Manila. He declared that the Roman Catholic Church accepts the truth and goodness in Asia's major religions; and he called for dialogue and cooperation among Christians, Buddhists, Moslems, and Hindus.

In what Vatican sources described as the most far-reaching call for interfaith dialogue ever made by a pontiff, Pope Paul said the church "wishes to do everything possible to cooperate with other believers in preserving all that is good in their religions and culture" so that all people may live "as brothers and sisters".

As a result of these and other efforts, there is a profound change taking place in the entire world which also has its effect on us. The idea of church unity is fast becoming more and more appealing. And we can be sure that just such an effort is the result of the devil and his hosts working while there is still time, for they know that they have but a short time.

However, we know that scripture assures us that God will always have His remnant that will not bow the knee. We should pray without ceasing that our churches will receive grace from our Heavenly Father so that we may remain true to Him and His Word. As John writes in Rev. 14:12, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus".

The Lord of Hosts Is With Us

by Linda Feenstra

This poem was read at the 1980 Convention as a special number.

When the narrow way leads across rough terrain
And we struggle to make it, but all seems in vain,
Then we should remember that we have a Guide,
For God in His wisdom is close by our side.

When doubts and impatience captivate our minds,
And around us press the troubles of our times,
Then think on the Lord and in Him put our trust
And we shall find comfort and in Him be blest.

Life's lessons aren't always easy to learn.
Our purpose in life can be hard to discern,
But we know that God in His sovereign good will
Has planned out our life and abides with us still.

So even when burdens or troubles are sent,
And tumults of temptation never relent,
Know that God will send only what we can bear
And we can bring everything to Him in prayer.

So rejoice, and be thankful, and praise the Lord
Who ever is near in His Spirit and Word.
And as was proclaimed by the Psalmist of old,
Let us again ring those words out - clear and bold:

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

"The Lord of hosts is with us"!

NEWS from, for and about our churches

by Linda Kaizer

BIRTHS
—Mr. & Mrs. John A. Keizer of Hull: daughter, Kimberly Sue, on Dec. 24.

MARRIAGE
—Mr. Martin Straayer & Miss Joanna Schwarz of Loveland on Jan. 23 at Zion American Lutheran Church.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP
—Faith received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Jon Bol & their son, Nathaniel, from First.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES
—First Church's Young People's Society had a hayride on Jan. 2.
—Sliding party at Johnson Park on Feb. 5.
—Faith & Southeast's Young People's Societies sponsored a Pizza Party after Covenant's Basketball Game on Feb. 6 at Hope School. Proceeds for the convention.

OTHER ACTIVITIES
—Hudsonville Choral Society gave a Christmas program on Dec. 28.
—Holland Church installed their new pastor, Rev. Rodney Miersma, on Jan. 7.

TEST YOUR MEMORY

1. Who said, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee."? Acts 3:6

2. What charge was made against Stephen? Acts 6:13

3. What prophet did Peter quote in his defense of the disciples at Pentecost? Acts 2:16

4. What does Aceldama mean? Acts 1:19

5. Of what sect was Gamaliel? Acts 5:34

6. Who said to a man, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God"? Mark 12:34

7. Who said, "The poor always ye have with you."? John 12:8

8. What did Mary see when she looked in the sepulchre? John 20:12

9. Does John record all Jesus did after He rose from the dead? John 20:30

10. What did Jesus say first when He appeared to His disciples after He had risen? John 20:19

"Hence life is first. Regeneration precedes all other work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the sinner. And in regeneration the Holy Spirit implants the power of the faculty of faith, so that potentially the regenerated is a believer, even before he comes to the conscious activity of faith."

(*Triple Knowledge*, Herman Hoeksema, Vol. 2, p. 436)

"Everywhere Scripture comforts and encourages those that must suffer for righteousness' sake by holding before them the glorious eternal reward. Thus the Lord Jesus Himself, in the Sermon on the Mount, declares: 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and shall 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.' Matthew 5:10-12."

(*Triple Knowledge*, Herman Hoeksema, Vol. 2, p. 369)

ATTENTION YOUNG PEOPLE

The 1981 convention will be held at
CALVIN COLLEGE
JULY 20-24

The theme of our convention this year will be:

MATTHEW 24

SIGNS OF THE TIMES
I. Signs in the World
II. Signs in the Church
III. Reasons for Signs
IV. Attitude

Our Speakers this year will be:
—Prof Decker
—Rev. Engelsma
—Rev. Koole
—Rev. Schipper

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!

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