BEACON LIGHTS

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The undersigned was requested to contribute an article on the subject, "What must be the attitude of our young people toward our mission work?", in this August "Missionary" issue of our Beacon Lights. In this subject the emphasis falls, I believe, upon the word "our"—what must be the attitude of our young people toward our mission work?

At first glance, we might be inclined to regard this subject as rather strange. An attitude, we understand, refers not only to our personal opinion of this mission work, but also to our reaction. The subject implies that we act, reflect in our walk and conduct this attitude toward our missionary activity. Is this not a strange subject? Does anyone among us doubt what our attitude should be, or that our attitude must be positive? Let us understand and be deeply conscious of the fact that mission work constitutes the high calling of the Church of God in the midst of the world. A church which is utterly or woefully lacking in missionary activity has thereby forfeited the very name Church. The Lord has commanded us to preach the gospel to every creature and to show forth the Word of the blessed God of our salvation in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Hence, my negative reaction to this subject is promptly ignored by the undersigned. The question is not whether we shall engage in this activity, but what, positively, shall our attitude be?

We should note, however, that my subject makes mention of our mission work. This, we understand, refers to the missionary activity of our Protestant Reformed Churches. I am sure that I am expected, in this brief article, to emphasize this aspect of the subject. The implication is undeniable: as Protestant Reformed Churches we have a calling, a high calling of God in Christ Jesus, to proclaim the blessed truth which constitutes our Protestant Reformed heritage. My subject would emphasize that we must conduct mission work as Protestant Reformed Churches, that we must therefore remain distinctive, refuse to be swept along by the tide of the present day which would unite the various churches

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and thereby cause the Church of God in the midst of the world to lose her distinctiveness and become colorless. The truth of God's sovereign and particular grace in Christ Jesus is indispensable for true missionary activity, and it is therefore vital and imperative that we retain our peculiar distinctiveness.

Facing the question, "What must be the attitude of our young people toward our mission work"?, we understand, I am sure, that mission work is, properly speaking, the function of the Church of God institutionally. We must not confuse personal testimony for Christ with mission work. We may and must confess the Name of Jesus before men. Mission work, however, is official preaching of the Gospel by the Church through her institute, her offices. The question is, therefore, not: How must I conduct mission work?, but: What must be the attitude of the young people toward the mission work as conducted by our Protestant Reformed Churches?

Moreover, we should also be acquainted with the peculiar nature of our Protestant Reformed mission work. That the gospel must be preached to all nations, and, therefore, also to the "heathen" we understand. However, our churches are limited because of our numerical weaknesses and this must be taken into consideration. Besides, we believe that we, in our mission endeavor, must proceed from Jerusalem. This, we know, characterized the work of the apostles when they were sent forth by Christ to preach the gospel. And they adhered strictly to the rule: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. Hence, we must work out from "home". The Christian Reformed Churches constitute the immediate field of our mission endeavor. I realize that we are ridiculed by the Christian Reformed Churches for this stand. This conception is thoroughly Scriptural, however. Besides, the Christian Reformed Churches themselves proceeded from this very same principle years ago.

What, then, should be the attitude of our young people toward our mission work?

FIRST, and fundamentally, we must be acquainted with and love the Cause of our Protestant Reformed Churches. This, I say, is of the utmost significance. Any salesman must be convinced of the value of his product; we, too, must be convinced that we represent the Cause of the Living God. It must be our conviction that our Protestant Reformed churches have the right of existence before God and that the Lord has delivered unto our churches the truth. This can and must be determined. It surely can be determined. How many of our young people are acquainted with the origin of our churches? How many of our young people are acquainted with 1924? What are the Three Points? Do we know them? Are we able to refute them? Do we ever discuss them? Are our young people strong in doctrine or are they woefully ignorant? We are Protestant Reformed Churches and our young people are Protestant Reformed young people. What does that mean? If we do not
have the truth we do not have the right of existence. On the other hand, if we do possess the truth we must proclaim it. Let me repeat: This is of vital importance. The Church of God must proclaim the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. She has no other calling. Has that truth been revealed unto us? Does that blessed gospel constitute the heritage of our churches? If so, our calling is clear: the Lord commands us to hold forth the banner of His Word and truth.

SECONDLY, inseparably connected with the foregoing, as young people we must study and love our Protestant Reformed Cause. Again I ask: How many of our young people know the Three Points, and are they able to refute them? Do we realize that such matters as the irresistible and sovereign bestowal of Divine grace, the utter depravity of the natural man, the gospel as a Divine power unto salvation rather than a Miserable offer are the issues which today separate us from the Christian Reformed Churches? It is true that our churches must perform this mission work institutionally. However, it is just as true that, if we are to proclaim our blessed truths to those outside the pale of our churches, we ourselves must present a united front. We ourselves must be strong if we would gain others. We ourselves must love the truth if we are to continue to proclaim it to others. We ourselves must be united. Are we? Do we love the Word of God? Do we study that Word of God? Do we seek, as young people, our Creator in the days of our youth? How shall we continue as a truth-loving people if that truth we neglect? I wish I could say that the young people of today were characterized by a passion and desire for the truth of the Word of God. What must be the attitude of our young people toward this vital question? I ask you, my friends: Study the Scriptures, search diligently the Word of God, and become more and more acquainted with the blessed heritage of our Prot. Ref. Churches.

THIRD, let us remember our missionaries before the throne of God's grace in prayer. They need our prayers. It is vital for them to know that they, in their tremendously difficult work, are being supported at home by the prayers of the people of God. Our prayers will quicken them, encourage them, strengthen them. But it is also necessary for us that we pray. We pray, generally speaking, if we experience the need of prayer. To pray for our missionaries implies that we are conscious of our calling as Protestant Reformed Churches to proclaim the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our own lives will be spiritually enriched. The spiritual needs of the Church of God will find more and more a place in our lives and consciousness. Let us, also as young people, develop a "missionary" consciousness.

FOURTH, let us prayerfully examine ourselves, whether we have personally the desire to go forth into the Lord's vineyard and labor in the Word of God. To be sure, the Lord commands His Church to go forth and proclaim the
Missionary endeavor which has always characterized the Church of God in the New Testament era. Beginning with the Scriptural records of the missionary activities of the apostles as recorded in the book of Acts and continuing down through the ages, the Christian Church has had a continuous record of missionary endeavors. In fact, it is possible to say that when missionary activity is absent, the Church has ceased to fulfill the injunctions of Christ. “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”.

There is much these days which is called missionary activity, but which in reality, is far from it. I have reference to the so-called mission programs of large bodies of nominal Christendom, namely, Catholicism and modern Protestantism. The former group, mainly through the Jesuits, extends its activity over the face of the whole earth and with a passionate zeal seeks to subjugate millions to the hierarchy of Rome. They seek mere numerical strength, caring nothing for the necessity of a true and sound faith in Christ alone as Mediator.

Modern Protestantism on the other hand is also filled with a sort of zeal, a zeal to make converts by means of material things. Millions of dollars in this country are expended by foreign mission boards to educate and train backward peoples of the earth in the glories of modern civilization and cultural progress. Giving mere creature comforts to the remote peoples of the earth, they would have us believe that they are fulfilling the mandate of Christ. To those who have the courage to oppose this social gospel they give the name of “trouble maker”, and oust them from their assemblies. The irony of the situation is that the mission churches of the past century founded by the larger Protestant groups in the 19th century often have to call on their spiritual mother to repent. A case in point here is the Presbyterian churches of Oriental countries such as Korea, China, and Japan.

A sound and Scriptural missionary endeavor does exactly ONE thing—preach Christ, the power of God unto salvation. This was the message of the apostles. This was their Gospel and that always has and always will be the only true and sincere missionary endeavor. This was the message that Paul proclaimed. Does he not say in Rom. 1:16: “I am not
ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation.”

The correct and true missionary endeavor has that mark of distinction.

The zeal which should characterize our missionary endeavors ought to be properly governed and controlled. Shall we seek to make many converts? Shall we try to win the world for Christ? Shall we lament when our missionary enterprises fail seemingly to bear fruit? Oh, no! Hearken back once more to the days of the apostles. Filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking with unprecedented boldness, they preached the gospel and then Scripture tells us that, “The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Acts 2:37.

The results of the missionary endeavor then is plainly beyond human control and our zeal should be diverted to a much more important question. Do we witness a true confession? In all our walk of life we have a very great opportunity and privilege to witness to the fact that we are new creatures in Christ Jesus. If that is our happy state, we certainly will endeavor to do missionary work, namely, bear witness of the power and grace of God! Our zeal should be concerned therefore, with maintaining the purity of the Gospel. In this manner only can we witness to the power of God.

— NOTICE! —

Delegates and Society Members:

Don’t fail to read the proposals presented by the Board, by Oak Lawn Society, and by the South Holland Society.
We receive a glimpse of Mission activities in India by means of the following letters. The first is a letter from Rev. A. Petter, Orange City, Iowa, regarding the work of his sister, Mrs. Anna Grundy, in the Missionary Orphan Home in India.

Readers of Beacon Lights:

The Board of Beacon Lights has announced the prospects of a Mission issue, and has asked me to give some remarks on the work of my sister, Mrs. Grundy, who is missionary in India and has visited America on a furlough in the past two years.

In responding to this invitation, I shall assume that our readers, though mostly of the youth, are not interested in the first place in entertaining remarks and items, but rather in some enlightening remarks to help them along in their interest in the work of missions.

We accept, as Reformed people, that the purpose of missions is the gathering together of God's people and to bring them to manifestation as the glorious body of the Son of God, the Church. Whatever I shall write will, I hope, be helpful in our realization of that calling.

About nineteen years ago Mrs. Grundy received a call to come to India to help in a missionary orphan home there. She was at that time still Miss Anna Petter, and was teaching in a Christian School in Roseland, Chicago. After much prayer and deliberation she set sail for this unknown field.

At that time there was as head at this home an aged woman who had spent many years already in the hills of India who was now aging to the point that made additional younger help very urgent. The method there used to carry on mission work was to take in unwanted, abandoned or orphaned native children and to bring them up in the midst of the Christian environment of this home. By this time there has through this manner of working, grown up a considerable family of these foster children who have come to maturity and responsibility and have become missionaries or missionary teachers or helpful members in the native churches.

About nine years after her departure Miss
Petter returned on a furlough to the U. S., very badly in need of physical recuperation and feeling the need of presenting the work to those who supported it. Returning after about a year, she resumed her work. During this second period several weighty changes took place in her situation. The toil, the heat, the privation, the poverty became too much for her at last. She broke down completely in health and it was necessary to move her by train, by bus, and by stretcher to the Missionary Hospital in North India of which Dr. Stuart Bergsma was at that time the head. Here she lay for a long time between life and death. But by constant and loving care she was at last restored sufficiently to resume her part in the work. During this time also Miss Sweinenberg the aged head of the Orphanage passed away, and one of the fostered children, now grown up, complicated the disposal of her right and claims so that it became necessary to reorganize the operation of the Home.

And at this time also Miss Petter was drawn into close contact with another mission in the hills, and as a consequence she was married to Mr. Mark Grundy, one of a generation of Grundy's who have labored in India many years and have established several little churches and day schools in the hills of Northern India.

As a consequence the Orphanage and these little hill churches have become much closer drawn together in their operation. The fruit of these labors is that there are about 300 native Christians in these parts of whom it may be testified that in general they are strong of faith, morally and spiritually delivered from all the corruption and superstition and evil of heathenism.

So much for this simple rather sketchy narrative.

Now the question arises, who supports this work and how is it organized. Also here I can best begin at the beginning of Mrs. Grundy's work there.

We may safely say that Mrs. Grundy is a born Missionary. I can give an interesting anecdote to illustrate this. When we were little children at home there was an abandoned log house about a stones throw from our home and one evening a crippled tramp took shelter in this place for the night. My sister, then still a grammar school girl, persuaded mother to fix a little lunch of sandwiches for the poor fellow, and with this she went to him and while she gave it to him she told him of Jesus and His love for sinful men. And this was typical of her life which was from the very beginning marked by a child-like fear and reverence for God and His word and by a desire to tell people about the only way of salvation from sin. And in harmony with this her life as a normal student, as a school teacher, as a city mission worker was always characterized by the desire to be first and foremost a missionary.

Consequently, while she was a school teacher in Roseland, she was also engaged in a small mission (I believe it was Lithuanian) as a Sunday school tea-
cher, and while there she was confronted with this call to come to India to fill this urgent need at the Orphanage. At this same time she attended the Moody Bible Institute for study and practical experience in Mission work.

Against this background we are to see the official status she held. For when this call came there could be no provisions made by the church to which she belonged for entering upon this work. Although she was very reticent in her conversation with me about these things, I could readily see that the cause was the slowness and the spiritually unimaginative and unadaptive attitude of the Church. This is not unusual with churches. In fact it is often complained of. And these who are ardent in the cause of missions in such situations often stand alone or with a little group of supporters, as a separate spiritual body within the church.

As a result of this a group of friends undertook her support and sent her as an independent faith mission. And so she has worked throughout these many years.

What must be our evaluation of this. We have a problem here that we must take seriously. On the one hand we may say, of course we may never foster a church within a church, or we may say only the church can call and send out missionaries. To this we may respond that such a group can and often does separate itself and organize itself as a church and is then free to call and send.

On the other hand we may say that the church must be alive and ready to implement the desire of those whom the Lord fills with a desire to declare the Gospel of Christ when the fields are white. To this again may be answered that this desire and this choice of field must be controlled by the church as the institution of Christ.

You will readily see that these are merely technical solutions and are perhaps more evasions than solutions. And you will also see that our solution must be spiritual. The answer is that in the power of love, the church, the whole church, burns with a desire to carry its message of salvation to gather more members into that blessed church of the Son of God, that the church thus seeks for mouth-pieces who are able and fitted to speak this message in her name, and that there be such missionary-spirited men and women, who are waiting and longing to be sent out and be supported with the God-speed, the prayers, the sympathies and the gifts of the living missionary church. The mouth cannot say to the body I have no need of thee; and the body cannot say to the mouth I have no need of thee.

By this time this work is supported by very many individuals and small groups, also several of our church societies have given her gifts. This is under the control of the Lethgarie Faith and Prayer League, Hdq. in Roseland. And yet she herself has plainly indicated that this is not her ideal. Her ideal is the support and sympathy and prayers of an organ-
At this point the question may arise, can an individual or a group, or could a church support this work of which it does not know the exact doctrinal position and persuasion.

In answer to this we must try to place ourselves in the position of these missionaries. This position is first of all practical Christianity. As an example the activity of the Grundy Mission has been more and more withdrawn from the control of the sponsoring church in England because this church demanded the subordination to the English government. The missionaries rightly objected that this was altogether in conflict with the freedom and equality which all have in Christ, the Redeemer of the Church.

In other similar instances it appears that these churches have to live their own simple lives and do not have very close contact with the forms and prejudices of more cultured churches. Mrs. Grundy would often remark, when the conversation would assume rather clear doctrinal distinctions and knowledge among the native Christians, "Oh, they could not possibly grasp that; or, Oh, we could not work with such distinctions there. We have tried some of our simple American catechism books and we had to abandon these and return to the simplest explanations of the Bible. It is not possible to expect creatures who can hardly keep body and soul together because of hunger, to delve into doctrinal questions."

On the other hand the work of missionary for many years has also drawn these missionaries closer to the simple word of God. They are cured of the idea that the heathen are waiting and hungry for the word of God, cured of the idea that human persuasion can bring men to Christ, and also taught by experience that when God draws men out of the darkness they are safe in His keeping and all the powers of the devil through the subtle means of hatred, prejudice, and seduction cannot break the work that He has once begun.

We may expect that these men and women who give themselves to this life of sacrifice and faith whereby they have to live close to the word of God, will also relatively speaking become schooled in the pure and true knowledge of God and the whole council of God.

There are among our young people as yet no missionaries. But are there those who aspire to be, are there those preparing for the work? As a true Church of God we must be a mission Church. There must be the power of the church to reach out with zeal to call the chosen of God into the fold. And there must be mouthpieces to proclaim this message of the Church. Are there among the readers of this article young people who will prepare for and fulfill this task and calling? There should be! Should you be one of them?
This second letter was written by a mission worker in South India some time ago. This letter and the foreword were sent in by Mr. G. Ten Elshof, Grand Rapids.

"We are not interested in Missions! Especially not foreign missions! The only "field" we know is where another has strawed and sown. We tear down established churches instead of tilling the virgin soil. We let others pioneer and endure hardships and privations and then we infiltrate after they are established." These are but a few of the accusations which are hurled at us as a Protestant Reformed denomination.

It is not my purpose in this introduction to refute these accusation—not because it cannot be done either in whole or part, but because we would simply introduce the sender and partial author of the letter which is to follow. And it will be left up to each one to determine in what measure we have fulfilled the command of Christ.

It is also desireable in order to acquire a true perspective of our missionary activity that we occasionally lift our eyes beyond the horizon of our own denomination and look also upon the works of others and that not only to criticise but also to learn from them.

And now, to the introduction:—It so happens that the author is my brother-in-law. That, of course accounts for the fact that we from time to time receive information and pictures concerning their activities as a missionary to India from the Reformed Churches.

While attending Hope College he was boarding at our home in Holland, Mich., and worked the night shift at General Motors to finance his education. After graduating from Hope College he attended a seminary out East followed by a year of agricultural work and study and a study of the difficult language of the land to which he was determined to go.

He married an only child of an eastern college professor and she, together with their two year old daughter have cheerfully endured the privations, diseases, discomforts and numerous inoculations resulting from their determination to bring the light of the Gospel as they understood it to that foreign field.

It would not be difficult to fill this entire issue of Beacon Lights with incidents and pathos of their work. And the fact that Christianity and civilization become interwoven becomes very evident from various incidents which he has related to us. ... But, for the time being let this suffice, and let us remember that as we sit at our tables or view our well-stocked cupboards, there are others who for lack of a grain of rice are wasting away and starving. May that cry of that mother and that child go past the vision
of this printed page and past our physical ears.

Geo. Ten Elshof.

* * * *

Dear Relatives and Friends:

As Christmas comes around again we are entering our second year in India and a very eventful year it has been. We have witnessed the final stage of the struggle for freedom. August 15, 1947, is one of the great landmarks of Indian history. That day marks the consummation of a long-cherished dream. The political struggle is over. We are now in the midst of the second phase of Indian rebirth—the communal struggle, more tragic than any words can measure. We have to face the third phase—the social and economic struggle—which may yet prove to be the bitterest struggle of all. But the year that has seen India divided into two dominions with Bengal and Punjab flowing red with human blood has also seen three major groups of Christians

united into the Church of South India. Thus one of the great obstacles in the spread of Christianity in Asia is now being removed. It was my privilege to witness the Inauguration of Church Union at close range as a press photographer representing the Church of South India in behalf of religious publications all over the world.

We have now completed our first year of language study at the United Theological College at Bangalore where we had opportunity not only to study the language in which our work is to be done and the customs and manners of the people among whom we are to work, but also to come into intimate contact with the finest of Indian Christian youth and the future leadership of the Indian Church. Having finished our course we have now returned to the Arcot Mission and have been assigned to take the place of Mr. Jack DeValois, principal of the Katpadi Agricultural Institute, while he is in America on furlough. In our duties at the Institute and in the villages throughout our whole mission area we will have many opportunities for helping to strengthen the Christian community in these difficult days. The Christian Church has almost unlimited opportunities in India today for service and a ministry of mercy and reconciliation. Several of our doctors and nurses have gone to serve in the refugee camps in the Punjab. In countless instances Christians have been able to stand between Hindus and Moslems in their frenzy of mass slaughter. No one will ever know how many babies have been saved from starvation, or how many living skeletons were brought back to some resemblance

"On The Farm". — Plowing scene with cocoanut palms in the background.
of health by the powdered milk that has come in vast quantities through the Church World Service Fund organized by churches in America. On Independence Day Nehru said that the Christians were the only group that were not a problem to India; there are many others who believe that Christ is the only help for India.

The cup of India's suffering which has never been empty is now filled to overflowing. Across the dusty face of the Punjab stream four million refugees, hungry and destitute, with their meager possessions on their backs, walking in weary foot caravans often 60 miles long. They have fled in terror from their flaming homes who has lost his sense of compassion. For him both God and man have become only meaningless abstractions. They do not know what it means when mothers see their children slowly die of hunger.

This is what it meant to one of the three million who died in the Bengal famine:

Washday in India,—the women are scrubbing clothes on the rocks, and others are sitting in the sun letting their clothes dry on their backs, a small boy is washing the back of his little sister.

"You are alive but my wife is dead. She was young like you. When I first met her she was swimming in the sea, with her shimmering black hair and her smiling radiant face. I took her home to my village. Rice was then one seer a rupee. I remember the rice fields of my village, now desolate. . . . But slowly the darkness closed around us. The rains failed. Rice went out of the market. Our little one was born, but there was no food. the last trace of food has disappeared from our village. Hungry, starving, we joined the caravan of refugees to Calcutta—refugees from hunger in a caravan of death. Sometimes we were given a few crumbs in charity—but charity does not solve any problems, it does
not give life. It only deceives, both the one who gives and the one who takes.

"I am only a sitar player, but who cares for music? When people are starving who cares for music? And so we went to Calcutta, the long unending road to Calcutta—to hunger, despair, and death. My wife trailed along with me, limping, walking mechanically, blindly. There were traders in human bodies. Suddenly she said, 'Let us sell our daughter, at least she will have food'. I cannot understand she spoke those words. What horrible power had crushed her motherhood? I only remember her anguished, embittered eyes. I snatched the child from her arms. And then tired and grimy with dust she went to sleep forever on that roadside. If it is true that woman is a miracle, the essence and the truth of life; this truth, this miracle is born of a grain of rice and without that it withers and dies. My wife died at nineteen—hungry, thirsty, dirty, and in rags. I have no grievance against death, but what was the harm if she had been allowed to live her normal span? To have a little home, a husband and children, the little joys of a normal life.

"And now there was only my little daughter—the consummation of our beautiful dream, the first kiss in the shadows of a palm grove, the climax of a song. She died, thirsting for a drop of milk.

I went to live in your brave new world—but I have left my wife and my child unburied on the roadside".

Thus our richest joys are set in this background of suffering, our moments of leisure are haunted by the urgency of human need. I am sorry that my letters are filled with descriptions of misery and death. But if I write of India I must write of suffering and sorrow. For the heart of our beloved India is filled with sorrow too deep for tears. You must take India into your heart, for as Jesus has said, we are all members of one another. By deeds of compassion and love in a witness to the Lord of Life and the Prince of Peace we must make India, the Jewel of the East, shine with a new radiance. the radiance of the Crucified One whose Love brings Light and Truth and Life to the restless, groping hearts of men.

Sincerely yours,
Ruth and Eugene L. Ten Brink.

WORLDLINESS . . .

... IN THE PEW

The Shady Dozen:

"I heard . . . ."
"They say . . . ."
"Everybody says . . . ."
"Have you heard . . . .?"
"Did you hear . . . .?"
"Isn't it awful . . . .?"
"People say . . . ."
"Did you ever . . . .?"
"Somebody said . . . ."
"Would you think . . . .?"
"Don't say I told you . . . ."
"Oh I think it is perfectly terrible . . . ."
—THE OUTLOOK.
8th
ANNUAL

P. R. Y. P.
CONVENTION

AUGUST 18
19
Convention Program

Theme: — "Faith Of Our Fathers"

Wednesday — August 18 —

9:00 A. M. Registration at the Church
(Cor. 20th St. and Maple Ave.)
10:00 A. M. Business Meeting
12:00 Noon Lunch in the Church Basement
2:00 P. M. Business Meeting

(Dinner at Places of Lodging)

7:30 P. M. Inspirational Mass Meeting
(at Kollen's Park)
1. Community Singing
2. Speech — Rev. H. Hoeksema

"Faith of Our Fathers—A Glorious Heritage"

Thursday — August 19:

8:00 A. M. Pancake Breakfast
(At Holland Christian High School)
9:30 A. M. Busses Leave For Tunnel Park
12:00 Noon Lunch at Park
  Speech — by Rev. G. Vos
3:30 P. M. Busses Return to Holland
6:15 P. M. Banquet
  (At Holland Christian High School)
  Master of Ceremonies — Rev. H. De Wolf
  Speech — Rev. C. Hanko

"Faith of Our Fathers—A Mighty Challenge"
### Greyhound Bus Schedule

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### Pere Marquette Train Schedule

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THE COMMITTEE WILL BE PLEASED TO MEET YOU UPON ARRIVAL.

JUST LET US KNOW WHEN AND HOW YOU ARE COMING.

Miss Marion Haveman
45 E. 22nd St.
Holland, Michigan
Federation Business Matters

We urge all Society members, and especially delegates to our coming Convention, to study these PROPOSALS. If possible talk these things over as societies so the delegates may be ready to express the sentiments of those they represent.

The Federation Board proposes to the Federation:

1. That it grant the request of the Young People's Society of Grand Haven, Mich., giving them membership in the Federation of Prot. Ref. Young People's Societies.
2. That it grant the request of the Young People's Society of Bellflower, Calif., giving them membership in the Federation of Prot. Ref. Young People's Societies.
3. That it raise the traveling expenses of the delegates from 4 cents per mile to whatever amount is necessary to actually cover expenses of the delegates from each society.
4. That Mass Meetings be held in all the localities where there are Prot. Ref. Young People's Societies who are members of the Federation, twice a year, namely one in October, to be a Reformation Day Mass Meeting, and the other one sometime in the Spring of the year.
5. That Society Round Robin Letters be circulated throughout all member societies during the course of the society year.
6. That, in addition to the regularly scheduled election (President and Secretary), it elect a vice-secretary-treasurer to serve out the term of Grace (Monsma) Van Dyken, who has resigned from her office because of marriage.

The South Holland Young People's Society proposes to the Federation:

1. That, since the Federation expense this year appears to be exorbitant and beyond the means of most of our smaller societies, the Federation take under consideration our desire to advise the societies of the far West to seek membership in the Western Federation until such time when there shall be a sufficient number of societies in the far West to warrant this expense.

Grounds:

a. The Western Societies beyond the Mississippi River have their own Federation and should belong there.
b. Members on the Federation Board, which could be delegates of the far Western Societies make the expense prohibitive.
The Oak Lawn Young People's Society proposes to the Federation:

1. That our Conventions keep the Theme of the Convention, its subjects, addresses and related spiritual matters, as the center of their attention.
   a. Would like to see the Convention distinguish itself from the outings, trips, etc. The two should not be mixed as they are at present. Not because we consider outings, etc. to be sinful or unimportant, not at all. We believe a Convention should have its social side. But we suggest this because we believe the Program to be the most important, and further, we believe that both the Convention as well as the outings, etc. will come to their own much better if we make this division.
   b. To affect this division we suggest that there be a ONE-DAY Convention and that this day be taken up with a well prepared program. There could be a THEME worked out, subjects, addresses etc. concerning which we have some further suggestions.
   c. There could be a SECOND DAY taken up with Outings, etc. organized or not, as they prefer.
      Note: If the Societies prefer there could be a TWO-DAY Convention with a THIRD DAY for outings, etc.

2. Concerning the Convention Program.
   a. We suggest that the Convention Program be drawn up by a committee from the various Societies, and that they present their program to the Societies well in advance of the Convention, so that all the Societies may be prepared to take part in it. They could build their program around a Theme or they may also make it a general program.
   b. We should like to see the various Societies themselves take a much more active part in the Convention, that is, the societies should actively contribute toward the contents of the program. Let there be debates, round-tables, open forums, essays, related numbers, interspersed with musical numbers etc. rendered by the various societies.
   c. Addresses by ministers, in keeping with the rest of the program and of such a nature as to induce discussion.
   d. Example: If the Committee arranged a debate between Society I and Society II, these societies would be notified to prepare themselves. But all the Societies would likewise receive notice of this debate and could therefore practice it and prepare for it in advance.
   e. The Beacon Lights could be used to establish contact between the Societies with a view to such a prepared program.

3. Further, we would like to present the following general suggestions:
   a. Business at the Conventions should be as much as possible of the report-and-decision nature. That is, the material to be considered should be referred to the various societies and at the Convention they could render their written opinions. Written opinions induce every society to take part, make for

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thoroughness and give the whole a businesslike appearance. After the opinions have come in, decisions could be taken as the societies see fit.

b. The Banquet should be held on the evening of the Convention, and should be an extension of the Program of the Day, that is, it should contain numbers from the Societies and a closing address. The Banquet should be simple, and as inexpensive as possible.

c. Last year the Banquet was too crowded. Quite a few married folk took the place of the young folks. Perhaps it is impossible to calculate exactly the number which will be present, but perhaps something could be done to keep room for all.

d. We should like to see a get acquainted hour instituted. Perhaps this could be held at the Inspiration Hour, or the Mass Meeting on the evening before the Convention. But any other time is perhaps as effective.

We suggest that this Convention consider this matter and discuss it, and refer it to the various societies for their opinion, requesting that their opinions come before the 1949 Convention, at which time definite decisions could be made.

At the

Protestant Reformed Church

Holland,
Michigan

Let's All Be There!
Pictures taken at the Young People's Outing sponsored by Fuller Ave. Societies. 5 Busses left the church at 7:00 a.m. for Dearborn and Greenfield Village, July 28.

Leaving by bus! — Dinner at Dearborn. Museum at Greenfield Village.—Resting. (Pictures taken by Seymour Beiboer)

Art and Ed.—dishing out ice-cream. (Where is Fred!?!)
Rev. and Mrs. H. Hoeksema.
Lining up for Hot Dogs. Relaxing at Case-Benton Park.

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What The Sunday School Records Reveal

REGARDING THE MISSION COLLECTIONS CONTRIBUTED BY BOYS AND GIRLS EACH SUNDAY.

Mr. John Faber — Sunday School Superintendent — 1st Church

Having received the assignment to write about the Mission work performed by the Sunday School of Fuller Ave., we shall try to do so without burdening you with many statistics. It is our fancy that you would be interested in what we learned from the records which we perused in preparing for this assignment.

We go back then to 1924 when we helped support the Rehoboth Mission Field through weekly Mission collections. Then came the separation from the Christian Reformed Church leaving us with no mission field of our own. Our collections however continued so that an ever growing Mission Fund was accumulated. We were now waiting for an opportunity to dispense it to some mission endeavor peculiarly our own. Many requests were received for a part or all of our purse, and we did hearken to some of the pleas. Johanna Veenstra's cause and that of the Standard Bearer and of the Sovereign Grace Union received about $800.00 from us that year.

Later, when again our funds grew into a sizable sum we cast about for another mission outlet. About that time the Rev. M. R. De Haan, pastor of the Calvary Undenominational Church distributed a treatise which purported to be a conclusive refutation of the doctrine of infant baptism. He asserted (among other things) that the Word of God has nothing to say in favor of the practise to baptize the children of believers! These bold statements could not go unchallenged and our own pastor, the Rev. H. Hoeksema promised, in the Standard Bearer, that at a convenient time he would write a treatise on the same subject.

Lo, there was our worthy cause! The Sunday School Superintendent appointed a committee to take over, and the Mission Publishing Society was born. Overnight, as it were, the Sunday School teachers became publishers, and the children's contributions became the means for us to spread the truth dear to us.

Our first publication was the treatise just mentioned under the title "Biblical Proof For Infant Baptism". We printed and re-printed several thousand pamphlets, in fact over $300.00 worth. The success of this venture moved us to print 14 other pamphlets of timely interest. Were you to ask which of these was most popular, we would probably list them in this order: "Infant Baptism"; "Jesus Saviour"; "Mark of the Beast"; "The Movie"; "Why Protestant Reformed", and so on down to the "Curse Reward of the Wicked Well-doer".

Looking over our shoulder at the mailing list you'd be surprised to see that our little booklets travelled far and wide.
You would see odd names like Kayzee, Wyoming; Lodgepole, South Dakota, and Killduff, Iowa. They've visited 25 states of the Union. They're globe-trotters, going to 7 foreign countries, even to far off Luxor, Egypt!

Did you ask how we distributed our pamphlets? Only upon request. Some ministers (and they are from many denominations) some teachers and some laymen ask for their favorites and then give them to their friends and neighbors. Whenever we publish a new number we promptly send a copy to those on our mailing list. You might recognize us as wholesalers and they the retailers of our merchandise. The great difference is that this merchandise is free for the asking.

This printing business soon outgrew its picayune origin and our records show that the staggering sum of $3,000.00 has been spent. Staggering, when you think of all the pennies, nickles and dimes that were given to make up this sum! But we did not confine ourselves to printing as we see when we find that we paid for 50 subscriptions to the Standard Bearer to be sent to the Netherlands three years in succession. We also disbursed $100.00 to the Radio Fund and $100.00 to the Mission Fund of our churches. Our record which only goes back twenty years reveal to us that we have disbursed the grand total of $4,000.00.

When we ponder about the result of this labor, we are reminded that as in all Kingdom work, its fruit is not wholly and immediately visible. We have received many thankful letters from men and women from every walk of life. Theirs is the testimony of fruit-bearing. We are truly thankful to our God that He may use us as instruments in His hand, and to be co-workers in His vineyard in these our Mission efforts to the extent that thousands upon thousands of our pamphlets go out far and wide. May He bless our efforts and continue to use us to gather His Church and to bring many sons unto glory.

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SCRIPTURAL GIVING

(1 Cor. 16:1)

PERIODIC — Upon the first day of the week: Worshipful, Prayerful, Habitual, Cheerful;

PERSONAL — Let each one of you: each Man, each Woman, each Boy, each Girl;

PROVIDENT — Lay by him in store: Forehanded, Deliberate, Thoughtful, Intelligent;

PROPORTIONATE—As he may prosper: Generous, Careful, Responsible, Faithful;

PREVENTIVE — That no collections be made when I come: No Deficit, no Worry, no Loan Interest, no Retrenchment.
Mission Work in General:

We are aware of the fact that much attention has been given to the subject of the Church’s Mission by all the denominations during and after the last war. The fields of labor are all over the world. We cannot think of any place where there is not some Christian mission. Besides there has been immediately after the war an effort toward reviving the spirit of hope and of Christianity among the Japanese and the Germans. Efforts were also made to enter Russia. It is still a question to me what are the real results of all these missionary expenditures of labor and money? Millions of dollars are spent and thousands of workers are sent out into the fields. How can we avoid such a question, therefore, about the results. Especially does this force itself upon us because of our singular interest in the prosperity and the coming of the Kingdom of God. Jesus tells us in Matthew 24:14, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” The question therefore narrows down to a question about the efforts themselves. Are these efforts directed toward preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, the kingdom of God overagainst the kingdom of Man and Antichrist? For Jesus also warns, there shall be false Christs.

We may ask several questions. We may ask about the purpose or aim of the mission effort in general. Is the purpose according to the commission, to preach the Gospel? Or is the purpose to benefit man’s social standard of living? Is the zeal for work a zeal of proselytism? That is, is it a zeal for the advancement of one’s own church, to increase the number and influence—a matter of self-pride?

Answers to these questions can be given only upon an examination of the content of the messages of the different churches and the reports of their missionary work; whether the messages are the Word of God and whether the reports do not primarily interest themselves in the number of converts, whether there has been a door opened, that the Word has had its twofold effect.

Our Foreign Mission Endeavor.

In the light of the absence of actual foreign mission work on our part it seems strange to speak of our effort in this field. For that reason only we wish to make a few remarks about it.

What has been our work in the foreign field?
We have shown interest. The prayer of our people has been for the conversion of all God's people out of darkness into light. This prayer is a very important part of our work for the coming of the kingdom through preaching the Word wherever it pleases the Lord to have His Word proclaimed.

Moreover, discussion has taken place upon several classical and synodical gatherings. The last Synod decided to provide collections for foreign missions. This is to be for some reputable existing foreign mission or for our own endeavor.

If it is for an existing foreign mission we face problems. Mission work is inseparably connected with a denomination's calling to preach the Word. If we recognize a church's foreign mission work we also thereby recognize its entire official preaching of the Word. And this forces the problem, upon us of stating our relations toward an existing Church Institute, which so far forth has never been done officially.

If we engage in that effort ourselves directly we must ask ourselves whether we have fulfilled our mission with time and money toward our own nation, toward the apostate church, toward the future church, the children of the covenant.

These questions ought to be made and clearly answered when and if we present the cause of foreign missions to our people for collection at this time.

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**Immigrating To Canada**

Rev. John D. De Jong — Grand Rapids, Michigan

Canada has opened its doors for immigrants. Many people from the Netherlands also have immigrated to Canada, or they desire to leave the old fatherland and seek a new home in the immensely large country of Canada, our next door neighbor. But although millions of people would like to settle in Canada, only a limited number are allowed. Besides, the prospective immigrants are a very select group of people and must pass an ever more stringent inspection before they are allowed to leave the old country and take up permanent residence in Canada.

Are you at all interested in this subject? You should be for a good many reasons which I will not enumerate at this time.

It was my privilege to spend a few weeks in Canada, first with the Rev. B. Kok and later with the Rev. W. Hofman, and visit some of the immigrants that have already arrived. I could tell you something about the immigration regulations as such. That alone would be an interesting subject. In fact there is so much connected with my subject that I really don't know where to start. But seeing my space is limited I will also limit myself in this article to a particular phase of the immigration in which all of you should be interested, because I intend to talk primarily about young people.

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BEACON LIGHTS

Perhaps it is not at all amiss if I first tell you that among the immigrants that have arrived, and also among those that expect to cross the ocean in the near future, there are a great many who hail from Reformed circles. We as young people thought that the Dutch services for divine worship were almost a matter of the past. Here in the United States that may be true, but there are places in Canada where they just recently have started with Dutch services. In fact in several places they hold Dutch services exclusively, and I expect that in quite a few communities there will be Holland services for several years to come.—I can hear you say already: “Not interested, we are through with the Dutch.” Just a little patience please, do not jump to conclusions too quickly but continue reading this article to the end.

A question frequently asked is: “Why do so many people want to leave the old country?” Some would answer this by saying: “Because they are so poor over there.” Now, that is not true at all! It is true, there are a lot of common laborers who seek a new home in Canada, but there are also a good many people coming to the shores of Canada who do not have to leave the old country because they are so poor. Among the immigrants you find many people who had a prosperous life on the farm in the Netherlands; or who held good positions. In fact the majority do not have to leave at all because of poverty. Most of the immigrants do not only pay their own way across but they also leave possessions behind in the form of land, real estate, money, bank accounts, etc. Why do they leave then? The great majority leave the old country because they believe that there are ever so many more opportunities in Canada than in the Netherlands. They all say: “There is no future in the Netherlands; our children cannot find a home to live in, they cannot find land to farm; even with a splendid education there are not enough jobs or positions available. The Netherlands is overcrowded, taxes are extremely high and the entire economic life is regimented.” And don’t forget either that there are many young married couples that leave for the shores of Canada. As one young man expressed it to us: “We wanted to get married but could not find a place to live anywhere. Perhaps we would have to wait fifty years before we would have found a place, and that is too long to suit us.” Can you blame them?

As I mentioned already, a lot of these people are of Reformed persuasion. And we might mention here, it is rather remarkable that the Reformed people in the Netherlands take the initiative as far as immigration is concerned. Thus it was also a hundred years ago, and even during the last hundred years many Reformed people came to the shores of America.

Let me also mention in this connection that with many there is an element of fear for Russian communism that prompts them to leave the place of their birth.

Have you ever thought about what a tremendous undertaking it is to immigrate to another country? Yes, indeed,
it is quite an undertaking and not the least for young people. You must also take into consideration here that the people who emigrate from the Netherlands leave behind a beautiful little country which has a rich history and heritage.

Let me tell you a little about some of the problems of these young people. I know there is a certain type of young people who like adventure. Now, to emigrate certainly has adventures in it. But they are not all this superficial type of youth. Most of the young people coming across the sea belong to the average type of youth. They like a trip, they like to see new things, they love a sea voyage, but after all is said and done they love the home surroundings to which they are accustomed. Have you ever been away from home for a few months? Then you also know how much you appreciated to come home again and be amongst your own friends and surroundings which make up such a great share of our life. But even when you went away it was but for a little while and wherever you went you could use the English language. How altogether different with the young people who immigrate to Canada. They come here to stay and are strangers in a strange land where there is a mixture of nationalities and where the people speak a strange language. Their entire life is uprooted and they are literally transplanted. They leave their friends, their intimates, their church, societies, their work, habits of living, and now they must adjust themselves in the new world among people they don’t know and cannot even understand. Oft times embarrassing situations develop due to the fact that they cannot speak English and don’t know the customs of the land. They have to learn by trial and error, which is especially a hard grind for sensitive natures. I assure you, young people, that your ‘cousins’ immigrating to a strange country must go through a tremendous period of adjustment. (That’s one of the reasons why old people are such poor immigration material, they are not pliable enough). To be and feel like a stranger in a strange land is not an easy matter, and I certainly sympathize with a good many of those immigrants. Perhaps you say: “But they’ll find work, they’ll earn money, eventually they’ll learn the language well, etc.” That is all true and well, but it is not easy and there are those who shed many tears in the new world. The past is irrevocably cut off, and they must in every way and in every sense of the word make a new beginning in a new world. They cannot continue their living as in the past, everything is new and strange. And all things, life itself, will never be the same again.

You are wondering how they make out? That all depends, and there is a great difference. Some young people can rather easily adjust themselves. They look for new interests and new friends, and are able to find them. Others, for a long time, have that strange, isolated, lonesome feeling, and although they bear with the situation, something nice, something loved, something beautiful, is brok-
en in their lives. Still others work hard to try and fill the gap as soon as possible with interests that approximate as nearly as possible the things they loved in the old country. "But there are also those who seem to have broken loose and try to fill the vacuum of their life with worldly amusements and the like. There are even those who fall entirely by the wayside, and presently the word goes back to relatives and friends in the old country: "He or she loves the present world."

I really was to write about mission work in Canada but wandered away from my subject. Let me close with some mission thoughts.

It is my personal conviction that as churches we have a task to fulfill among those thousands of Reformed immigrants who are of the same blood and spiritual background as we are. We have a wonderful truth to preach to them. Let us get to work, let us try to draw them to us and instruct them in the doctrine so dear to all true Reformed people. It is our calling to also witness among them. And if the Lord gives us an open door it will be the distinguished privilege of our missionaries to also draw and lead and guide these young people in their new country. It will be their privilege to help them in their period of great adjustment, to advise and succor them in the trying time of transition. All this calls for faith, courage, love and sympathetic understanding. Just this morning I received a letter from a fine young fellow from the old country, a serious-minded boy, asking for advice, for contact, for a visit from one of our ministers when he presently arrives in Canada (which will be in the month of August).

Will you help this cause along? Be sympathetic toward your, in many respects, less fortunate young fellow Christians. Pray for them and be interested in them. Why not talk these things over in your societies. There are many phases to this problem. If you show interest in this cause and in the welfare of these young people I have been writing about, you'll find it instructive, enlightening, edifying to discuss the subject of immigration in your meetings. And your own life will be enriched, your horizon will be broadened.

Will you promise me to give this matter some thought? And if you can help some of these young people in any way at all with writing letters or by any other means, be sympathetic and do your share. Besides, appreciate your spiritual heritage and remember the struggle of your forebears who came to the shores of this country as pioneers and prepared for you and handed down to you the temporal abundance and the rich spiritual heritage which is yours today. Furthermore, remember also that the struggle of your newly arrived "cousins" is not first of all a question of material things and primitive conditions and surroundings, but theirs is a spiritual struggle to maintain themselves as Reformed people in a world which does its utmost to swallow them up spiritually and cause them to drift away from the God of their fathers.
THE MISSION OF THE RADIO

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

Does the radio have a place in the mission endeavors of the Protestant Reformed Church? That question is often raised, and all too often it is answered in the negative. The question in itself is a just one: for if the radio cannot be used in mission work, we should stop using the radio as churches; it is an expensive and wasteful method of reaching the comparatively few shut-ins in our circles. Contrariwise, if the radio does have a place in our mission endeavors, we of all people, must use it as much as we can. I would answer the above question with a four-fold answer.

It Can Have A Place.

That this is true has been proved in at least two concrete cases. The radio was a means in bringing the German Reformed Churches into contact with us. And the radio, according to Missionary Hofman’s report, was also a very useful means in his work in Lynden during the early part of this year.

That this is true has already been recognized officially more than once. First Church of Grand Rapids a few years ago decided overwhelmingly to officially take over the Reformed Witness Hour. Our Mission Committee is heartily in favor of the radio work, and has supported the radio work in the Lynden area financially. Synod approved this action of the Mission Committee. And now it has been decided to make station KVOS in the Lynden area available for the direct use of our missionaries.

It Does Have A Place.

That this is true has already been shown. Apart from all this, however, the radio has a place in our mission endeavor whether it is used directly or not. No, we cannot organize churches over the radio; but we can and do preach the Word! And we know, too, that the Word is heard; there is abundant proof of that. And God hath assured us that His Word never returns unto Him void. Radio does have a place!
BEACON LIGHTS

It Must Have A Place.

That is our calling. We should stop questioning, and go to work. We should use the radio to the utmost of our power. We should put an end to stinginess and to our annual slashing of radio appropriations. Our churches should welcome the opportunity to spend a few more pennies per week in a manifestation of the much-talked about mission zeal. Our ministry should welcome the opportunity to support this cause with their speaking efforts. We should go forward!

The Place Of Radio Must Be Improved.

We must strive to improve our radio witness. This can be done in several ways. There should be more emphasis on advertising, so that people may know when and where we are on the air. There should be more of a denominational emphasis, so that people may know that the truth they hear is not only the truth of a "Reformed Witness Hour", a "Sovereign Grace Hour", or a "Reformed Truth Hour", but the truth of the Word of God as it is proclaimed in the Protestant Reformed Churches. And we might suggest more unity in order to avoid wasted effort and overlapping broadcast areas. Perhaps Synod, through a committee, should be in charge of broadcasting. But by all means: let us use the radio to preach the Word!

Homer C. Hoeksema.

* * * * * * *

THE REFORMED TRUTH HOUR

The Reformed Truth Hour is a half hour broadcast conducted each Sunday evening from 9:30 to 10:00 over WJOB Hammond, Indiana. The program is sponsored by the two Churches residing in Oak Lawn and South Holland, Illinois. The two ministers serving these churches, the Rev. Martin Gritters and the Rev. Marinus Schipper alternately have charge of the speaking, and the announcers are Louis Regnerus and George Lanting from the respective churches. The music is provided from transcriptions previously transcribed by a chorus of young people of both churches.

The program is well received as indicated by the responses sent to us from points as far as 35 miles from the station. The area covered by the Reformed Truth Hour includes the Englewood and Roseland districts in Chicago, Harvey, Dolton, Lansing, Chicago Heights and South Chicago, and as far West as Oak Lawn, although the reception is rather poor there. In Indiana, we cover Munster, Highland, Hammond and as far east as West Gary and south as far as Crown Point.

One of the most interesting contacts we have made is that with a minister of the Reformed Episcopal Church of Chicago, the Rev. J. A. McCollam by name. He responded to one of our broadcasts and after contact with him has been an eager aspirant to the truth as it is proclaimed in our Churches. He
told us that he was a professed Arminian before our contact, but claims that the Lord led him to our program and us in order that he might know more perfectly the way of salvation. He has been given all the Protestant Reformed literature at our disposal including the Standard Bearer, and he is a most efficient distributor of our literature to many of his associations even as far as India.

Recently, he gave us the names and addresses of some twelve individuals, mostly ministers, for whom he requested trial copies of the Standard Bearer which he considers one of the most enlightening theological papers obtainable. We have had several conferences with this young minister where we discussed the truth with him, and which appear to have been very successful. He has also interested another minister in this area who also has asked us to a conference with him some time in early September.

What the result will be of these contacts, the Lord only knows. But we are assured that the Lord has given us the radio which has become a medium of contact which exceeds its 35 mile circumference around the world.

Our broadcast has also proved to be a means to bring a new family to our South Holland Church which for some twenty years lived apart from the church, but which now is faithfully active in the life of our church.

In our own little way, we believe the Lord is blessing our mission in spreading abroad the truth, the fruits of which only eternity will reveal.

Yes, it costs money, and much self-sacrifice. But we, our money, time and strength are God's servants in the greatest calling in all the world; namely, to show forth His praises and show unto this generation that He is alone the sovereign Lord. Who by particular grace has chosen a people in Christ, which He gathers by the Word and Spirit of the Son of God.

Churches and Societies and Sunday Schools which are not immediately connected with any radio work, and would like to support our program with their prayers and gifts, we would gladly hear from. Several have already helped us with donations which greatly aided us in carrying the burden.

One thing is certain, the Church or Churches that are busy in sending out the truth is alive. May God keep us alive for His Cause until the coming of the Lord.

Rev. M. Schipper

— NOTICE! —

Watch for the new department appearing in the October issue of Beacon Lights. A series of After-Recess Programs have been planned by your Federation Board under the general theme: "The Glory Of God". Throughout the year eight discussion outlines will appear. We urge each society to devote at least one of their after recess programs to the outline in Beacon Lights. Rev. M. Gritters will introduce the general theme as the first outline of the series. . . . More about this at the Convention!
We really have nothing. That is, according to the usual standard of judgment, we as a denomination have no economic or social or political power or position. If you look around and consider all things there is really nothing we can boast of or proudly point out as a matter of greatness. After all, we are only twenty-three small specks in a large and vast universe; a few thousand people in the midst of millions. Why should anyone take account of that handful or expect that they should wield any influence in this great world. We have no imposing structures or big projects or programs in progress. It's true, there are a few among us who are building new edifices but it's a struggle, and even after their completion there is nothing extraordinary or pretentious about them. If we are truly objective, the only conclusion we can draw is that we don't amount to much.

It may be hard for us, and especially so when we are young, to accept that fact. We all have a certain amount of idealism and pride and desire to be able to point to achievement and worth. Yet, if we look around and compare, we might feel a bit ashamed of our humility and relative poverty. That's perhaps, the judgment we would come to make and begin to wonder if we had any right to existence at all. Even if there are a few things we might find to point out and soothe our pride, certainly no one else would be greatly impressed.

The flesh doesn't like to be small and have nothing to boast in. Though essentially it might be a matter of pride we can also be rather pious about and maintain that even from the point of view of the cause which we represent it's too bad that we don't have more means and ability. If we had more we could do so much more for God and His kingdom. We could build better facilities which would attract more people; we could broaden out our radio work to reach from coast to coast and the islands of the sea; besides we could have several missionaries and spread the Truth to foreign lands.

Yet, do you know, that even our smallness and nothingness may be a good sign. Certainly all of Scripture emphasizes that the flesh can avail nothing and must become nothing. The history of the true Church reveals that she is usually small and of no account in this world, according to its standards. Scripture always teaches that the flesh must be left without glory. That's the heart of our preaching and as we believe and live that it's not too strange that we are nothing. More and more it becomes evident that the time is at hand when "they will not endure sound doctrine" so that the prospects are not bright for the future: we may become even less.
But . . . and that gives to our small nothingness true greatness . . . we have the Word. You may object that that is no exclusive possession or peculiar characteristic. The Bible and the Reformed confessions are not ours alone. Many others still have them and preach from them. In fact, there never was a time when the Bible was more widespread or religion was more popular than in our own day. Yet, even a superficial examination will reveal that much of it is false and we alone, by the grace of God, possess and maintain the purest manifestation of the Truth. The Word is really the only thing we do have and in the confidence that it is the Truth that has been dear to the Church of all ages we proceed in faith.

And proceed we must. Overagainst the desire for numbers, the striving after bigness, the false zeal and broadmindedness that marks and characterizes the modern Church, our calling is to hold fast that which we have. We as young people especially, face that calling and challenge overagainst all these temptations to compromise. In the preaching, in our catechism instruction, in our societies and papers, we must demand and desire the sound exposition of the Word and the doctrine of the Scripture. We are the future of the Church of the Living God. May God give us grace to stand fast.

It is also evident, of course, that this has a bearing on our Missionary endeavours. Because of it we need not expect great things nor need we hope for that. We are called, each one of us whether or not we are engaged in a special work of the ministry, as the Protestant Reformed people of God we are called as stewards of that Word and Truth which God has entrusted to our care. We are not called to do great things but to remain faithful in our testimony in teaching and walk. We are not called to save souls but to preach the Word. God alone can save souls; preaching is our privilege. And if men will not hear that Word we are not told to give them something that they will hear and accept. On the contrary, we are explicitly told that the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine and the answer is not to proclaim something that they will endure but to continue to preach the unadulterated truth of God's Sovereign grace.

People today look for results and if they are not forthcoming a movement is condemned as a failure. We have nothing to do with results but do have to do with faithfulness. The results always belong to God while faithfulness is our responsibility. And only as we regulate our Church and all their labors, as well as our whole life, according to that standard do we realize the peace and grace of God. In His way only can we expect blessing and comfort on our way.

Remember, we have nothing but the Word. But that's the most glorious heritage we could ever possess, for it alone is the power of God unto salvation. Pray then, that that Word may be preached, in our own midst and elsewhere. And although we need not then expect great things, we know that our labor is never in vain in the Lord.
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