BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1991

"Does the Christian, holding faithfully to the Word of God, have answers for the fossil record? Is this record embarrassing at best or soul-shaking at worst? . . . . By Faith we understand that no theory contrary to the Word of God can be correct."

From "Of Rhinoceri and Palm Trees", by Rev. Dale Kuiper

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EDITOR'S NOTES AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1991

by David Harbach

We want to thank Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church Young Peoples Society and all those who contributed of their time and effort to make the 1991 Young People's Convention an enjoyable week of spiritual growth, Christian fellowship and fun. We especially thank Rev. Van Baren who spoke on "Knowing About the End," Rev. Bruinsma who spoke on "Living With A View to the End," Rev. Dykstra who explained "Experiencing the End," Rev. Koole who prepared important questions concerning whether we should influence the world in the last times, Rev. Bekkering who gave us a thorough outline on Pre-millenialism - what it is and why it is wrong, and Mr. Mitchell Dick, who prepared a thorough discussion outline on what are the signs of the times. We thank these faithful men who defend the Word of God, in these days full of signs of the last times, over against the lies of the Social Gospel, the Redeeming Culture, and Pre-millenialism.

The speeches of the convention will be put in future issues of the Beacon Lights. A convention issue, D.V., will be sent to each conventioneer in the near future. If you would like a convention issue but did not attend the convention, then send your request to Beacon Lights, P.O. Box 375, Jenison MI 49428.

You'll find a very interesting and thought provoking response from Shari K. Brummel of Edger-

ton Protestant Reformed Church. She wrote a letter to me and as editor-in-chief I took the privilege of making the first part written to me and the rest written to you by adding the words "Dear Fellow Peers." So read her letter to you carefully because she covers such subjects as witnessing, standing up against temptation, rock songs, sanctification, and forgiveness. My brief response to her first part is given after her article.

Miss Amy DeVries reflects on her first year of teaching in her article, "Children-God's Special Gift To Us." Her "Special Person of the Week" idea shows the godly concern that she has for her students. Standing in the place of parents in the classroom makes teaching their children a unique experience requiring much patience and praise of each student. Mr. Dirk Westra will begin teaching this year and so we thank him for writing about how his student teaching in a public school which, as he puts it, "Only strengthened my resolve to become a teacher in our own Christian schools." Thank you Miss DeVries and Mr. Westra for giving us a glimpse into the heart and mind of Christian teachers.

Prof. Hanko's very important series on the Janssen Controversy, "To Lose The Battle And To Win The War" continued with Chapter IV "The Basic Issue(2)." Read this article to find out why the Study Committee refused to enter into a discussion about common grace even though Prof. Janssen based his views of scripture upon common grace.

Would you like to take a trip into western and eastern Washington? I did a few years back and would encourage anyone who is planning a trip to visit the breathtaking beautiful landscape of Mt. Baker and Mt. Rainier and the complete devastation of once the same beauty at Mt. St. Helens. But in case you don't, Rev. Kuiper takes us on two interesting trips that discuss among other things, fossils, in his article, "Of Rhinoceri and Palm Trees."

We almost never print articles where the author does not give his name In this case, however, a few years have gone by, so I will include "The Christian Teenager and His Friends" in this issue. It is our hope that any of you who have had a similar experience will rebuke those who are unruly and seek out friendship with those who seek to walk uprightly

Carol Brands' Letter #12 on Ecclesiastes will appear in the next issue, I promise.

Lora Bouwkamp, our faithful Church News editor, thanks the bulletin clerks for sending her your bulletins each month. It is our hope that all of our churches send her their bulletins.

We thank Joan Hanko (nee Buiter) for doing a superb job as secretary. Joan is still on the staff to help with the planning of each issue, for which we are very grateful. We pray that our covenant God will continue to bless her in her work and recent marriage to Dave Hanko.

Our new secretary is Sandy Storey from our Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Walker MI. Sandy contributed much during our recent staff meeting and is eagerly taking on her new position. We welcome you, Sandy, and pray that God will strengthen you for the work He has for you to do.

The New Book sale is over so that Jesus' Beauty Shining In You

is now $6.50. We have received several requests for this new book and others. This is encouraging to us. We will continue to advertise our books regularly.

You are used to the Beacon Lights being 6 1/4 x91/2 but in the near future the Beacon Lights will become larger. Look for a new cover designed by Mr. Eric Lubbers, who attends Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. The larger page format will mean fewer pages but will provide room to easily add pictures and other neat stuff. We trust you will enjoy the changes.

We are no longer going to advertise that the Beacon Lights is available on cassette tape.

DEAR FELLOW PEERS

by Shari R. Brummel

I have read some of the articles in the Beacon Lights, and it has occurred to me that most of them are "do"s and "don't"s. The articles are usually very good in themselves, but as the "Beacon Lights" is a pamphlet for the youth, I feel that there should be more articles on why we don't do something bad. Or why we wouldn't want to do something bad.

I feel that if people do have faith that the Bible is the law, they should want to strive to please the Lord by following His commandments. I also know that kids don't like to be denied some pleasures in life. And they don't like anyone telling them what to do. This is wrong of course, but that's why they need to have someone there to change their minds. Just having authority saying "THAT'S WICKED" does not do it. Of course it should!! But life isn't that simple now, and it never was.

. . . .

Dear fellow Peers,

Some of you take God so much for granted that you forget He's here. let me tell you; God is real. God is here, now, with you. Being all knowing, He realizes why you do everything that you do. He knows every trick you pull, and why you did it. God sees you every time you make a conscious decision to go against His commandments. And do you think He's smiling, and saying, "O, my blessed child is sinning against me again, No big deal."?

We know that the best of Christians cannot reach perfection in this life. Every person is a sinner. Yet, what is a Christian? It is: someone who strives as hard as they can to love the Lord, keep all of His commandments, and be repentant of their sins.

There is not a "happy medium". You either love God and live

a life of standing up for Him in public, or you don't care about God, (which is to hate) and have all of the puny pleasures of earth while at the same time giving up the non-comparable glories of Heaven.

God chose all His elect saints before the world began. Yet we must not take this opportunity to claim that we don't have to witness to others, because it won't help. God has chosen people to be saved through our example, and our witnessing! Maybe God is using you to bring someone to faith. Don't give up!

Fellow peers, if you don't stand up against the temptations of this world, you will most likely get caught deeper and deeper into a life of sin. There won't be true peace and contentment in your life ever, and the threat of everlasting damnation will be hovering over your head. Hell is really there. It's worse than your most painful sickness, that the worst hangover, that your most embarrassing moment, that the time your girl or boyfriend broke off that "perfect" relationship. It's worse than physical labor till your muscles ache and your body cries for sleep. And Hell is worse than any type of physical pain there is on this earth, or mental for that matter.

That is the just consequence of not living a life to glorify God. But I told you that to make you think first about whether it will be Heaven or Hell for you. When you become a true Christian you will realize that you love God not for the prize afterwards, but because He deserves every bit of honor and glory for everyone!

Some rock songs state that sex is like Heaven on earth. The truth is, Heaven will be zillions of times better! Maybe that example will help you realize how great it will be to glorify God and be pure, holy, sinless, and worry-free in Heaven.

Earlier I wrote something to the effect that those who aren't living their lives to God's glory show that they hate God. Is that you? Can you love and care about God if you go out and get drunk whenever you feel like it, or alcohol is available? Can you love God if you say every swear word in the book around your peers, all the time, just to be an all around "cool" person? Can you pray and talk to God as your friend, savior and judge while keeping up an uncaring way of life that is to no one's benefit and your destruction? Or are you slowly drifting away from God?

Have you given up praying? Do you feel that since you are this bad, you can't be forgiven, and are ashamed to ask God's forgiveness? Or is everything on earth just way more fun?

Maybe you don't feel the spiritual benefit that confiding in the Lord gives a person. Have patience, it will come and you can only see it by looking in your past to see what God has done for you, and what blessings he has bestowed upon you.

Maybe you do feel the earthly "benefits" immediately when you serve the world. Have you ever stopped to realize that the spiritual benefits last longer and will always be there for you, while the earthly "benefits" fade and disappear almost immediately? It's true. So true!

We who have been brought up in Christian homes are so blessed by God. Yet, we are some of the worst examples of Christians. Some of us take God so much for

granted that we literally forget He's there! Then we look in the direction of the world and say, "Hmmm, that looks new and interesting."

Keep God in your life! Love Him and have faith and complete trust in Him, and He will watch over you at all times.

But don't forget to change your way of life to His glory also. Would you keep a friend who talked to you only in private but ignored and even made fun of you in public? Well, God sure won't.

There might be a couple of you reading this and thinking, "Okay, like what is the point? This is nothing compared to having fun. Man, the chick who wrote this must be a real Holy Roller."

But I don't care. And I will pray for you, because the relationship that I have with God makes me so joyful and thankful at times, that I feel for a moment lifted out of this painful world. I wouldn't trade anything for the love of God.

Yours in Christ,
Shari R. Brummel

Dear Shari,

I want to thank you for writing to the Beacon Lights. In this way you encourage others to write to us.

It is my hope that our young people read all of the articles in the Beacon Lights.

As a staff we take note of your suggestions to have more articles on why we don't do something bad and why we wouldn't want to do something bad.

When a person having authority from God tells you "Stop what you're doing, that's wicked," he or she does so out of a love for the Holy God and out of love for you. They need not explain to you why it is wicked, although a sanctified explanation often helps a young person to see why we don't do something wicked and why we wouldn't want to do something wicked. The failure of a young person to heed these godly admonitions will mean that young person, as you state, "will most likely get caught deeper and deeper into a life of sin." And that's one reason why the admonitions are given, to keep that further falling into sin from happening. You experience God's love for you through those in authority correcting you.

"Let children be warned not to be
presumptuous or fickle or
given their desires,
but let them be peaceably submit
to their fathers and mothers,
knowing that they are fighting
against God when they cannot
submit to the yoke
that our Lord places on them."

John Calvin

The Janssen Case
Chapter IV
The Basic Issue (2)

by Prof. H. Hanko

(In the last issue of Beacon Lights we began a discussion of how common grace became an essential part of Dr. Janssen's defense of his views of Scripture. We discussed how important this whole issue of common grace was in the controversy, and we began to give some history of how common grace even appeared as an issue in the Christian Reformed Church. We concluded with showing how Rev. Herman Hoeksema, even before the Janssen controversy, had begun to challenge and eventually deny common grace. From that point we continue the discussion.)

Rev. Herman Hoeksema's denial of common grace was well-known in the Christian Reformed Church before the Janssen controversy even began.

But although there was some discussion of the whole subject, gradually the dispute died out because the attention of the church was soon directed to other matters.

It was towards the end of 1919 that controversy began in the Seminary over the teachings of Prof. Janssen.

We have discussed this controversy earlier and will not repeat here what we already said.

When Hoeksema became involved in the controversy over Prof. Janssen s teachings, he began also to write about Janssen's views in his articles in The Banner. To these articles Prof. Janssen responded. In one issue of The Banner Janssen wrote:

> We can now sum up. Our discovery brings us face to face with a very discouraging fact. The unexpected has happened. In Rev. H. Hoeksema we are after all not dealing with a critic who is a sound Calvinist. In denying common grace he has broken with true Calvinism and has in so far joined ranks with Anabaptists. He has been found to deny one of the most important doctrines of our Reformed faith.

And so Prof. Janssen drew the battle lines. He insisted that his views on Scripture were correct because common grace was an important part of the Reformed faith, and he held to his views of Scripture because of the doctrine of common grace. To this doctrine Janssen returned again and again in all his writings. In fact, so

important did this doctrine become that it basically formed his only line of defense. He used it as a two-edged sword, both to defend his own teachings and to brand his opponents, in their denial of common grace, as being out of step with the tradition of the Reformed faith, and particularly Calvinism.

There were those who claimed that this appeal to common grace was unjustified. They argued (and Hoeksema at first agreed with this) that the doctrine of common grace was irrelevant to the discussion. They argued that Janssen introduced the doctrine as a "red-herring" to attempt to lead his opponents along a wrong trail. They insisted that Janssen was only trying to obscure the real issues by an appeal to common grace in defense of his position.

And yet, when one reads Janssen's writings, it becomes undeniably clear that this was not only Janssen's last line of defense, but that it was his only defense.

And yet, the Study Committee which entered into Janssen's teachings (one member of which was Rev. Hoeksema) and the Synod of 1922, which condemned Janssen, refused steadfastly to enter into this discussion.

Why was that?

It may very well be true that Janssen, while firmly believing that common grace indeed stood at the foundation of his position with respect to Scripture, nevertheless also saw that to introduce this issue of common grace was a strategic move which would help him in his defense. This would presuppose that Janssen was aware of the fact that his opponents were not agreed on the question of common grace, that some favored it and that some opposed it. He, if this was his tactic, hoped to divide the opposition and, in this way, relieve the pressure which was being brought to bear on him.

That there was division cannot be denied. Revs. Herman Hoeksema and Henry Danhof were on the committee. Everyone knew that both strongly opposed common grace. Janssen himself suggested the strong possibility that Samuel Volbeda, a professor in Calvin Seminary who was pressing for Janssen's condemnation, agreed with Hoeksema and repudiated common grace. Janssen also stated that he did not know where the other professors stood on the question of common grace for their statements were, in Janssen's opinion, ambiguous. But he also knew that at least some of the members of the study committee were strong proponents of common grace. The conclusion, then, which Janssen came to and which he exploited in his defense was this: If I can get the committee and the professors involved in the subject of common grace, the result will be that they become so entangled in their disagreements and in their debate over common grace, they will have no unity among themselves to condemn me and my teachings.

It seems clear that the study committee sensed the truth of this. And so, in the interests of offering advice to the Theological School Committee and the Synod, they put this issue of common grace aside and refused to enter into it. It was, in their minds, more important to agree on Janssen's higher critical views of Scripture than it was to become embroiled over the question of common grace. And so

they refused to enter that part of the discussion, and the result was that the Synod of 1922, which condemned Janssen, did not enter into this aspect of the controversy either.

The result was that the committee apparently thought it possible to consider Janssen's views on Scripture apart from common grace. This was possible because Janssen's views could be considered only on the basis of the teachings of the Confessions regarding the doctrine of Scripture. It is also true that to discuss common grace would have been a diversion which could have endangered the case against Janssen. If the churches had become involved in a lengthy discussion of common grace, this would have so dominated the controversy that it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for Janssen's opponents to present a united front in their attack on Janssen. Common grace would have torn the ranks of Janssen's critics and made any condemnation of Janssen's views impossible.

We all know, of course, that when common grace did become an issue after the Janssen controversy, that all the professors in the Seminary plus all the members of the study committee joined in condemning Revs. Hoeksema and Danhof for their denial of common grace. At the Synod of 1924 where the three points were drawn up and adopted Hoeksema stood alone. Everyone who had formerly been at his side when Janssen was condemned now abandoned him and became his accusers.

Rev. Hoeksema later regretted that the committee did not deal with common grace right from the start. In an important pamphlet written after the common grace controversy (entitled: Not Anabaptist But Reformed) Hoeksema and Danhof agreed that not only was common grace always really the issue, but that if common grace were not repudiated, Janssen's views would once again prevail in the church. In this they were prophetic.

Later still, Hoeksema became even more convinced that the matter of common grace should have been dealt with immediately. In The Standard Bearer he wrote that many said: "There would never have been a Danhof-Hoeksema case in our churches (The Christian Reformed Church) if there had been no Janssen case.

Hoeksema claimed that the historical relation was clear. He wrote that in 1918-1919 he wrote against common grace and no one opposed what he said, and, in fact, he was reappointed editor of "Our Doctrine" in The Banner. Only when he criticized the 1920 decision of Synod on the Janssen question did the issue of common grace and Hoeksema's denial of it come up. Further, Hoeksema pointed out that all those who protested his teachings on common grace were really Janssen supporters. And this led him to wonder whether the relation between the Janssen case and the common grace controversy was doctrinal or personal.

Still later he wrote:

> The fact that the four professors and others of the opponents of Doctor Janssen could unite with the pro-Janssen faction in their action against the three ministers that were deposed in 1924-1925, plainly reveals that, apart from superficial differences, there was fun-

damental agreement in principle. There was in the Janssen controversy an underlying principle which, had it not been violently and intentionally forced into the background, would have paralyzed every effort of the four professors to combat Doctor Janssen's views and would have aligned them from the beginning with the pro-Janssen faction against the Reverends H. Danhof and H. Hoeksema.

Nevertheless, we may be thankful that the discussion over common grace was postponed until Janssen's views were adjudicated and condemned. But it remained a striking fact that the issue of common grace would not die; that it was resurrected shortly after the Janssen controversy was settled; and that the men who brought it up were themselves Janssen's supporters. That Hoeksema took the lead in the condemnation of Janssen; that Janssen's supporters were mainly instrumental in forcing the issue in the churches, resulting in the expulsion of Hoeksema; that those who sided with Hoeksema in opposing Janssen later became his accusers and condemners, these are some of the ironies of history.

TRAINING UP A CHILD: **COMPARING PUBLIC EDUCATION TO PARENTAL EDUCATION**

by Dirk Westra

I was raised in the Protestant Reformed Churches and educated, kindergarten through twelfth grade, in our PR Christian schools. Following high school, I spent four years at a Christian college. When I later returned to school to get my teacher certification, I attended a public university, where I was required to do my teacher assisting and my practice teaching in a public school. Getting my classroom experience in a public school would certainly not have been my first choice. It was a valuable experience, though, chiefly because it strengthened my love for Christian education.

Although the field placement director was sympathetic to my desire to do my student teaching in a Christian school, we were unable to get permission to do this. She did, however, place me in a school district which she knew to be quite conservative. "I think you'll fit in there," she said. She certainly was right. At the school where I was placed, the principal is also superintendent of Sunday

school at a Reformed Church. He, in turn placed me with a fourth grade teacher who shares our love for the Reformed faith. The fellowship of these and other Christians was a great encouragement to me throughout the semester.

Nevertheless, my faith was strengthened most when I confronted things with which I disagreed. Ultimately, I disagreed with the values and morals that were being taught.

In the realm of public education today, you hear the idea that we should be giving American youth a "values-free" education. Just give a student all the facts and options, it is said, and he can create an ethical framework that is right for him. We may not try to "force our beliefs on others." What's right for one person might not be right for everyone... and on and on go the relativistic homilies.

The ostensible goal of the public schools is a religiously neutral education. Advocates of such an education cite the constitutional separation between church and state as the basis for this. What in fact happens, though, is that they eliminate Christianity and Judeo-Christian morals—religion associated with a church—and replace them with humanistic religions, which are not associated with a church. They fail to acknowledge that humanism, materialism and all sorts of new age "relaxation techniques" are also religions, since they include moral standards, as well as beliefs about who and what God is.

Student teaching is a time to make mistakes—and learn from them. (In fact, one of my former teachers, upon hearing that I would have to do my student teaching in the public schools, told me that I ought to be thankful that I could make my mistakes in front of strangers.) The kinds of mistakes that a student teacher may make in a public school, though, differ greatly from what we in our Christian schools might consider to be mistakes.

Obviously, starting the school day with prayer in a public school would be more than a faux pas — it would be illegal. as would be teaching the students any morals that could be remotely identified with the Christian religion. On the other hand, though, the attention and deference paid to minorities and revolutionaries amount to a religious reverence in many public school classrooms. Textbook publishers are caving in to the political pressure of these often small but always vocal minorities. Thus, they publish textbooks (especially social studies) where accuracy takes a back seat to giving each minority equal time. As a public school teacher, you can probably curse the name of God and get away with it...but just mind that you don't make disparaging remarks about ethnic minorities, homosexuals or social revolutionaries.

I draw several conclusions from my experience in the public schools. First, I think we ought to pay attention to what goes on in the public schools. For one thing, it is our money that is being spent (and squandered) there. Also—and more ominously—I think the day is coming when our Christian schools may be shut down. When and if this happens, we ought to have at least an idea of how the public schools are run, so as to anticipate the problems that we will face if our children are educated there.

Second, and closely connected

with this, I can see the strangle hold that Satan is tightening around the Christian schools, with deceitful rhetoric about a religiously vanilla public school curriculum, and of making laws concerning this. Through teacher certification requirements, minority hiring quotas in private schools, and the pervasiveness of slanted curriculum materials, he will put tremendous pressure on our schools to conform to godless philosophies and ideals. Only God's grace can keep us off this broad way to destruction.

Third, I see the importance of parental involvement in education. God established his covenant with parents and their children. The goal of Satan is to break up families. If he can use public education to separate covenant children from their parents, he'll do that. Christian parents may teach their children what is right, but the public schools are being taken over by people hostile to Christianity. In the public schools, Christian students are taught to abandon or at least question the beliefs of their parents. God's command to "train up a child in the way he should go" (Prov. 22:6) is given to parents; parents should not forfeit this privilege to the state—especially a state which is becoming increasingly hostile to family and Christian values. Granted, many Christian parents send their children to public schools, where the children recognize and refute the lies of Satan. In the public schools, I found many students who were firmly grounded in the Bible and recognized the errors of evolutionism and humanism. But I think that with our parental Christian schools we have a unmatched opportunity to educate children in the fear of Jehovah all day long.

Finally, I see the necessity of teaching Christian children "the fear of God, which is the beginning [or principal part] of knowledge." After I showed my fourth graders a film which was heavily weighted with evolutionary theory, one girl raised her hand and asked, "How do they know that this all happened millions of years ago?"

"They don't," I answered. "That's just one theory—and not a very good one, I'd say—they can't prove it." I stopped there, although I longed to add, "...and besides, the Bible tells us that evolutionary theory is just a lot of hooey."

Without teaching children the principal part of knowledge (i.e. the fear of the Lord), I don't find it worthwhile to teach them any knowledge at all. Some Christian parents send their children to the public schools so they won't grow up naive, knowing nothing about the ways of the world. I don't worry that the children of Christian parents might grow up not knowing the ways of the evil world; I'm concerned that they might grow up not knowing the good ways of Jesus Christ and His kingdom. Paul spoke to this issue when he said "...I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." (Romans 16:19)

My experience with public education has only strengthened my resolve to become a teacher in our own Christian schools.

Prayer, real prayer, is a coming into the Presence of God, and a sense of His awful majesty produces a realization of our nothingness and unworthiness. -Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God

CHILDREN - GOD'S SPECIAL GIFT TO US

by Amy De Vries

This year opened up many new beginnings for me. There were new people to meet, families to get to know, lessons to create, and ideas to thrash around. Not to mention the first report cards, parent-teacher conferences, and field trip.

It seemed only appropriate that we begin the new school year by studying the beginning of the world and man during our Bible period. The first and second graders and I discussed the greatness of our Creator in making the universe and everything in it. We also marveled that God did not just stop at this, but went on to make man in His own image and as a reflection of Himself. As I gazed at these 26 faces in front of me, I realized that God had created each of them special. Just like a puzzle with its pieces in place, our classroom would be complete only when every unique child was there. Throughout the year as I got to know each of the children better, I would again and again praise the Creator for each student in our room.

As a teacher, I decided that a way to celebrate the uniqueness of each child would be to set up a corner in our room designated for a "Special Person of the Week." Each child was given a week throughout the year when he would be the "Special Person. This person would fill out a booklet about himself and include baby and birthday pictures. We all eagerly looked forward to the few minutes we took each Monday afternoon to find out the favorite foods, subjects, and treasures of each child.

Many of my college education professors influenced the way I taught the first year, but I can remember one professor telling us the importance of recognizing each child for who he is. This professor proceeded to put his words into action by quickly learning our names and backgrounds. He also invited us over for coffee. As a result of this, we began to feel more like a community working together to become the best teachers that we could be. In his classes, we were more likely to tell each other our problems and ask for advice from our fellow class- mates and this professor. Throughout this first year of teaching, I strove for this same kind of atmosphere.

I was able to get to know each child a little better when I would give the special person a treat after school and take him home afterwards. I was pleasantly surprised at how some of the students opened up to me during and after these times. One quiet child began

to raise his hand more and more in class.

Teaching these covenant children made me realize how important it is for them to hear encouragement and praise when it is due. The children who receive only criticism will never be confident of their God-given abilities. That does not mean that every child is going to receive an A on every paper and in every subject. But to me it means catching that one little boy doing a super neat job in his penmanship and encouraging him with a sticker or a note. It is amazing what a little encouragement can do! For example; for the rest of the year, this particular student always tried to do his best in penmanship. I also remember encouraging an excellent writer in the class. After a few compliments, I had many exciting stories and beautiful poems lying on my desk.

I am thankful to God that I was given the opportunity to teach, discipline, and encourage the children in our Christian school. It was a year in which I tried what I had learned in college, made mistakes, and tried again. Perhaps I learned more in it than all those college courses could teach because it was a real life experience. With the help of our Heavenly Father and the encouragement of fellow teachers and parents, it was truly an exciting and fulfilling year.

THE CHRISTIAN TEENAGER AND HIS FRIENDS

A Friend. The word may be short and simple, but the idea is complicated. A friend is one with whom you can confide and someone who can share your innermost secrets. For persons to be friends, there has to be a love for one another. For teenagers a friend is important. Because with this person, he or she is able to go places and do things together. And during a teenager's life many problems arise and someone is needed to listen to those problems.

But Christian Young People must choose the right friends. Not those of the world, but those of like faith in Jesus Christ. For if we yoke ourselves with these worldly people, bad things begin to happen. Alcohol and /or drugs enter the scene and in order to stay friends with these people, the Christian teenager must accept these things and go along with them.

My own experience with my "friends" happened this way. Day after day we would have so much fun together. Then one day my friend pulls out from his pocket a joint. My friend assured me before

that he "would never use drugs"; and that is why this took me so much by surprise.

I did not smoke this joint with him nor did I rebuke him for doing wrong and walk away, which I should have done. Instead I just stood there in amazement as he was enjoying this moment of "getting high."

I saw that "friend" a couple days later and again he did the same thing. Again I did not walk away as I should have.

After seeing that I did not like what he was doing and that I would not not join him, he was reluctant to call me whenever he wanted to do something. And to this day, he has yet to call me again and I do not miss hanging around with him either.

My fellow young people, choose your friends carefully. Do not hang around with them just because you will then be in with the "A" crowd. If they drink or use drugs, stay away from them because the only thing that will happen is that you will be dragged into their habit and into their sin.

But have fellowship with Christian young people and do the things which are right and pleasing in the sight of God. Do not worry about what others say about you because of this, but be joyful in the fact that you are doing as the Lord hath commanded.

The Gospel never claims that the Christian will be exempt from pain and suffering in this life. The hard winds and circumstances of life hurt us just as much as they hurt the world, but at the same time they drive us toward the goal of our high calling to be like Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, who became perfect through suffering. If we are not hit hard and relentlessly, we are likely to go to sleep and remain stationary. One of the things God detests greatly is a sleepy Christian, and He knows that if our faith isn't tried, we shall surely go to sleep.

The Behavior of Belief, Part II, pg. 100
by S. Zodhiates

BOOKS:

Published by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies

Reformed Education by Prof. David Engelsma -86pp. - **$2.50**

Originally published in 1977 by the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies, this excellent book was reprinted by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies in 1981. An excellent series of speeches on:

The covenant basis of Christian education
Scripture in the schools
Reformed education and culture
The Protestant Reformed teacher - and
The goal of Reformed education.

Implications of Public Confession of Faith by Abraham Kuyper - 68pp. - **$2.50**

A reprint of Abraham Kuyper's stimulating volume answering the question, "What is expected of me after I make confession of faith?" He reveals how full Christian life does not end but begins with confession of Christ as a personal Savior. An ideal gift book which includes a presentation page.

Leaving Father and Mother by Rev. C. Hanko - 56pp. - **$1.50**

A brief discussion of finding a mate, and courtship, the marriage vows, and the bond of marriage that unites two lives in love, in devotion, and in the fear of the Lord.

Christian Liberty by Rev. R. Harbach - 48pp. - **$1.50**

An excellent short book on Christian Liberty in matters indifferent, concerning proper mutual respect, vs. judging and despising, in observance of days, occasions to fall, offenses, and the principle of faith.

NEW BOOK

Jesus' Beauty Shining In You by Rev. C. Haak and Rev. R. Van Overloop, Don Doezema and Marybeth Lubbers - 187 pp. - (retail $6.50) - **New Book Sale $4.00** + postage, **until September 1.**

The three main authors of this book took each fruit of the Spirit as given in Galatians 5:22-26 and wrote from a particular point of view. Don Doezema wrote on the fruit shown in the life of Christ; Marybeth Lubbers wrote about the fruit shown in the life a biblical character; and Rev. Van Overloop wrote on the fruit of the Spirit shown in the life of Reformed youth today. A superb study of the fruit of the Spirit in the life of Christ and in the lives of God's people.

Orders for books should be sent to:
Beacon Lights, P.O. Box 375, Jenison, MI 49428.

OF RHINOCERI AND PALM TREES

by Rev. D. H. Kuiper

Did you ever see a palm tree growing next to a glacier? I did, kind of.

Have you ever been inside a rhinoceros? I have, in a way.

Let me explain a bit. Most readers of the Beacon Lights are not aware that many years ago it was my privilege to be a teacher in our Protestant Reformed schools. Having graduated with a bachelor's degree in Chemistry, I decided that I ought to obtain the masters degree in earth science. I was accepted at a large graduate school with the proviso that I first take prerequisite courses in mineralogy, geology, and climatology. This I arranged to do at Western Washington University, located near our Lynden congregation. It was the summer of 1964. You will say, We are dealing here with ancient history in more ways than one!

After six weeks of intense, classroom instruction we spent the last two weeks of the summer on field trips, first on the beaches and in the mountains of western Washington, and then in the arid environs of the eastern part of the state. Go with me on two of these trips on which we collected rocks and minerals, and observed various structures of geologic significance.

Riding high above the coastal plain of northwest Washington stands Mt. Baker (10,776 Feet), blanketed in perennial snow, with long fingers of glaciers reaching down in several directions. These slow moving glaciers maintain a thickness of forty to a hundred feet: compressed ice at the bottom and new snow at the top. In sight of Coleman Glacier, at an altitude of approximately 8,500 feet, we were being instructed in glacier movement when the boulder I was resting upon caught my attention. Our learned professor informed me that what we had here was a large fossil of a palm frond. Careful application of the rock hammer yielded a magnificent specimen which even now sits on the hearth of my study fireplace. A large, flat piece of petrified material, it clearly shows the structure of part of a palm leaf, the ridges and veins converging on a point (not on the rock), giving the familiar appearance of the palm leaf. At 50 degrees north latitude, and at 8,500 feet elevation, with glaciers all around? Our leader fearlessly dated the fossil at 90-70 million years old.

The following week found the class in eastern Washington which, for the most part, is covered with lava (scoria) from ancient

volcanoes and other disturbances. One evening after supper in a state park, the leader of our class asked several of us if we were up to some stiff work; if we would row across the lake and do a little climbing, he would show us something we would not soon forget! Soon two rowboats were tied to some brush on the far side of the lake. Six of us students then climbed a faint trail on the face of a cliff that was only a few degrees on the friendly side of perpendicular. Our attention was directed to a small hole high above our heads. With flashlights in hand, we took turns standing on each other's shoulders. When my turn came, I thrust head and shoulders through the small opening and found myself inside a rhinoceros!

By shining the flashlight about, I observed a perfect cast of a mature rhinoceros body. The opening I filled was near the rump of the animal; the remainder of the cast stretched out before me for ten or twelve feet. The animal had been lying on its side with its feet slightly higher than its spine when it was entombed in flowing lava. Closer inspection revealed every toenail on its round, stumpy feet, the coarse hair that covered parts of his body, and at the far end the head with eyes minutely outlined, deep wrinkles about the face, and two terrible horns. There was no skeleton or any other remains of the three ton body; likely everything had been incinerated by the lava. but every detail and dimension was faithfully preserved in rock. The professor was correct in that I'd never forget this; he was dead wrong when he dated the demise of the beast at 90-70 million years ago.

Does the Christian, holding faithfully to the Word of God, have answers for the fossil record? Is this record embarrassing at best or soul-shaking at worst? If we try to deny fossils, or anything that definitely belongs to the creation in which we live, we do two things: we bring unnecessary reproach of unbelievers upon the Church for being blind, ignorant and naive, and we deny God His glory for something wonderful He has done. Although every fossil and related phenomena may not have a Biblical answer at this time, we may be sure that there is such an answer. And, by faith we also understand that no theory contrary to the Word of God can possibly be correct.

The two examples mentioned above pose no threat to the child of God who holds to divine creation in six, twenty-four hour days, and to all the rest of scripture as well. Palm trees in northern climates and rhinoceri near the Canadian border may surprise us today, as we know these creatures to be found only in the tropic sub-tropic zones. (There are other examples of what may be called odd displacements: remains of tropical fish and warm-water coral sprinkled lavishly across the Arctic part of the globe.) All these things point in the direction of a pre-flood, universally mild climate.

The Bible has a way of giving scientific faces that no Christian student or scientist may ignore. On the basis of Genesis 2:5-6, we are justified in saying that it did not rain before the flood; God nourished the plants with a mist from the earth. On the basis of Genesis 8:22 we are justified in saying that before the flood there were no seasons, for in this verse God speaks for the first time of

"seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter." One of the tremendous, cataclysmic acts of God in the flood was that He tilted the axis of the earth 23 1/2 degrees from an upright position relative the sun. Without this tilt there could only be inhospitable torrid and frigid zones; some how, Rehwinkle suggests either ocean currents or a cloud canopy (Cf. The Flood Alfred M. Rehwinkle, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), God created a universal, mild, Spring-like climate that allowed plant and animal life to prosper everywhere on the face of the earth.

In the flood, that great deliverance of the Church by water and that great picture of the final deliverance of the Church in the end by fire, God worked many changes in His creation. The windows of the heavens were opened and the fountains of the deep were broken. What havoc was worked when God shook the earth: incalculable amounts of water were added to the earthly sphere; the earth tilted to a specific degree in relation to the sun; seasons began; continents, islands, and mountain ranges (above and below sea level) were formed, large areas of the earth were convoluted; and countless volcanoes belched forth their unlovely contents. All animals, birds, and men not with Noah in the ark were destroyed, including the rhinoceros I invaded. Plant species became restricted as to where they could grow and bring forth after their kind. In the universal flood, and in the changes worked by God in that flood, we find the answers to most, if not all, the challenges hurled by unbelieving science against the Bible and its adherents.

In that class, so long ago, I recall two classmates: a Jewish teacher from a public school in Arizona and a "Reformed teacher"from a Christian school in Michigan. The Jewish teacher, though he denied the New Testament and the Christ, held to creation according to Genesis 1-2. The "Reformed teacher" believed in the period theory and accepted eagerly all that the professors were saying. "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His glorious and for His wonderful worKs to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:8)

. . . It will be necessary to call to your remembrance what I formerly observed, viz., that the safety of the Church depends as much on this doctrine as human life does on the soul. If the purity of this doctrine is in any degree impaired, the Church has received a deadly wound; and therefore, when I have shown that it was for the greater part extinguished, it will be the same as if I has shown that the Church had been brought to the very brink of destruction.

J. Calvin

CHURCH NEWS

by Lora Bouwkamp

DOON, (Iowa)

Dolan John was born to Mr. and Mrs. Paul DeRoon on May 8, 1991.

Chelsey Janae was born to Mr. and Mrs. Jay Teunissen.

Kim Klein and Craig VanderVeen were united in holy matrimony on May 17.

Lori Mantel and Kevin Eppinga were united in marriage May 24.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Hoekstra received a baby girl, Ashley Jea by adoption.

Mr. Loren Gritters and Nancy Van Baren were joined in marriage June 28.

Mr. and Mrs. John Wynia were blessed with the birth of Marlena Leigh June 28.

Mr. and Mrs. Floyd VanDenTop were blessed with the birth of Lisa Marie July 5.

Mr. and Mrs. Ken Vink were blessed with the birth of Kent Douglas July 21.

Mr. and Mrs. Steve Hilt were blessed with the birth of Michael Seth July 29.

Valen Kay was added to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Perry Van Egdom August 3.

HOPE, (Redlands)

We express our sympathy to the Meelker family in the death of Eltje Meelker.

Sue Porte celebrated her 89th birthday May 12.

Mr. and Mrs. John Ekema celebrated their 54th anniversary May 12.

Mrs. Margaret McNeece celebrated her 83rd birthday May 26.

Martin De Vries and Karen Gnatkowski were united in marriage June 8.

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Gritters were blessed with a baby boy, David Edwin.

Mr. John Jabaay celebrated his 85th birthday June 14.

John and Becky deBoer rejoice in the birth of a son, Blake Wesley.

Bud and Mary de Vries express their deep appreciation for the sympathy shown them in the death of their son Robert.

Mr. John Ekema celebrated his 78th birthday July 4.

The congregation welcomes Mr. Stephan Engelsma from South Holland, PRC.

PELLA, (Iowa)

Julie Bekkering, Lynn Bekkering, Lon De Zwarte and Chuck Pawloski made public confession of faith June 2.

FIRST, (Grand Rapids)

We extend congratulations to Mrs. Tena Doezema who celebrated her 95th birthday July 10.

Mrs. Corrie Vander Woude celebrated her 89th birthday July 12.

Mr. Henry Hagedoorn celebrated his 89th birthday June 16.

The congregation welcomes Mr. and Mrs. Larry Boersma (Eleanor) from Cascade CRC. We extend our sympathy to them in the death of his mother.

Mrs. Marguerite DeYoung mourns the death of her brother-in-law.

We extend congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Steve (Dawn) Pastoor who were united in marriage June 7.

Mrs. Jean Pastoor celebrated her 82nd birthday June 17.

Mr. and Mrs. Lary Doezema transferred their membership to Faith PRC.

The congregation extends her Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Henry VanderWal in the recent loss of their daughter Barbara.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Hofman rejoice in the birth of Jill Marie, July 18.

Rev. Robert Harbach celebrated his 77th birthday July 27.

Tim Decker and Kathy Van Dyke were united in marriage July 26.

Mr. and Mrs. Dave Monsma were blessed with the birth of Nicholaus Jay on July 20.

Mrs. Elizabeth Hagedoorn celebrated her 82nd birthday on August 2.

Mr. Jacob Koenes celebrated his 81st birthday August 2.

The membership papers of Mrs. Henrietta Oomkes were transferred to Faith PRC.

Rev. George Lubbers celebrated his 82nd birthday August 6.

Mrs. Marguerite DeYoung celebrated her 84th birthday August 12.

Miss Beverly Storey made public confession of her faith August 11.

LYNDEN, (Washington)

Calvin Den Hartog and John Heystek made public confession of their faith May 5.

John and Jenny Tolsma celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary.

Heidi VanderMeulen had her papers sent to Loveland PRC.

Jerry Vogel's membership was received from Redlands PRC.

SOUTHWEST, (Grand Rapids)

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Jason Ryan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Doug Boone, Stephanie Lynn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Kamps, and to Jordan Dean, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Reitsma.

Andrea Kraima and Arthur Klein were married June 21.

Nathan Kamps, Andrea Klein, Joan Kuiper, Jill Schipper, and Ron Schipper made public confession of faith June 30.

Thomas VanderWoude and Linda DeKraker were united in marriage May 18.

Mrs. Lena Koppenol celebrated her 85th birthday May 20.

SOUTHEAST, (Grand Rapids)

The consistory granted the transfer of membership of Rev. Key and family to our Randolph, WI PRC and for Pat and Joan Baskwell to Kalamazoo PRC.

Mrs. Mary Kamminga celebrated her 93rd birthday July 6.

LOVELAND, (Colorado)

Mr. and Mrs. Tim Bertsch were blessed with the birth of a baby girl, Nicole Marie.

Lisa Marie Brands was bap-

tized June 2.

Miss Kim Poortinga made public confession of her faith July 28.

BETHEL, (Illinois)

The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Steve Miller and family were sent to them at their request.

HULL, (Iowa)

Mr. Jeff Kalsbeek and Mary Hoekstra were united in marriage June 21.

FAITH, (Jenison)

Bob Moelker and Gail Shepherd were united in marriage June 15.

Jordan Kooienga, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Kooienga was baptized June 23.

Mr. Kimmy Kooiker and Miss Cheryl Rau were united in marriage July 19.

HUDSONVILLE, (Michigan)

Lisa Koop and Thad Lubbers were united in marriage June 28.

Gerry and Kathy Schut give thanks to God for the birth of Kyle Gerald.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Prins rejoice in the birth of Brianna Rae July 16.

Mrs. Mary Holstege celebrated her 80th birthday.

Mrs. Ann Miedema celebrated her 85th birthday July 25.

Elder and Mrs. Arnold Haveman have been married 50 years July 25.

Mr. Gerrit Lubbers celebrated his 84th birthday July 31.

Tim Bartelds and Heather Kreuzer were united in marriage August 9.

Mr. M. Mellema celebrated his 83rd birthday August 8.

We express our sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Hi. Kuiper in the loss of her brother, Cornelius VanderWeerd from Iowa.

HOPE, (Walker)

Mike and Grace Lotterman rejoice in the birth of Gayle Eileen.

Joan Buiter and Dave Hanko were united in marriage June 28.

The baptism of Gayle Lotterman and Andrea Lou Kooienga, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Doug Kooienga was administered June 23.

Sharla Langerak and Scott Moelker made confession of their faith August 18.

The Peter Kamps family has transferred their membership to Hudsonville PRC.

Mr. and Mrs. Tim Koole were blessed with the birth of a son Seth Loren.

Mr. and Mrs. Dick Kooienga thank the congregation for the congratulations expressed on their 64th wedding anniversary.

Tim and Brenda Bomers were blessed with the birth of a son, Alexander Timothy.

Mr. Dick Kooienga observed his 88th birthday July 26.

The membership papers of Marcia (Lotterman) VerBeek are being transferred to Southwest PRC.

BYRON CENTER, (Michigan)

Ken and Cathy Rietema were blessed with the adoption of Josef Anthony.

Rev. and Lori Gritters were blessed with the birth of Lisa Jean.

Walt and Harriet DeLange celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary and her 85th birthday the 22nd of May.

Sid and Lisa Miedema rejoice in the birth of Jordan Philip.

The membership papers of Mrs. Amy Oomkes (nee Velthouse)

from Faith PRC, and of Mr. and Mrs. Chip (Laura) Wierenga from Southeast PRC have been received.

The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Tom (Buffy) Schimmel were received from Hope PRC and S. Blendon Reformed.

Naomi Noble made public confession of her faith July 14.

SOUTH HOLLAND, (Illinois)

The membership papers of Mrs. Janet Kooy were sent to her home so that she might join Bethany CRC with her husband.

Andy and Sheryl Birkett were blessed with the birth of Daniel Gerrit.

Mr. and Mrs. Egbert Maatman's membership papers were sent to their home so they might join Lynwood CRC.

GRANDVILLE, (Michigan)

Mr. Tom Vander Woude has requested that his membership be transferred to our Southwest PRC.

The marriage of Becky Lotterman and Cornelis Kleyn took place July 5.

The sacrament of baptism was administered July 7 to Emily Joanna, daughter of Steve and Shelly Spencer, David Mitchell, son of Tony and Melinda La count, and to Jason Allen, son of Rich and Jane Van Til.

The consistory has received the membership of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Vander Lee from Hope CRC.

HOLLAND, (Michigan)

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Warner and their 3 baptized sons were accepted as members from Haven CRC of Zeeland.

Mr. and Mrs. Randall (Anne) Alkema were received as members from the First Presbyterian Church of Schenectady, New York.

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Cammenga celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

Mrs. Sarah Hoolsema celebrated her 87th birthday July 1.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Wassink thank the congregation for the expressions of sympathy in the death of her sister-in-law.

Rog and Viv Berens thank the congregation for their support in the death of Rog's brother.

FIRST, (Edmonton)

Dave and Susan Zylstra celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with an open house July 13.

Gordon Mark Tolsma was born July 8 to Mr. and Mrs. George Tolsma and baptism was administered July 21.

Leslie Joanne Tolsma, infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Doug Tolsma was baptized July 21.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hendricks (nee Rhoda Zylstra) were united in marriage July 20.