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FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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INCORPORATION INTO CHRIST

BEACON LIGHTS

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EDITOR'S NOTES: MAY

by David Harbach

I am happy to write that we have received an interesting response to the letter sent to our Young People's Societies. From Houston, Texas, Mrs. Virginia Hugg writes,

"I am writing in response to your letter to our Young People's Society, asking us to send articles or poems to be printed in the **Beacon Lights**.

"This article is not from the YPS, as such. Mr. Truett Hugg is our YPS leader. At our Wednesday night Bible Class, we were asked to write a 2-3 minute presentation on, "What is Christianity?" A Moslem man has been attending our Worship Services and wants to learn about Christianity. We were all asked to study and be prepared to tell this man, or any unbeliever, what Christianity is. . . ."

Seems to me that would be a worthwhile challenge for our Young People's Societies to do sometime. What would you write? Compare your answer to Mr. Hugg's presentation which appears later in this issue. Thank you, Mrs. Hugg, for taking the time to write an interesting letter and to send to us the article and also a poem.

Another reader, Rev. Rawson, from Barnsley England, writes,

"Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. I have intended writing you for some time to enquire concerning literature published by the Federation of P.R. Young People's Societies. The latest **Beacon Lights** prompts me to get down to this.

"Can you supply (these) if still available? "Leaving Father and Moth-

er'' by Rev. C. Hanko, ''Reformed Education'' by Rev. D. Engelsma, ''Christian Liberty'' by Rev. R. C. Harbach, and ''Implication of Public Confession'' by Abraham Kuyper.

''It was the note concerning this last item that finally spurred me into action. Several correspondents of late have asked me if the P.R.'s do anything on the subject of Christian Education - hence my intention to write to see if Rev. Engelsma's book was still available. . . .

''. . . I continue to enjoy the **Beacon Lights** magazine. Perhaps from time to time you should mention the literature that is available from you.''

Rev. Rawson has been distributing our literature for several years, an action which we greatly appreciate. In answer to his question about availability, we can say, yes, the first three publications mentioned are still available at $1.50 plus postage. ''Implications of Public Confession'' will have been typeset by the time you read this issue. My guess is that it will be finished in the summer. And as to his suggestion about letting our readers know about our publications from time to time, well, I think we have accomplished that too for this issue and will promote them in future issues.

''Spiritual Apathy of Our Young People'' by Bruce Jabaay I hope is not the last article for the B.L. that comes from his encouraging pen. Bruce reluctantly had to resign as an associate editor because of his busy life. We will miss his writing and presence at our staff meetings because good writers are not always so easy to replace. The staff extends our heartfelt thanks to Bruce as he serves God in other capacities.

Rev. Harbach continues his dialog with Pastor and Catechumen on the subject of ''Incorporation Into Christ'' Romans 6:1-13. From what Predestinarian viewpoint do we look at Incorporation into Christ? You will find the answer as you read this interesting article.

I moved the article ''An Awesome Warning'' by Rev. Heys into this issue even though it was scheduled for next month. I did that to provide copy for this month since the next issue will include the study outlines for the coming Young People's Convention held here in Grand Rapids. Rev. Heys reminds us of the name we have as young people which contains a blessed truth. And as Rev. Heys will let you know it is not the title Christian. Then what is it? I'm not telling!

Rev. Terpstra reviews the book ''Pop Goes the Gospel'' by John Blanchard. Remember though, that Rev. Terpstra wants and needs for you to respond to his book reviews. Your thoughts are important to him and us. You don't have to write an encyclopedia or two, just a page of your precious thought will do.

Make sure you read ''What's Happened'' by Ruth Bleyenberg to find out what the steering committee for the convention has been doing and what they plan to do during the convention. Looks like a super time is being planned. And of course, catch up on the latest what's happened in our churches.

Our request for articles to be printed in the **Beacon Lights** has produced some fruit, but we need more. The need for more articles is great and we pray that God will provide you young people with the will to write for the **Beacon Lights**.

Editorial

SPIRITUAL APATHY OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

by Bruce Jabaay

What is apathy? Someone told me a story about a discouraged Young People's leader who wrote the word "APATHY" on a chalkboard just prior to one of their meetings. As the young people began to straggle into the room, one young person slumped into his chair, stared at the chalkboard with a puzzled face, and then said to the person slumping to his right, "Hey man, what does APATHY mean?". The person responed with "Hey, I don't know and who cares anyway?". Well, I hope you care, and please read on!

Can you imagine if our Father in Heaven was apathetic towards His people? We would truly have no comfort in this life nor the life to come. Man would have been already wiped off the face of this earth and surely would not receive eternal glory. We take great comfort in knowing that our Father careth about all of His creation and that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (exact opposite of apathy)!

Obviously we all care about things, but what things do we care about and how much do we care? What causes us to be excited about cars, boys or girls, being popular; and what causes us to be apathetic towards Bible study, church, devotion and witnessing? We all know what makes us excited about the things of this world - great self love; and we all know what makes us lax about spiritual things - lack of love for God and our neighbor. When we emphasize spiritual things, we are greatly de-emphasizing self love. We don't like to be called miserable sinners and we even hate to be disliked by the world because of the things the world has to offer our sinful flesh. We are like the church of Laodicea who was "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked" (Rev. 3). You must "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him: for he careth for you." (I Peter 5:6, 7).

What are the consequences of our spiritual apathy? First of all, we are cheating ourselves out of that great joy and peace when we do not lead sanctified lives: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith" (Gal. 5:22). Of course being a "Christian" is miserable and boring when we don't lead a sanctified life, but a sanctified Christian becomes excited and filled with awe when he dwells on God's creation, sovereignty, perfection and matchless love. Being spiritually apa-

thetic is foolishness when we compare the meager sinful pleasures to spiritual riches. Secondly, we are causing others to sin when we encourage others to join in our spiritual apathy through peer pressure and lack of witness. Jesus commanded you to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Ultimately, the most severe consequence is the "wrath of hell", which would be a conclusion each individual would have to draw about him or herself if they do not possess the "fruits of the spirit"!

If you have spiritual apathy but are a child of God, then let me suggest some remedies to cure that horrible disease. The two most important things you can do are pray and read God's word so that the Holy Spirit will cause you to "be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in right-eousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). Jesus commanded us saying, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross **daily**, and follow me. . . For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed" (Luke 9). So, young people, do your devotions daily and have Christ on your mind always. If Christ is on your mind, you shouldn't be ashamed of God's word and should care less about peer pressure and other worldly matters. You will also care more about others.

If someone wants to know what spiritual APATHY means, tell them it stands for **A** Pathetic **A**ttitude **T**oward **H**elping **Y**ou and myself serve Christ. Then tell them you like the word CARE better and that it stands for **C**hrist **A**lways **R**eigns **E**verywhere in my life.

ATTENTION STUDENTS

The Protestant Reformed Scholarship Committee is accepting applications for the 1989-90 school year from future Protestant Reformed teachers and ministers. For an application, contact:
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II. INCORPORATION INTO CHRIST
Romans 6:1-13

by Rev. Robert C. Harbach

Pastor: For this lesson today, Charles, have you read the assigned passage (above) both in the King James Bible and in the New King James Bible?

Catechumen: Yes, I have and I've also memorized the definition you gave of "incorporation." The dictionary says, "Incorporation is the act of uniting one body to another so as to form one body." Therefore, incorporation is the divine act of uniting the church to Christ, so making it bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh.

Pastor: How further do you explain incorporation?

C: God in His eternal purpose set the Church objectively and positionally in union with Christ its head through the substitutionary work of Christ in all His redemptive acts which He accomplished representatively as Head of the Church, and Savior of the Body of Christ. Ephesians 5:23b, c.

P: We then look at Incorporation into Christ from what Predestinarian viewpoint?

C: From the Supralapsarian viewpoint, which teaches that Christ is the Head of a glorified, unfallen mass—His Church, and that the means He takes in realizing His purpose of a glorified church is in becoming the Savior of the Body of Christ in the way of sin and grace.

P: What are these redemptive acts of Christ?

C: His crucifixion, His death, His burial, His resurrection, His session at the right hand of God, His eternal reign.

P: Can you give the Scripture texts, in the New King James Bible, for these representative redemptive acts?

C: Yes, I can: Gal. 2:20, NKJB, "I have been crucified with Christ. . . ." Rom. 6:5, NKJB, ". . .we have been united together in the likeness of His death." 6:8, NKJB, "we died with Christ. . . ." See also Col 2:20; 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:14; 6:4, NKJB, ". . .we were buried with Him. . . ." Eph. 2:4, 5, 6, NKJB, "God. . .made us alive together with Christ. . .and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Col. 3:1, NKJB, ". . .you were raised with Christ. . . ."; 2 tim. 2:11-12, NKJB, "we died with Him, we shall also live with Him." Rev. 5:10, NKJB, "we also reign with Him."

P: "Why do we consider all these passages in the NKJB?"

C: Because we notice in these places of Scripture, by this NKJB, how that the original Greek New Testament informs us as to **when** these substitutional, representative corporative acts and positional emplacements occurred. For example, "we died with Christ"

(Rom. 6:8) when He died on the cross. This is the church's co-dying with Christ.

P: Excellent, Charles!

C: Could you explain this a bit further, Reverend?

P: Certainly. Incorporation in Christ is already a settled legal fact, the fact of the Church's objective **position** before God. It is not a subjective **condition** into which the believer may enter by faith, but is an objective position into which he with the whole church body corporate has been placed in God's eternal decree: Acts 15:18. Here in Romans 6, the act of faith does not enter in to the picture until 6:11, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Notice that at Rom. 6:3 we do not read that when we **are** baptized into Christ Jesus, we **are** baptized into His death, but, KJV, ". . .as many of us as **were** baptized into Christ Jesus **were** baptized into His death." This is not only the way it reads in the KJV, but also exactly how it reads in the Greek New Testament text. Only, the NKJB puts the entire passage in literal conformity to the original Greek.

Notice, further, in this Romans 6 passage there is no symbolical baptism, no **ritual** baptism, but only the **real** baptism—"through **the** baptism in **the** death" (Greek). **The** baptism is the **real** baptism, which takes place "in **the** death," the death of the Cross. What we have here, then, is objective, corporate baptism, not individual baptism, and certainly not at the same time the figure of facts and the figure of a figure. There is no portrayal of this positional truth by ritual acted out or represented in visible form.

In Rom. 6:1-10 we have not exhortation, such as to crucify the flesh and live a new and holy life. What we have is settled legal fact stated. Then on the basis of the settled fact stated we have, at v. 11, the exhortation, "reckon." This means "count it all to be so," "see yourself as God sees you," say the same thing God says of you and of the whole church corporately, and then go on to live accordingly, v. 12-14.

The same thinking applies to Col. 3:3, NJKB, "For ye died. . ." that is, ye died **with** Christ, when He died; ye died **in** Christ. Ye died to all **out** of Christ. Ye died to all **against** Christ. When the Apostle writes this to the Colossians he takes it for granted that the Colossians have so died. For this is their position in Christ. Since God has set His church corporately in these positions with Christ in these redemptive, representative acts they are the reality apart from any symbolical act individually experienced. Forget the latter since it blinds to what Paul is saying, "Ye **died** with Christ!" Reckon that to be so. Account it to be so that "we died with Christ." Then in your own experience, when tempted to yield to the lusts of the flesh, say, No, sin shall not have dominion over me: I died to all that way of life!

In fact, if you are a Christian growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ you will be so spiritually sensitive to sin and the exceeding sinfulness of sin that when you are confronted with the shocking question, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" your soul will grieve at the very thought of doing so! To continue in sin, after having **been** delivered from the penalty of sin, and while **being** delivered from

the power of sin, is for the Christian with tender conscience unthinkable. What? **remain** in sin, that is **live upon** sin as a vulture lives upon carrion? "God forbid!" Be it not so! Don't let it happen! "How shall we who have the status of a perfect, objective sanctification fail to live in the subjective sanctification of a new and holy life?

Now consider Rom. 6:7, translated literally, "For He who has died has been justified from sin." The personal pronoun should be capitalized, "He." It is not we who have died, not believers, not the elect, but **He**, Christ. "For the death that **He** died, He died to sin once for all. . . ." (v. 10, NKJB). "Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him" (v. 9, NKJB). By His death He has been justified (declared righteous) from sin. Being the Sin-bearer, sin had a claim on Him. But not only having died **for** sin, but also having died **to** sin, sin no longer has any claim upon Him. "For He who has died has been freed from sin."

In our incorporation into Christ there is an identification with Christ of the Church of all ages, as it has been united together with Him in the likeness of His death (which is crucifixion), and united together with Him in the likeness of His resurrection (which is the walking about in newness of life with Him), v. 4-5.

"Knowing this that our old man **was** crucified with Him, (when He was crucified) that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." v. 6, NKJB. "**Knowing** this. . . ." It is not a matter of feeling. We may not feel crucified. It is a matter of knowledge in which we reckon it (count it) to be so. "Knowing . . .that our old man was crucified together with Him." It is important that we understand what is meant by "our old man." Our old man, our old **position** in Adam was crucified with Christ in order that our **condition** in Adam (the body of sin) might be done away. "The **old man**, the old **position** in Adam, is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, the old **condition** in Adam. Eph. 4:22.

"Our old man was crucified." This has nothing to do with subjective experience, but refers to an objective, historical, spiritual fact. This crucifixion **was** accomplished at the Cross. In what sense **was** the "old man" crucified? Judicially, legally, the whole elect church was corporately united in Christ crucified.

Now a brief sketch of Rom. 6 and 7 showing the relation of their halves will aid in the understanding of this doctrine of incorporation into Christ. The first half of Rom. 6 and the first half of Rom. 7 deal with the church and its members as to their **position**, whereas the second half of each chapter deals with the **condition** of Christ's members with the difference that in the end of chapter 6 it is our condition as it **ought** to be, while in chapter 7 it is our condition as it **actually** is.

Further, as you look closely at Rom. 6:1-10, NKJV, you notice that this section does not contain the exhortative, nor the imperative. It is all factual/positional. We are not commanded to die to self, nor to crucify the old nature. The emphasis is all on our identification with Christ crucified, dead, buried, and risen. Not until verse 11 do we have a command: "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Then in verse 12 we are commanded, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts." Further, v. 13, "Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." So that in verses 1-10 there is no command to **do** something, but there is the fact of our **knowing** something (v. 6), as namely the gaining of the right standpoint in our identification with Christ in His redemptive, justifying and sanctifying work. It is knowledge of orientation to fact. On that basis we move on into the activity of faith as expressed in verses 11-14.

CHRISTIANITY

by Truett Hugg

Christianity is that state of being like God. Furthermore, the life which Christ now possesses, also belongs to that group of people called Christians. The foundation of that life of Christianity is Christ, Himself. It is He Who has reconciled the Christian to God, II Cor. 5:18.

That work of reconciliation, or salvation, was performed by Christ. No one in the past, present or future is able to perform that work of reconciliation for himself or for others. What man, who is full of sin, is able to perfectly obey all of God's Commandments? What man is able to die for his sins and raise himself from the dead? What man is able to enter into God's presence and hear God's pronouncement, 'Your work has satisfied My wrath? Your guilt of sin is gone. I pronounce you innocent.'

The Bible, God's Word to the Christian, tells us that Christ was able and did keep all the Commandments of God perfectly. He did take all of our sin upon Himself. He did suffer and die in our place, bearing all of God's wrath for us. He did raise from the dead in three days, and He did ascend into heaven. Thus, He completely satisfied God in working out the Christian salvation. Thus, He reconciled the Christian to God, II Cor. 5:19.

This work of salvation, when applied by God to God's people, makes the Christian a new person, a born-again person, II Cor. 5:17. That person has a new life of Christ within himself. That person is no longer God's enemy, but God's friend. He is no longer separated from God, but is at peace with God. The Christian now longs after God, seeks after God and has fellowship with God.

Finally, the Christian, who has a beginning of that new life of Christ in this life, will die and go to be with God in heaven. There, he will have endless joy and peace. There, he will be troubled no more by sin and misery. There, he will truly know what it means to have fellowship with God; to walk and talk with God. The Christian will do this for eternity. Praise be to God!

BOOK REVIEW FOR THE BEACON LIGHTS

by Rev. Charles Terpstra

Welcome again young people to the world of books! I would like to review another book with you, but before we get to that let me again encourage you to respond to these book reviews, either by telling me what you thought of the book(s) which was(were) reviewed on these pages, or by submitting your own suggestions. To this date I haven't heard from you, so let's get reading and writing!

In this review I would like to recommend to you a book dealing with the subject of Christian rock music. Its title is **Pop Goes the Gospel**. It is authored by John Blanchard along with Peter Anderson and Derek Cleave, and published by Evangelical Press (1983). It is not a lengthy book (only 160 pp.),. but is a thorough treatment of this important subject. The authors are British and their concern is chiefly with the British music scene. But their viewpoints and arguments apply with equal cogency to the Christian music scene here in the U.S.

The purpose of their book is to evaluate the use of rock music for communicating the gospel - what they refer to as "entertainment evangelism". As you young people are undoubtedly aware of, in the last 5-10 years there has been a tremendous outpouring of contemporary Christian music from a host of new musicians, many of whome have combined Christian themes and biblical lyrics with rock music. Musicians such as Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, Sandi Patti, Petra, 2nd Chapter of Acts, and countless others have become well-known and highly popular through their records, tapes, compact discs, and concerts. I have no doubt but that you too have your favorite contemporary Christian musician, right? Your thinking is probably that of thousands of teenagers, "I gave up listening to the rock music of the world. Now I listen to Christian rock. I've thrown away my "Genesis" and Olivia Newton-John albums, and now I buy Amy Grant and Larry Norman."

But what must be said about this? What should your attitude be toward this so-called "Christian" rock and much of contemporary Christian music? The authors of this book tackle this whole subject, and do so in excellent fashion. They begin by tracing briefly the history of rock music, and then go on to identify its main elements (repetition, driving beat, and volume) and its chief traits (sex, the occult,

drug abuse, violence, rebellion, etc., i.e., all the culture and godless philosophies of the world). At this point they have a rather clear message to young people: "Demonstrate once and for all all your allegiance to Christ and your opposition to Satan by clearing these musicians' material out of your life and out of your home - records, tapes, books, magazines, posters, clothing, badges - **everything**" (p. 58).

From this point concerning what rock music is the authors now ask, Can this music serve as a tool for the communication of the gospel? And by now you should guess that their answer is a loud NO! What is important however, is their chief argument, namely, that the medium is already the message. Even apart from the Christian words one may attach to rock music, there is inherent in the musical form itself a loud and clear message - all that rock music is and proclaims.

The authors do not stop with that damning argument. They go on to refute the most commonly heard arguments in favor of using rock music for evangelism, such as "It draws the crowds"; "It communicates to young people in a language they can understand"; "It produces excellent results". From there they express their concerns for what rock music does when associated with the gospel. In their judgment Christian rock encourages worldliness and showmanship, reduces the gospel to entertainment and waters it down to a shallow message, detracts from the preaching and personal evangelism, and ruins the church family by widening the gap between the young and the old. In the light of these points, the authors are convinced that pop music and the gospel do not mix and that Christian rock must be forsaken. In fact, it is their conviction that the Bible no where teaches that music should be used for evangelism.

The book however, is not merely negative. The authors also give some specific positive direction for the Christian with regard to his use of music. From the Scriptures they draw some basic principles regarding music, and then they set forth eight questions the Christian should answer to govern the music he uses in the worship of God, such as: "Does it help you to hear the Word of God clearly?"; "Does this music tend to give you a greater vision of the glory of God?"; "Does this music encourage you to disciplined, godly living?"; "Would you expect to find this music in heaven?".

It is my conviction that **Pop Goes the Gospel** should be read by our young people **and by our parents**. It is an excellent evaluation from a biblical perspective both of rock music in general and of Christian rock in particular. As the back cover states, it is "a highly provocative, hard-hitting examination of the pop scene and the use of rock music in evangelism. You may never listen to music the same way again. . . ." It is the hope of this reviewer that with the help of this book our young people will take a close look at the music they now listen to and enjoy.

Perhaps one word of warning should be given. The chapter of the book which deals with the sexual content of rock music contains some rather explicit quotes from musicians themselves and their music. Parents may not wish their very young teens to read some of this material.

Until next time - good reading!

From the Pastor's Study

AN AWESOME WARNING

by Rev. J. A. Heys

You young people have a name which contains a blessed truth. It is a name for which we owe God everlasting thanks.

We do well therefore when we look carefully at it. And the important question is whether we call ourselves by that name.

No, I do not mean the name Christian, although that also is a very rich name and one for which we owe God constant thanks. The name which I like to call to your attention at this time is one that Jesus Christ our Savior presented in what is called The Sermon on the Mount. Personally I prefer by far to call it The Sermon on the Kingdom of Heaven. For Jesus Himself begins that sermon with these words: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3. Then in verse 10 He says: "'Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." In the rest of this sermon He in Matthew 6:10 and 13, and in Matthew 7:21 again speaks of the kingdom of heaven. All this reveals that this is The Sermon on the Kingdom of Heaven. Surely that says a lot more than calling it The Sermon on the Mount. Where Jesus preached it does not have the importance that the content of the sermon has.

Once again, although this name Christian is a beautiful and important name of the child of God, the name to which I would call your attention at this time is the one found in Matthew 5:13. There Jesus says, "Ye are the salt of the earth."

Does it sound good to you to be called salt? Undoubtedly we had better look more carefully at this name and take hold of the awesome warning that Jesus adds in this verse. After telling His disciples that they are the salt of the earth, He adds, "But if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." That indeed is an awesome warning.

What does Jesus mean? When He calls His elect, reborn children of God the salt of the earth, He does not mean what many incorrectly today present. Some claim that the believers, as that salt of the earth, improve this world. And some even teach that ultimately the churches are going to produce a wonderful, peaceful world before Christ returns. The amazing truth however is that although this word salt appears almost forty time in Scripture, it is used always as a savor, that is, that which gives a taste. We use salt today to preserve certain elements of food. But that is not what Scripture means here.

Take note of the fact that Jesus

speaks here of salt of the earth, not of the world. The idea is that the earth, on which God placed us, is pleasing to Him because of what His reborn children do upon this earth. The earth itself cannot serve God in praise and thanksgiving. But the believer, as he uses it and thanks and praises God for it, gives God a pleasant taste. He enjoys that. Turn once to Isaiah 43:21. There God Himself says, "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise." Everything the child of God receives he, by that new principle of life which he received by being born again, returns to God in service, praise and thanksgiving. The earth tastes good to God because it is being used by His elect, born again children, in a way that pleases Him.

Then too, the children of God cannot and do not improve the world of ungodly men, women and children. They do not cause them to do things pleasing in God's sight. They did not do that before God came with the punishment of the flood. Turn to Genesis 6:5, for there we read, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Get that, young people! Notice those three words: every, only and continually! The world performs not one good work. It may do what men call good because their flesh likes it. This leads some to say that there is a common grace that enables the world to do good. We had better listen to what God says here and also elsewhere in Scripture. Turn to Psalm 14. There we read that "there is none that doeth good" and "all are gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no not one." And tell me, how many of the world listened then to Noah, when he built the ark, and did begin to do something good? How many even came to the ark when it began to rain and the waters arose? No they all continued to do evil only and continually.

Besides, young people, Scripture teaches very clearly that sin is developing and will soon produce that man of sin. Get that! He who is coming is not the babe, the child, the young man of sin but the full grown man of sin! Look up II Thessalonians 2:3. There we read that the man of sin will be revealed. And since the world is composed of men, women and children who are all born spiritually dead, they cannot do what leaves a pleasant taste in God's mouth. No more than you can work on a physically dead man and cause him to serve you consciously and willingly, can those who are spiritually dead be caused to do what pleases God. They cannot love God; and what pleases God is always and only that which results from love to God. No man comes into this world with that love, unless as was the case with John the Baptist, they were born spiritually by God's grace before they were brought forth on what we call their physical birthday.

Therefore the wide-spread doctrine of "common grace" is so very wrong. Those not born again cannot do what God calls good works. O, yes, they often do what fulfills God's counsel, and in that sense is good. But from an ethical, moral point of view they never even want to do anything in love to God. Only those born again with the life of Christ in them love God and do good works. Before he was born again the apostle Paul did some terribly evil things, hating Christ, hating His

church and striving to wipe it out. But when born again a tremendous change took place and he was the salt of the earth. That is what God's grace does. It does not simply give a man mental talent and physical power to fulfill His counsel. Grace is not common. It is very particular. Go back to Isaiah 43:21. God has formed **this** people for Himself, not the world that praises itself and by its deeds denies that there is a God Whom they must serve.

The reborn child of God is the salt of the earth because through that rebirth the Spirit of Christ entered into him and implanted love of God, which in paradise man lost. Did God not say? "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17. With that Spirit of Christ, Who loved God fully and constantly, we too begin to love God and use this earth in a way that praises and glorifies Him. The church is precious in God's sight; but it also tastes delicious in His holy mouth, because His Son by His Spirit is in that church. This Spirit causes the believers to be the salt of this earth. That rebirth makes men serve God, praise and extol Him and bring thanksgiving unto Him. That is why Jesus calls the believers the salt of the earth.

But, young people, take hold of that awesome warning that salt can lose its savor. No, an elect, born again child of God will never lose his new spiritual life. He may, as Peter did, fall into a terrible, God-dishonoring deed. But this same Paul wrote correctly in Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that He Who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Jesus also said, "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." John 10:29.

Individual reborn children of God cannot fall away and no longer be the salt of the earth. But in process of time the number of unbelievers in the church can far outnumber the faithful, and introduce evil doctrine and practices which leave a bitter, abominable taste in God's mouth. Surely the idolatry in the Roman Catholic church does not taste good to our God. The Jewish synagogues that deny Christ taste very bitter in His mouth. Churches today who cast away the rich heritage of truth that Luther, Calvin, the Synod of Dordrecht, to mention only a few who are the salt of the earth, are losing the savor, because enemies of Christ now rule their church.

We, therefore, have this awesome warning. You do too, young people. You are going to be our church in the years to come. And you will be pleasing to God in the measure that you hold on to the truth He gave us.

Do not let our Reformed Doctrine slip away so that our churches begin to be less pleasing to our God. Then we will be salt that is losing its savor. Our children in the future will take hold of more doctrinal errors, if we do not hold on tightly to the truth God gave us. Behind all this is the devil; and he is trying very hard to get more crafty and subtle false doctrines into the church. When a church accepts them, that church always goes farther away from the truth and is less tasty in God's mouth.

We as parents and grandparents must strive to keep our churches doctrinally pure and walking in strong love of God. But so must you young people hold on firmly to the truth God gave our churches. Be careful what you accept as the truth, what your walk of

life is and whom you marry. Listen to Jesus' warning here about the salt of the earth. Live a life that pleases God, and you will one day with the Psalmist sing, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." For you will taste His goodness in the new creation. You will be the salt that gives God great delight; but you will also taste His mercy and grace, and enjoy the cross of Christ more richly than we can in this life. Those who in this life make this earth taste good to God will in the life to come taste God's love, mercy and grace everlastingly and to a degree much richer than we can in this life.

Things don't just happen

Things don't just happen to us who love God,
They're planned by His Own Dear Hand;
Then molded, and shaped, and timed by His clock,
Things don't just happen - they're planned

We don't just guess on the issues of life,
We Christians just rest on our Lord;
We are directed by His Sovereign will
In the light of His Holy Word.

We who love Jesus are walking by faith,
Not seeing one step that's ahead;
Not doubting one moment what our lot may be
But looking to Jesus instead.

We praise our Dear Saviour for loving us so,
For planning each care of our life;
Then giving us faith to trust Him for all
The blessings as well as the strife.

Things don't just happen to us who love God,
To us who have taken our stand;
No matter the lot, the course or the price,
Things don't just happen—
THEY'RE PLANNED!

Author Unknown

WHAT'S HAPPENED

by Ruth Bleyenberg

HULL, IOWA

-Mr. and Mrs. Evertt Van Manen were blessed with a son Kevin Jon.

-The young people held a soup supper on Feb. 22. Proceeds for the 1989 convention.

-The infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Roger Grevengoed was baptized on February 12.

-On Feb. 26, Rosie Hoekstra, James Kooiker, Kevin Kooima, Terry Jansma, Kristin Kooiker, and Rhonda Gritters made public confession of their faith.

FIRST CHURCH OF HOLLAND, MI:

-The infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Darle Wassink was baptized on January 29.

-At their request, the membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. G. Nienhuis and two baptized children have been transferred to Hope Prot. Ref. Church.

-Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Camminga who were united in the bonds of holy matrimony on March 3.

-Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Tom Camminga who were united in the bonds of holy matrimony on March 10.

PEACE OF LANSING, ILL:

.On February 24, a spaghetti dinner was sponsored by the Ladies Auxiliary. Dinner was served in South Holland Church basement.

-The congregation of Peace Prot. Ref. Church is presently meeting in Illiana Chr. High School.

SOUTHWEST, GRANDVILLE, MI

-The senior young people's society is presently studying from Genesis.

-Tricia Lotterman made public confession of faith on February 26.

-The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Dave Van Baren and their 3 baptized children were sent to Hope Prot. Ref. Church.

-Mr. and Mrs. Todd Timmerman were blessed with a baby girl, Ashley Nichole.

LOVELAND, COLORADO

-The congregation was invited to the home of Ray Ezinga's for an ice-skating party on January 13.

-The young people's society is presently studying from Nehemiah.

-The young people's society sponsored a Sweetheart banquet on Friday, Feb. 10.

-The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Bruinsma Jr. and family have been sent to their home at their request.

-The young people's society is planning an all family swim night, and also planning a singspiration to be held on March 19.

HUDSONVILLE, MI

-Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hoekstra were blessed with a daughter Alyssa Joi, on Jan. 3.

-The consistory received Mark Hoekstra as a baptized member from our

Hull Prot. Ref. Church.

-At the request of Mrs. Wm. Lafferty, her dismissal was granted together with that of her three children, with the purpose of joining Messiah Chr. Ref. Church.

-Baptism was administered to Matthew Ryan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Lubbers, and to Shane Michael, son of Mr. and Mrs. David Kamminga.

-Mrs. Kim Bykerk made public confession of her faith on February 19.

-Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Schut were blessed with the birth of a baby boy, Todd Alan, on Feb. 18.

-The consistory received as members Mr. and Mrs. Garett Jansma from Hillcrest Christian Reformed Church; Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Koop Jr. and two baptized children from our Southeast Church; Mr. and Mrs. Allen Karsten with four baptized children from our Faith Prot. Ref. Church; and Mr. and Mrs. Greg Lubbers with two baptized children from our Faith Prot. Ref. Church.

-The young peoples sponsored a fun night at Racquetville in Grandville.

FIRST CHURCH, GRAND RAPIDS, MI:

-The membership papers of Mrs. Janet (Pastoor) Ohlmann were received from the Plymouth Heights Christian Reformed Church.

-The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Rutgers were transferred to our Southwest Church at their request.

-Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Pastoor were blessed with a son, Andrew Mark, on Feb. 8.

-First Church extends their congratulations to Mrs. Minn Pastoor who celebrated her 85th birthday on Feb. 14, and Mr. John Faber who celebrated his 87th birthday on February 16.

-The sacrament of baptism was administered to Andrew Mark, son of Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Pastoor, on March 5.

-The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Doezema with Charles and Joan, have been transferred to our Holland Church at their request.

-The young people's Mass meeting was held at First Church on March 19. Rev. Joostens was the speaker.

FAITH OF JENISON, MI:

-The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to Thomas Peter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Peter D. Vander Schaaf on February 26.

-The Council has received and accepted the resignation of Deacon Larry Meyer. The membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Larry Meyer and their family have been delivered to their home at their request.

-The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Block and family and Mr. and Mrs. Peter Dekryger have been transferred to our Southeast Church.

-The membership paper of Mr. Dan Van Dyke has been received from Coopersville Chr. Ref. Church. Dan is presently attending Dordt College in Sioux Center, Ia. and is presently worshipping at our church in Hull.

BYRON CENTER, MI:

-The consistory received the baptismal membership papers of Mr. Brent Domissee from LaGrave C.R.C.

-The membership papers of Doug and Sue Wedekind and children was sent to their home. They plan to join Beverly C.R.C.

-The consistory received the membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Rowe from Pella First C.R.C. and Pella P.R. Chruch.

SOUTHEAST, GRAND RAPIDS, MI:

-The consistory has granted a transfer of membership to the Gerald Koop family. They have plans to affiliate with

the Hudsonville congregation.

-The young people's is presently studying from Galatians.

-The consistory wishes to express their congratulations to Don and Gail Kuiper who were blessed with a baby girl, Emily Grace.

TRINITY OF HOUSTON, TX:

-A men's prayer breakfast was held on Saturday, Jan. 14 at 8:00 a.m.

HOPE OF WALKER, MI:

-The young people's is presently studying special topics from the **Standard Bearer, Beacon Lights,** and the **Perspectives.**

-Mr. and Mrs. Mike Rau were blessed with a son Benjamin John.

-A certificate of dismissal is being sent to the Joseph Dykstra's at their request.

-Don Faber and Carole Reitsma were joined in marriage Feb. 18 at First Church.

-Hope Young People's Societies are busy planning the upcoming convention. The steering committee has put a lot of effort forth in making this convention an exciting and enjoyable one for the young people. They have different activities planned, such as a day at Pleasure Island and a day of canoeing and tubing. They plan to have a pig roast Thursday evening instead of a banquet. The speech for that evening will be held right in the park.

Above all, they hope that each individual may grow more spiritually, and enjoy the fellowship of one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

-The Sr. Young People's had combined society with Faith Young People's on March 12.

-Baptism was administered to Benjamin John, son of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Rau on February 26.

-Hope Jr. Young People's had a combined meeting with Byron Center on March 12.

CONTENTED

"If the wren can cling
To a spray a-swing
In the mad May wind,
And sing, and sing,
As if she'd burst for joy —
Why cannot I
Contented lie
In His quiet arms,
Beneath His sky,
Unmoved by life's annoy?

— Anonymous

SINGSPIRATION SCHEDULE

May 21	Hope
August	Pre-Convention
September 17	Southeast
November 19	Faith (Thanksgiving)
December 17	Hudsonville (Christmas)