BEACON LIGHTS
FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

JUNE - JULY, 1976

ARE YOU GOING?
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Editorial

A Declaration of Independence
A Product of the Enlightenment

by Harry Langerak

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

On July 4, 1976 the citizens of the United States will celebrate the bicentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.* It has been 200 years since the founders of our country, also known as patriots, dared to stand in defiance of the sovereignty of the king of England and declare their right to be free and independent states. The founding fathers were not content just to declare their independence and win it in battle. They felt compelled to let the world know by what right they could sever the ties that so long had held them to the mother country. They knew this momentous step could not be taken lightly. This is what compelled them to write the document we call the Declaration of Independence. In it they set forth the philosophy of government which gave them the right to declare their independence. A right which up to this time was not based on anything other than the principle of might makes right which needed no rationale.

Every child of God who is a citizen of the United States should be familiar with the ungodly philosophy of man upon which our independence was declared. Many are those who acclaim it as the greatest document of freedom that has been produced. Some Christians have even said it is the document which gave our country its Christian foundation and principle. They base this on the use of the word God and the idea of liberty found in our Declaration. We must not be caught up with these arguments because those who make them are seeking to justify an unjustifiable cause.

Thomas Jefferson was the chief architect and guiding spirit of the document we call the Declaration of Independence. In fact, he is the author of it. Much of his philosophy of government and religion became apparent in it.

In this article I would like to share briefly with you some of the ideas that he incorporated in our Declaration and that were subsequently adopted by the Continental Congress as the rationale for our country declaring its independence.

Jefferson was a product of the Enlightenment, which was the philosophic movement of Europe in the 18th century. This movement had taken upon itself the questioning of the traditionally held idea of the church, science, government, etc. The Enlightenment is distinguished primarily by the efforts of its philosophers to

*This is actually the date when it was passed by the Continental Congress. The men who actually signed, waited until August or even later to sign it.
make reason the absolute standard by which man can obtain truth. It was a movement that looked back to the Renaissance rather than to the Reformation with its emphasis on reason at the expense of faith. They felt the period of medieval times and even the Reformation were periods of darkness as a result of religion and that man only by pure reason could be enlightened.

This movement had its effect on Jefferson through the work of men such as John Locke. He was the British political philosopher who was given the task of justifying the British overthrow of their king in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Locke’s works were studied in the universities in America and even in the religious colleges and seminaries of Harvard and Yale so that his influence extended even into the ministry at the time of the Revolution. He declared that all government originated with mankind in terms of a social contract for the reservation of those human rights which nature’s god had conferred upon man. This is sometimes referred to as the “social contract” theory of government. According to this theory, the government enters into a contract with its subjects who delegate authority to the government, and the government agrees to protect the “natural rights” of the people. These natural rights are life, liberty and happiness. According to Locke, when a human government fails to observe the terms of the contract or fails to protect those rights which it had been created to defend, its citizens have the undoubted natural right of revolution. These ideas of Locke have been incorporated into our Declaration through the pen of Thomas Jefferson who had adopted them as his own. They are the rationale for our revolution.

But the political philosophy of John Locke was not the only influence of the Enlightenment on Jefferson. He also adopted its religion which was Deism. Deism is a revolt of man against a sovereign God who controls all things for his own purpose. The Deist said the knowledge of God, and what God requires of man, is rationally perceived and the Bible is binding only to the extent to which its teachings correspond to the dictates of right reason. The Deist had succeeded in robbing God of His sovereignty and had replaced it with man’s sovereignty, which was in reality the consent of the governed. Jefferson adopted the ideas of the Deist. As a Deist he said that God is the Creator of the universe. But so far as the government of the universe was concerned, he looked to natural law rather than the providence of the sovereign God of the Scriptures. Jefferson had this to say of God and the Scriptures: “Do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called Scripture, which any human hand might make, but the Scripture called creation.”

These are some of the ideas that had their influence on Jefferson. It is not too much to assume that these ungodly ideas found their subtle way into our Declaration through the pen of Jefferson. Just take the time to read the Declaration of Independence and it will become evident that this is the case. But lest you think Jefferson was alone, let me hasten to add that these ideas were more or less adopted by most of the signers of the Declaration.

In conclusion, let me say:

1. Christians should stop kidding themselves that the foundation of our government is Christian. It is founded on nothing more than the wicked imagination of man’s mind.
2. The god of the Declaration is of man’s creation. Man wanted a God who would allow him to revolt so he set up a god that would fit his purpose. Our God is the sovereign God of the Scriptures who sets up governments and brings them down by His sovereign will.
3. Jefferson in the Declaration assumes that man is able to govern himself based
on his goodness. This must be denied because man is totally depraved and seeks himself.

4. Jefferson, in the Declaration, makes government dependent upon the will of the people not upon God's will. This replaces the sovereignty of God with the sovereignty of man.

5. The freedom of Jefferson in the Declaration is based on man's doing what he wants, which is nothing more than license. Scripture knows only one kind of freedom, which is the child of God doing the will of his heavenly Father.

6. In the Declaration Jefferson makes man the sole judge of when his natural rights are violated. This, of course, will lead to anarchy if followed to its extreme. Man is sinful and his imaginations are sinful. He does that which is right in his own eyes.

The celebration of the Fourth of July is man's celebration of a great event in man's achieving his purpose in history. Man achieved a great freedom for himself when he threw out a sovereign God who shackled him. But do not forget that God was there sovereignly directing the evil intents of man for his eternal good purpose. God was preserving and saving His Church through these carnal acts of man. He was doing this to His glory. That is our comfort, young people. This is not our holiday nor our celebration. It is the world's hour. But do not forget to thank God as He uses the evil intents of men to serve His Church. Do not forget to thank Him for the privilege to worship Him so that the Word can be preached and the Church gathered. Thank Him for the privilege of Christian instruction and all its benefits as well as all the other blessings we receive as citizens of the United States of America.

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**Feature**

**ARE YOU GOING?**

by Jonathan Bol

It is almost time for the annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention. And once again we hear the familiar comment, "Are you going to the convention this year?" This question is one which I am sure all of our young people ask each other each year, and it is the reason that I am writing this article. Too many times we base our decision of whether or not we will go to the Convention on the location of the convention and whether it sounds like fun. The only time that the location should be a factor is in deciding if transportation is possible. Usually the Federation Board supplies the method of transportation, eliminating that problem for Conventioners. As for being "fun," almost everyone that has gone to a convention will admit that having a good time is quite easily achieved.

The financial aspect probably affects our decision more than anything else. Sometimes it is a matter of being able to afford to go to the Convention and sometimes it depends on whether or not you can get off from work. Since part of the Society dues goes to the Convention fund and because there are many money-raising projects, much of the cost of the Convention is cut down. Included in the registration fee charged for the Convention is lodging, meals and transportation to Convention activities, as well as the activities programed. From a vacation outlook there probably isn't a
better bargain available!

So far we have only gone over the practical aspects of going to the Convention. Transportation to the site of the Convention and deciding if it is possible to take off time from work are important factors, but why should we go to the Convention? Sure it’s fun to see another part of the country and it’s fun to make new friends, but is there any other reason why we should go?

Conventions are ideal opportunities for young people to meet together and discuss their convictions. Not only can we have a good time participating in activities with young people of the same faith, but there is exercise for spiritual growth also. This is the most important reason for going to the Convention and we must always keep this in mind. The Convention agendas are always filled with plenty of fun activities, and combined with discussion groups and mass meetings which feature speeches on timely topics, it provides a well rounded week for our young people. Conventions afford a unique experience in our development as Protestant Reformed young people and I believe that everyone of society age should put forth every effort to attend them.

The value of Conventions is hard to measure. They are very worthwhile as a means of learning and strengthening our belief, preparing us for what lies ahead. If we come prepared to attend with a good attitude, ready to participate, and willing to share ideas, this Convention will leave an indelible imprint upon our lives.

George M. Ophoff (8)

by Prof. H. Hanks

HIS EARLY YEARS

In our last article we began to narrate two important incidents which took place during the years which George spent in Calvin College. The first incident of which we spoke is the death of George’s father in the explosion which destroyed the furniture factory in which he worked. The second incident which needs to be reported is seemingly insignificant, but in the light of future events, of considerable importance.

To understand this incident, you must be aware of the fact that already during the years in which George was in college the common grace controversy was in the air. We cannot go into the history of this controversy in these articles, although this is, in itself, interesting enough. There were especially three reasons which we ought briefly to mention why common grace was already a subject of discussion and debate. The first was the writings of Dr. Abraham Kuyper in the Netherlands. While originally a staunch defender of the Reformed faith, Dr. Kuyper had developed also various theories of common grace in his treatise: “De Gemeene Gratie.” He had done this at about the same time that he had, as the head of the Anti-revolutionary Party in the Netherlands, become Prime Minister. This rise to power was made possible by the formation of a coalition government which included the Roman Catholics. Whether there is any relationship here is not easy to determine, but it is quite possible that the development of common grace, at least in part, was an attempt to justify this political
coalition on the part of Dr. Kuyper. Dr. Abraham Kuyper's views, because of his enormous prestige, were increasingly widespread.

In the second place, these same views came to this country and were especially adopted by a group within the Christian Reformed Church which was influential in the church and college. A magazine by the name of "Religion and Culture" was the mouthpiece for this element. By means of this magazine, common grace was introduced into the church and was propagated throughout the church. In the third place, these were also the years when Dr. Jansen was introducing his heresy into the church. He was professor of Old Testament in the seminary, and was calling into question various miracles in the Old Testament by means of a rationalistic and critical approach to Scripture. For these views he was condemned at the Synod of Orange City in 1922. Rev. H. Hoeksema played a leading role in the efforts made to condemn these views. (For those interested in more information on this subject, I refer the reader to Mrs. Hoeksema's book, "Therefore Have I Spoken.") What is of interest to us is the fact that, in support of his views, Dr. Jansen appealed to the doctrine of common grace. While the synod of 1922 condemned Dr. Jansen for his higher criticism, it did not enter into the common grace issue which Dr. Jansen had brought forward. That issue remained unresolved. But the result was that common grace did become an issue in the Church.

It was during his Seminary years that George Ophoff was assigned a paper on the subject of common grace as part of his school work. For months he labored with the problem and struggled with the question, but could find no light. His problem seemed especially to center on the questions of the Scriptural basis for common grace and the place which common grace occupied in the organic body of the truth of the Reformed faith. You must understand that his whole approach was a naive acceptance of the doctrine. While the subject of common grace was being discussed, there were as yet none who were seriously questioning what the great Dr. Kuyper had taught. It was true that Rev. Hoeksema, especially because of the Jansen case, was becoming increasingly distrustful of the doctrine; and his dissatisfaction with the doctrine was to grow stronger as he wrote on the question in "The Banner." Nevertheless, George Ophoff did not as yet know of such questioning, and was operating on the assumption that common grace was part of the Reformed heritage and a doctrine to be believed. But he could not square it with Scripture, and he could not harmonize it with the great doctrines of the Reformed faith.

The struggle continued for a long time. Finally, almost in desperation, he decided to approach the problem from the viewpoint of common grace as a false doctrine. To use his own words, "Suddenly the light went on." All the pieces began to fall into place. All the loose ends disappeared. All the problems dissolved. The paper was, from this point on, very easily written. It became clear to him that the Scriptures taught no such thing and that the doctrine had no place in the organic body of the Reformed faith, but was a non-Scriptural addition. It is interesting to note that this latter point is still admitted by those who defend this doctrine. And in order to explain the contradictory position which common grace occupies in the body of Reformed thought, the defenders of the doctrine fall back upon the idea of "apparent contradiction." This is in itself an admission of the fact that the doctrine does not fit organically into the whole of the truth of the Scriptures as developed in Reformed theology.

What is significant, however, is the fact that George Ophoff came to an independent conclusion with regard to the
question while still in school. His views with respect to common grace were born then. No doubt, he did not yet know what to do with this new insight. No doubt, the significance of it had not yet penetrated his soul. No doubt, he was not yet even clear in his own mind what all the implications were. And beyond doubt, he could not possibly envision what this position would hold for him in the future and what the consequences of this position would be. Only God knew that. But the fact is that he had set himself, independently, on a course of action which would have in the future the gravest consequences. When finally the time came for him to take his stand publicly in the Churches, it would not be the result of hasty conclusions or the influence of a powerful personality, but it would be the result of a position centrally taken when he wrestled with a paper for his professor and could find no answer until such a time as he saw how un-Scriptural common grace was.

How wonderful are the ways of God, unfathomed and unknown!

**Rev. Ophoff in his Seminary days**
"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"

Luke 12:34

Young people sometimes like to play games which involve a lot of activity. One of these games is what we call a "Treasure-Hunt." Such a treasure-hunt calls for seeking, looking and desiring to find the desired "treasure." Upon such finding, they have set their sole attention. And they desire to find it first, so that they may claim the found object.

However, this treasure is perhaps not what they set their heart upon; it is only a game, a bit of excitement, a bit of fun.

Jesus is speaking in Luke 12:34 of what is dead serious. He is talking of the heart from whence are the issues of life. As a man's heart is, so is the man. The pure in heart shall see God. Opposite of a pure heart is what the Bible calls an evil heart, an impure heart from whence comes only that which is impure and a transgression of God's holy law. There are certain fruits by which a heart is known as to its spiritual character. A good heart trusts God as a heavenly Father. We often make sinful excuses for our bad heart, our unbelieving heart, which is such in us that we are of little faith, so that we fret and worry concerning the simple necessities of life. and anxiously ask: "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Now this is the real question of paramount importance for the world, which lives without God and without hope in the world. God is not in all their thoughts in these problems. But thus it should not be with us, covenant young people.

We live in days of planning, a planned economy. As covenant youth, you live in days of preparing for life's calling, choosing a wife or husband. And then you look into the future and you say to each other, "We don't have any money, but we have each other and love!" But did you
say to each other, "We don't have any money, not much at least, but we have a Father in heaven, who cares for us?" Do you place your trust in the heavenly Father, who cares for you and makes your needs His care? Unless you do this you will have anxious cares. Is God your great treasure, and are all your treasures in Christ Jesus? If they are, then you will seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. All these things will be added unto you! Where is your treasure? There will your heart be.

Do you believe that we belong to the "little flock" of God in the world, the church of God among the hundreds of millions who do not know God. Do you know that in all the great and wide universe there is a little planet called "earth," and on that place called "earth" God gathers His Church, His Israel, whom He loves in sovereign elective grace? God, too, has a "treasure." We read in Exodus 19:5, "And now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine." Yes, this peculiar people are kings and priests unto God. God has placed this love-note also in the Psalms. We read in Psalm 135:4, "For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure." Now if it is true, that where our treasure is there our heart will be, then that is true in us because that is true in God. That is an eternal spiritual principle. And, therefore, Jesus says unto us, "Fear not little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give to us the kingdom. Luke 12:32." We need not fear that the Lord will not provide for us. And in trusting in our heavenly Father's love and care, we can safely and contently gather treasures in heaven and not on the earth. For, young people, you are little sheep in that flock of God, the congregation of Jesus Christ.

Now, where is your "heart?" Is it in that flock which is God's treasure in all the universe, above the universe? Are you walking in spiritual readiness of hope for an eternal place in that kingdom of heaven? Jesus says, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down at meat, and will come forth and serve them." Yes, Jesus Himself shall serve us at the heavenly banquet.

Where is your heart? Where is mine? Do we live for self, treasuring treasures to ourselves, or are we gathering treasures in heaven, seeking the kingdom and His righteousness? That means that we sell what we have and give "alms." We think of the poor and needy, the widow, the orphan and the stranger. We gather treasures in heaven by scattering to the poor. Thus the Psalmist says, "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth forever; his horn shall be exalted with honor." (Psalm 112:9, II Cor. 9:8-15) This is a difficult lesson for us to learn and take to heart. It is a profound lesson that we live by dying to self.

We must heed the warning of Jesus, "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness." We must have a single eye and not an evil eye, which never sees things right, but always makes everything dark. That is the trouble with the whole world which is not a part of the "little flock." No, there is not a certain "common grace" of God which makes this evil world see a bit single, seeking the kingdom of heaven. The unregenerate world cannot see the kingdom of heaven. Now we must beware that we are not like that world. That world has natural light, glimmerings of it, to be sure. But that world uses this light and
holds the truth down in unrighteousness, and thus becomes inexcusable before God. They do not put their trust in God and help the poor, and "provide bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heaven that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth."

Where is your heart, and where is mine? Are we seeking treasures on earth.

**Hold Fast Our Heritage**

**TRUE TO THE FAITH**

by Mrs. Jacob Kulper Sr.

Mrs. Kulper is a member of our Hope, Walker Church.

Dear Young People,

I was asked to write an article on how life in general was for a young person in the church of my day. I am thankful that the Lord, in His eternal counsel, had my parents included in that little mission station that met in River Bend, Hope, some sixty years ago. Those were the horse and buggy days. This area is where I spent the first twenty years of my life.

My father, being one of the leaders, had to take his turn to pick a student to preach for us on Sunday. This was done on Saturday afternoon with horse and buggy. This student would stay the weekend and be brought back to the streetcar, some five miles, again on Monday morning. I particularly remember Rev. J. R. Brink, who would always pat me on the head and say, "God bless you."

These meetings were held in people's homes until 1918. A cement block church was then erected, which was later organized as Hope Christian Reformed Church. Rev. G. M. Ophoff was our first pastor.

We were really isolated from all other churches. "out in the sticks" as many people called it. We hardly ever got to see any other young people. There was no young people's society, banquets or conventions. Once a year we had a big day which was a Sunday School Church picnic, held at Fenessey Lake about two miles from church. There was a large pavilion, some playground equipment and even 100 square feet of sand and muck bathing beach. What fun! Later, when a few more people purchased Model T cars, we went to John Ball Park for the occasion. This was five miles away, which was really quite a trip and something we looked forward to all year.

There were no Christian schools around. There was only a public grade school, thru 8th grade, which I attended and from which I graduated. It was a one room school. At recess and noon hour the whole school participated in games. School life was really enjoyable. I remember especially singing out of the Folk Song Book every day. As a child I enjoyed music and singing. I was chosen as part of a quartet that had to sing at special school day events. The teacher had asked me more than once if I might sing at P.T.A. but father and mother never went and I was not supposed to either. It was a public school, you see. We wouldn't feel
at home there. Only once I had permission. We sang the River Bend School Pep Song and "The Old Rugged Cross." That was it.

I took reed organ lessons from one of my school teachers. As soon as I could play a couple of hymns my father said, "That's enough, now you know how to play. Never mind all of that other fancy stuff." I kept playing which prepared me for being an organist, which I was later in Hope Church.

My father was an elder at the time of the 1924 split when, along with others, Rev. Ophoff, our pastor, was deposed. I remember sitting in church one Sunday morning after we really had been forbidden to use the church. During the sermon two strange men walked in and Rev. Ophoff kept on preaching. Everyone was quite shook, but the men turned around and walked back out. After that Sunday we had to give up our church. Then we began meeting in the Blair Schoolhouse.

After graduation I asked my parents if I could go to high school. My desire was to become a teacher or a nurse. High school! Where? Grand Rapids Christian High was miles away. There was no Wilson Ave. and no bridge over the Grand River at Grandville. I would have to board away from home all week! That was not for girls. I shed many a tear that fall.

Going back to my schooling, we had no Bible courses. One or two of my teachers did read a chapter before school. I received my knowledge by reading Bible Story Books at home, from Sunday School, and from my parents' instruction. We had two church services. One was Dutch, of which I understood nothing, but always attended. I remember distinctly I had to play the piano for the Dutch service. I only know how to play a few Psalms so the consistory gave Rev. Ophoff the list. He remembered the first two times but the third time he forgot about the list and announced a number I couldn't play. I got his attention and shook my head. To my great embarrassment he said, "Can't you play that?" And then, "Oh, that's right." He found the list.

I had plenty of time to study and read even though evenings were short. We had no electricity, so we sometimes went to "bed with the chickens." We didn't have a "Pizza Hut" down the road, a corner drugstore, or a car. We could go across the road to my cousin once in a while and to a neighbor until dark.

I also had a lot of enjoyment walking on our back 60 acres, which was mostly pasture at that time, picking wild flowers. It is now Ferndale and Wilson Ave.

At 14 years of age I had to get my driver's license. My older brothers worked away from home, my father worked part of the farm and I had to take produce to retail market a few days every week. This was a lot of work, but fun. Mother or my sister always went with me. Here we got to meet a lot of different people, including my future husband (which I was ignorant of at that time). He was always there with celery and onions.

I said earlier that we had very little evening activity. Well, in the summer the neighborhood fellows played softball at the schoolhouse. I was allowed to go provided I was home by dark. I recall a couple of times when a team from First Church came out and competed. That was exciting, seeing some fellows from one of our other churches. After the game they would go and get an ice cream cone. That was a treat! I wasn't in on this, though. As I said, I was to be home by dark.

There were some evenings when my parents had company. These times were spent in much singing and praising the Lord around the reed organ. This was very rewarding!

On Sunday evenings, too, the whole congregation would meet at different homes for Bible Class. We would have prayer, an hour of Bible discussion and some singing. After meeting the children and young people would have lunch in one
room and the grownups in another. We would go home early. These were profitable evenings. This happened yet even after we were married, 41 years ago.

As I said before, we had no young people's society, just catechism. We went to this until we were married, confessed members or not. That was the way it was and no one complained.

When I was sixteen and one half years of age I went to my first Young People's Outing. We took a bus to Ludington, got on a big boat, went out on Lake Michigan to Grand Haven, and then returned to Grand Rapids by bus. At that time I was with a fellow from the Dutch Reformed Church. He was a son of some dear friends of my parents. We sort of dated for six months, but father said we had to break up because he was not of our faith.

A few months later it seemed like the world was becoming a little bigger. Two young fellows from the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church motored to Hope after catechism and picked up a couple of young ladies from Hope and took them home. When my father found out they were from one of our churches it was O.K. This resulted in two happy marriages. As dear Rev. Vos said at that time, "There's Hope for Hudsonville."

Young People, what is my conclusion? I thank the Lord for the way I was brought up. There were moments of rebellion because sin constantly cleaves to us, but on the whole, I was content. With quiet times, reading, music and meditation I was happy.

You might perhaps say, "Sure was dull and boring!" I wish we could go back to that kind of living. God in His counsel has brought you face to face with many, many temptations, luxuries, sports, etc. I pray for you every day. You will need much grace. Spend much time in prayer. Make very good use of your time in your Christian schools and on college campus. Choose the right friends. We are nearing the end of time. Be on the alert. Set not your affections on things below for they shall perish. Think of the Eternal Rest which lies in store for those who cling to the "Faith of Our Fathers."

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**Current Events & Comments**

OLD MEN NEED LOVE TOO!

by Jessica Poortinga

Jessica is a member of our South Holland Church. She will be writing for this rubric. Welcome!

Recently, the Federation Board sent out a letter to the Young People's Societies with regard to the youths' attitude toward the elderly members in the congregation. I would like to apply this not only to the elderly in the congregation, but also to the young person's attitude toward grandparents. How often haven't we heard such remarks as: "My grandfather is 85; he's senile," or "My grandmother likes to come over and tell me what to do." Recently, in a class in school, a teacher asked the students to ask their grandparents or someone they knew who was at least 65 about the Depression of 1929. He was immediately greeted with moans and groans and complaints about these grandparents and how "odd" they were. What a terrible reaction for a Christian!
The Bible calls us to honor our parents. This is not done by complaining about their deeds. Proverbs 23:22 calls us to obey our fathers and not despise our mothers when they are old. This also applies to our grandparents and the elderly in the congregation. In Colossians 3:20 we are told that the Lord is pleased when we obey our parents (grandparents). The Heidelberg Catechism in Lord’s Day XXXIX states: "That I show all honor, love and fidelity to my father and mother, and all in authority over me (grandparents and elders), and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; and also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities; since it pleases God to govern us by their hand."

We should, in the tradition of the Old Testament, show due respect and honor to the elderly by visiting them. James exhorts us to visit the fatherless and widows, and included in this thought is the elderly! By doing this we experience the communion of the saints.

Not only are grandparents and older people sources of religious knowledge, but also are a good and interesting source of past history and anecdotes that are quite amusing. Ask Grandpa once about what Dad was like as a child. You will receive stories about how he fell out of a tree and broke his arm, or how he burned down the chicken coop when he was five and sent all the chickens scurrying around. Or, I’m sure that he would be glad to tell you about your uncles and aunts and the strange little habits that they had. Grandparents are a great source of amusing little tidbits that help you understand how things were when your parents were young. Also, they know a lot about the past history of the church and things that happened in church. My favorite is the one that was recently told to me about Professor Hoeksema when he was a minister in our South Holland Church. It was summer and, because of the heat, the windows were open. The Professor (then Reverend) was preaching when a hornet flew in and landed on his suitcoat. He very calmly reached into his pocket, took out his handkerchief, and caught the hornet, folded his handkerchief, put it back into his pocket, and never missed a word of his sermon. Or have you heard the one about Reverend VanBaren? When he was a seminarian and was preaching in the old South Holland church, he stumbled as he was going up the stairs to the platform. The first song the congregation sang was "The Lord upholds the faltering feet." I’m sure your grandparents and older members in your congregation can add to these humorous incidents from their past.

Visiting the elderly should be a joyous occasion for us as we benefit from their spiritual knowledge and learn from their experiences.

THE REASON WHY
by Mrs. H. Brants

My life is but a weaving between the Lord and me,
I cannot choose the colors, He worketh steadily.
Oft times He weaveth sorrow, and I in foolish pride,
Forget He sees the upper and I the under side.

Not till the loom is silent and the shuttles cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvas and explain the reason why,
The dark threads are as needful in the weavers skillful hand,
As the threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned.
MANSOUL SUBVERTED

According to the annals of The Holy War, the attack of Black Diabolos on the Town of Mansoul met with success. The people expelled their King Shaddai and unanimously turned to the usurping bramble with, Do thou reign over us. This he immediately began to do, as a strong man armed, moving into Mansoul’s throne room lest the original King try to recover it to himself. Next he began remodeling the town. He turned out of their places the mayor, Lord Understanding, and the recorder, Mr. Conscience. Although Lord Understanding became as blind as a bat and his mind as dark as a sealed tomb at midnight, Mr. Conscience, even in his defiled and hardened degeneracy, showed glimmerings of Shaddai’s natural light. There were times when he had terrible fits: the awful dread of Shaddai’s law would come over him; then he would speak out against Diabolos with a voice like the roar of a lion, shaking the whole town of Mansoul. So that though he was a miserable slave in the town, the new master could not stand him. So much the more so because Mansoul’s tyrant never could entirely control the power and obstinacy of Mr. Recorder. He was an account book of his own keeping, deeply, hopelessly in the red, bankrupt, with charges he could neither erase or deface, and debts he could not blot out indelibly and bold-facedly remaining on the book of conscience. “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; it is engraved upon the tablet of their heart. Jer. 17:1.” No matter how drunken and debauched he became on the wine of the Old Serpent, Mr. Recorder was always regarded by his hateful enemy as a spy and crypto-enemy within Mansoul, observing and weighing all that was said, done and thought. But neither could anyone else in Mansoul stand the irrepressible Mr. Recorder. He made depraved Mansoul a hell. He was to them all like the first gnawings of the worm that dieth not. He was to them all, to the town’s tyrant and to every soul in it, their worst enemy. No assassin could do him in. No man could run away from him anymore than from himself. Despite the fact that Diabolos tried to dismiss him lightly as a decrepit, senile madman, Mr. Recorder gave them all the horrors. He made them see right under their feet the yawning abysmal jaws of hell.

Another charter citizen of the corporation of Mansoul put out of his place was Lord Will-be-will. Originally, he was of such great strength, resolution and cour-
age that when he set out on a course, no one could turn him aside. Now, he, too, was a slave in Mansoul, yet he still had the persistence and headstrong determination to be a petty ruler in the city. It was this man who first gave audience to Diabolos, first consented to his flattery and bribery, first accepted his dark counsel as wholesome, and first opened all the gates and let him into the town. Diabolos had such a liking for him that when the town fell into diabolonian hands, this man, a lord, remained a lord. He was at first a lord servant of Saddai. He became a lord vassal of Diabolos. Free Will-be-will became a slave to the serpent, a deputy to Diabolos.

How this man lived up to his name! He could not stand anyone opposing him. Neither could he stand the sight nor sound of Mr. Recorder. He would plug his ears when he heard him speak. Will-be-will became Mr. Recorder’s constant enemy. In fact, he became the proudest enemy Prince Immanuel ever had this side of hell. He became more corrupt than Mr. Mind and more depraved than Mr. Understanding. Sometimes a little glimmering of natural light came into Mr. Mind, but Will-be-will so despised the light that he held it down in the pool of unrighteousness until it drowned. While Mr. Understanding was ignorant of all good, this wretch abhorred and refused all good. That Mansoul should be given up to the dictates of this insane drudge-lord was a great judgment, a terrible punishment. Shaddai had said, Mansoul “would none of Me, so I gave them up to their own hearts’ lusts, to walk in their own counsels. Ps. 81:12.”

It was in this town of Mansoul that the image of Shaddai was to be found. Such a perfect image it was that it more than anything else in the Universe did resemble Shaddai himself. But now that Diabolos was indisputably garrisoned in the town, he ordered this beautiful image to be defaced and removed. This was done by Mr. No-truth. It was No-truth also who followed orders in setting up, instead, the horrible and deformed image of Diabolos. He also saw that all law books in the town, moral, civil and natural, were destroyed. He and Lord Will-be-will destroyed every semblance of good remaining in Mansoul, so that nothing of it was left. The new recorder, installed in the place of Mr. Conscience, was I. Forget-good. He was wise to do evil, but to do good, he had no knowledge. Whatever he did was hurtful to the whole town of Mansoul.

Then in place of the good Lord Mayor, Mr. Understanding, a new mayor was set up, the Lord Lustings. This man was blind and deaf to good; he loved evil and favored it exclusively. He was the cause of most of the evil and corruption in Mansoul. See now the desolate ruin of poor Mansoul! Lord Lustings must confess, and he is not capable of any denial, I have been the cause of this! Others, and other factors, of course, concurred, but the root of all was in that man of base desire. He could not blame it on Shaddai. For the Creator of Mansoul made it a perfect light-bearer, not a greasy, pitchy torch which spits, sparks, sputters and stinks when it is lighted. Nor can any altogether blame Diabolos. To begin with, he could do no more than be suggestive, but suggestion can do nothing without Lust. The fire broke out in Mansoul from two quarters, at one end from a belch of flame out of the dragon’s mouth, and at the other end from a huge pile of oily rags in the basement of Lord Lustings’ mansion causing spontaneous combustion. Diabolos held out a banana dangling on the end of a string from his stick, but Lord Lustings made an ass of himself to follow and swallow the bait. Old Lord Livermore Lustings is still with us, but he cannot today, anymore than at the beginning, blame it all on “the iniquity of the times,” for good men are the best in worst times. Think of Noah in the old world, Daniel in Babylon and Job in the land of Uz. This
man's name at bottom is the name of all sin. Mansoul's sin first discovered itself in Lustings. The whole town was swayed by him in the direction of No-truth and his degrading and enslaving master, the Liar from the beginning.

In the town Diabolos set up certain ones as aldermen, policemen, politicians, entertainers, comedians, truckers, union heads and news media men. These are the names of some: Mr. Infidel, Mr. Blasphemer, Mr. Whorer, Mr. Effeminate, Mr. Transvestite, Mr. Pimp, Mr. Drunkard, Mr. Bulge-with-lies, Mr. Cheapsheat. Mr. Love-pot, Mr. Rocknut and Mr Atheist. Mr. Infidel was the eldest and Mr. Atheist the youngest. The entire train of them, from engine to caboose, has for six millenniums been off the track and is hurtling over the rocky gorge of the ages to destruction. Diabolos set up concentration camps in and all around the town, one being called Sweet-sin-bog. The commissar of the camp was one. Luvflesh, and his flunkey, Sucklust. Inmates here, for the sustenance of the state, in forced, feverish labor were busy canning maggots. Another labor camp, called Egyptian Midnight Darkness, had an image of Beelzebub in the center of it, was illuminated only with psychedelic black light and run by Comrade Hate-light. A third was a penitentiary known as Defiance Lounge. With these Diabolos became the god of the town of Mansoul, and the take-over of the town was complete. Understanding is now darkened. Conscience hardened with debauchery, the Will an abject slave to the laws of Legion, the image of Shaddai deformed, displaced and destroyed. His old law books surreptitiously removed and a new constitution installed, with a change in the name of Mansoul country from Land of Uprightness to Land of Graven Images. All Mansoul then wallowed in swinish lusts, luxuriously languished in defiance of God, loved their dungeon darkness, and were herded and guarded by droves of diabolonians to secure all, in case King Shaddai or Prince Immanuel should invade His captive kingdom.

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Young People, these are the outlines for the discussion groups at the convention. Read and study them to be prepared to take an active part.

**CALLED AS SHINING LIGHTS**

**IN SPEECH AND READING**

by Rev. Veldman

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Meaning of light
   a. Scriptural references: John 3:19-21; Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:4-8; 1 John 1:5-7.
   b. We can make the following distinctions:
      1) Physical light — light is movement, travelling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second, taking up into itself the image of things, revealing them to the perceiving eye. We can, therefore, speak of the light of the physical eye.
      2) Rational light — this is the light of the understanding, the mind. We often speak of it in this sense: working on a problem, for example, we say: "I see it."
3) Spiritual light
   a) God is light.
      1) Light is a spiritual concept, not merely knowledge. Then darkness would be merely ignorance.
      2) Light in God is that eternal movement within the Triune God whereby He knows and loves Himself and beholds Himself in the sphere of eternal goodness and perfection.
   b) Light for us is that spiritual movement of God’s grace and Spirit upon the elect sinner, translating him out of the darkness of sin and causing that sinner to turn to the living God, to know Him and to love Him, and to walk as children of the light in the midst of the world. Darkness in Scripture refers to sin and death, the hatred of God, and light means to know God and love Him with all our heart and mind and soul and strength.

2. The subject before us calls our attention to our calling to be shining lights in our speech and reading. We prefer to treat our reading first.

**SHINING LIGHTS IN OUR READING**

A. Why do we discuss our reading first?

1. This reading includes many things.
   a. It includes our hearing. After all, what we read enters our consciousness through the ear. All reading material is adapted fundamentally to the ear.
   b. It includes all the “instruction” we receive through television.
   c. It includes all the books and magazines we read.
   d. The whole field of instruction is meant here.

2. The ear is fundamental.
   a. Jesus’ miracle as recorded in Mark 7:31-37.
      1) We should read this scriptural narrative.
      2) Why does Jesus first put His finger into his ears and then spit and touch his tongue?
      3) The ear must be opened first before the tongue can be loosed.
   b. Let us understand.
      1) We are by nature conceived and born dead in sins and in trespasses, full of sin and darkness.
      2) Before we can speak unto God’s glory, that glory and praise of God must first enter into us. We must first receive the grace of God before we can speak of it.
      3) Here, of course. I am discussing this reading with covenant young people whose ears have been opened.

B. What do we read?

1. Indeed, there is so much reading material available.
   a. Think of all the trash on the market.
      1) What an abundance of rotten, filthy, corrupt, sexy novels.
      2) What an abundance of corrupt paperbacks. I have seen our young people looking at all this stuff in our drugstores. How repulsive these paperbacks are!
      3) Think of all this stuff on the television screen. All these movies. And remember, movies are wrong. Apart now from the evil of impersonating another, life may and cannot be played. whether you attempt to play the life of a sinner or a saint. Why is this true?
4) And then, of course, there is an abundance of so-called spiritual literature, in which the truths of the Word of God are undermined, distorted and denied.

b. And then there is so much good reading material available: the Bible, Beacon Lights, the Standard Bearer, our radio sermons, commentaries, Sunday School pamphlets, the books of Rev. Hoeksema, Rev. Engelsma, Professors Hanko, Decker and Hoeksema, etc. And when you avail yourselves of all these, there are clean books for relaxation. And also books to increase one’s learning.

2. So, what do you read?
   a. Do you fill your souls with trash?
   b. Do you watch movies, either in the theaters or in your homes on television?
   c. Do you read the Bible, regularly?
   d. Do you read Beacon Lights, regularly, and also the Standard Bearer? There are certainly things in the Standard Bearer we can read. John writes this of the youth in 1 John 2:12-14. Does this characterize you?
   e. Do you prepare for your society meetings? Are you ready to discuss? Or, do you visit during the meeting instead of taking part in the discussion?
   f. Are you walking as shining lights in your reading? Remember, what you read and digest controls and affects very seriously your spiritual life.

SHINING LIGHTS IN OUR SPEAKING

A. We are always speaking.
   1. As such.
      a. This does not necessarily mean that we speak audibly.
      b. We also speak within ourselves to ourselves. What else is thinking than that we speak within ourselves to ourselves? And this we do constantly.
   2. Tremendously serious!
      a. We must speak. And when we speak we always speak concerning God.
         1) We have been created image bearers of God. What does this mean? See Rev. Hoeksema’s Triple Knowledge, Vol. I, Lord’s Day 3, Chapters 1 and 11.
         2) We cannot ignore the Lord. We must speak concerning Him, whether for Him or against Him. Always we deal with God’s Name, His revelation of Himself, in all His works and also in Christ. And we will always do one of two things: reverence that Name or use it in vain.
      b. How serious this is!
         1) When we speak, we do so consciously and knowingly.
         2) We know how we should speak. We know when we are speaking evilly. And we are surely responsible for what we say; we are held accountable.
   B. What is our speech?
      1. Scriptural references: Eph. 4:15; 5:4,19; 1 Tim. 4:2, 5:13. To these passages many more, of course, can be added.
      2. Do we indulge in profanity, in filthy, sexy talk? I am informed that there are young people, attending our schools, who are guilty of this. Are you guilty of it?
      3. Do you speak nonsense, things that do not and cannot edify?
      4. Is your speaking only about carnal things, the things of this world? It is said that the mouth will speak of that whereof the heart overflows.
      5. Reading and speaking. They are inseparably connected.
C. What our speech should be.
1. We should speak unto the glory of God.
2. We should speak unto the edification of the church and of the people of God, our fellow young people.
3. We should speak as condemning the wicked, also when our fellow young people speak wickedly.
4. And this we can do only through prayer and the study of the infallible Word of our God.

CALLED AS SHINING LIGHTS
IN OUR CHOICE OF VOCATION

by Prof. Hanko

I. The Idea of Vocation.
A. The meaning of the word.
1. The meaning of the word as such.
   a. The word comes from a Latin word which means "to call."
   b. As applied to the subject, therefore, the idea is that the life's work which we choose is a "calling."
2. This word is, in the light of the Scriptures, particularly apt.
   a. It means, first of all, that every calling is a calling of God.
      1) This is the idea, e.g., in the parable of the talents. Matthew 25:14-30.
         a) The man travelling to a far country is Christ from the viewpoint of His ascension into heaven.
         b) The exalted Christ gives to every one of the citizens of the kingdom his own place and calling in that kingdom. This is the idea of the talents.
         c) And Christ gives that place "to every man according to his several ability;" i.e., Christ gives to every one the gifts which enable him to do the work in his particular place and calling in the kingdom. Vs 15.
      2) Thus, the following elements are included in one's calling.
         a) The calling is from God Who assigns each His place.
         b) The calling is to work within the kingdom.
         c) The calling is according to the abilities which each man receives from God.
   b. It is important to understand that this pertains to the whole of our calling.
      1) The reference is not only to special places within the kingdom, although this also is included.
         a) Officebearers in the Church.
         b) Christian school teachers, Sunday School teachers, participation in all the activities of the Church, etc.
      2) But the calling includes the whole of our calling in life, for all belongs to the kingdom.
         a) The calling and responsibilities of family life, whether as parents or children.
b) The calling to walk as God's people in the world; i.e., to flee from sin and do the good.

c) The particular way in life in which we earn our daily bread.

B. However, the word "vocation" is usually used to refer to that work by which we earn our living in the world. And on that we must concentrate.

1. There is no particular work which is, as such, disapproved by Scripture.
   a. One can be, according to Scripture, either an employer or an employee. See Ephesians 6:5-9.
   b. One can enter any of the professions: minister, teacher, doctor, dentist, lawyer, etc. None of these professions are, as such, condemned.
   d. Nor are even positions in government necessarily closed to the Christian.

2. The most fundamental calling in any work which we are given to do is to glorify God.
   a. This means, concretely, that whatever work we do in life, it must always be done in such a way that God is glorified.
      1) And that, in turn, means that we must be always conscious of the fact that our work is work given us in the kingdom of Christ.
      2) And that, by means of our work, we must seek the kingdom and God's righteousness. See Matthew 6:33, Colossians 3:1-3, and similar passages.
   b. Hence, there are no higher and lower "callings" in the kingdom. Every work is noble and glorious.
      1) Whether that be as a mother in the home;
      2) Of digging ditches, collecting garbage, building houses;
      3) Or preaching the gospel, teaching in Christian schools.

II. The Choice of Vocation.

A. In general, the choice must always be a spiritual choice.

1. This does not always happen in our life.
   a. It is a critical choice that must be made.
      1) It is usually made at a very early period in life — somewhere in our late teens.
      2) But it is a choice that often determines a large part of our life.
   b. It is a choice which is often given little or wrong consideration.
      1) Sometimes we just slide into a particular job because it happens to be available.
      2) Sometimes the only (or, at least, chief) consideration is the amount of money we can make.
      3) Oftentimes we give little thought that it is God Who assigns each his place.

2. Yet always the choice must be made before the face of God and in prayer.
   a. It must be a choice which takes into account the abilities God has given to us:
      1) Musical abilities, mechanical abilities, teaching abilities, mathematical abilities, etc.
      2) We must, with the help of teachers, pastors, and parents, come to know these abilities as best we can.
3) God shows us our life-calling in this way.
   b. But it must also take into account the way in which God leads us.
      1) God opens the way into a certain work, and shuts the door to a certain calling.
      2) He may do this in many ways, and we must be conscious that He always leads by His hand to point us to our work.
      3) He may, and usually does, do this by opening up to us a particular job which comes available at the time we need work.
      4) He uses all the circumstances of life to make His way clear to us.

B. This is also true when specific choices face us.
1. We must always ask the questions which bring us before His face.
   a. These questions are:
      1) How can I, with my abilities, and in the place in life God has given me, best serve Him?
      2) How can I best serve the cause of His kingdom?
      3) Lord, what wouldst Thou have me do?
   b. Then, in the work we have for our life's calling we will find happiness and contentment.
      1) We will do every task laid upon us for the purpose of seeking His kingdom and righteousness.
      2) Our hearts will be set upon the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. But this brings up several questions which are worth while discussing.
   a. Is every job open to the Christian in the light of the times in which we live?
      1) What about the need to join the neutral labor unions in some jobs?
      2) What about some jobs which almost necessarily involve a breaking of God's commandments? A business firm, e.g., which requires dishonesty of its workers.
      3) What about work which involves labor on the Lord’s Day?
         a) Is all such work wrong?
         b) Is some wrong and some legitimate?
         c) What standard can we use to judge?
      4) What about work that takes us away from our Church on the Lord’s Day? Such as military service?
   b. Are all the professions legitimate work in the light of the times in which we live?
      1) Is it possible for a Christian to be a politician and hold a place in government?
      2) Is it right to make a career in music such as concert pianist or operatic soloist?

III. The Calling Of Vocation.
A. Scripture gives general directions for our calling in whatever vocation we choose, but does not give specific commands for each.
1. There are directives for:
   a. Employers. Eph. 6:9, Col. 4:1, and like passages.
   b. Employees. Eph. 6:5-8, Col. 3:22-25, 1 Peter 2:18-25. etc.
   c. Husbands and wives. 1 Peter 3:1-7, Col. 3:18-21, Eph. 6:4, etc.
   d. Officebearers. 1 Timothy 3, Titus 2, 1 Peter 5:1-4, etc.
e. And many specific commands with respect to our relationships to parents,
    magistrates, etc.

2. But, in our specific calling we must apply the general principles of God’s
    Word.

B. This specific calling.

1. It involves:
   a. In whatever task we have, we are called to do the very best job of which
      we are capable.
   b. We are called to do this whether we wash dishes, climb electric poles,
      work a drill press, teach the 7th grade, or whatever.
   c. We are called to do this in such a way that we always seek the welfare of
      the one for whom we are working without thought of ourselves.
   d. We are called to do this cheerfully, thankfully, industriously, always
      seeking God’s glory.
   e. We are called to do this in obedience to God, for He is the One Whom we
      serve.

2. And we are called to do this in this way because we must let our light shine
   before men.
   a. This light is the light of God’s grace in our hearts.
   b. And when that light shines, others will see the power of God’s grace.
   c. And they will glorify our Father Who is in heaven. Mt. 5:14-16.

CONVENTION-NOTE

Survival Kits (suitable for competition in upcoming convention). Kits contain: 1 set of lightweight knight’s armor (one size fits all); choice of several insurance forms; 1 old pair of jeans; football helmet; rescue flairs; 1 straight-jacket for after competition; 7 standard U.S. Marine physical training guides; 4 combat manuals; 1 victory badge (chest not included); 1 pull-over cap with pre-cut holes for eyes (ideal for losers); 1 box of melted candy bars (good for instant energy); 1 family size bottle of aspirin; 1 full-size heating pad; 1 towel (very dry); 1 Alka-Seltzer; 1 bottle of snake-oil (used by Satchel Page); and 1 full size dartboard type family portrait (1946) of our fearless leaders, Jim and Char Schipper (darts included, no tips).

If interested call - HEL-P007 collect.

The Publicity Committee
Sandy VanderWoude, Chairman
FROM OUR DOON CHURCH:
A Farewell Program is planned for Rev. Moore and his family on May 14.

FROM OUR HOPE CHURCH:
The public confession of faith of Darlene Kamps took place on May 2.
Mr. Larry Bertsch and Miss Darlene Kamps were united in marriage on May 7.
A special program of audience singing, men's quartet and instrumental numbers was held at First Church on May 2.
Mr. & Mrs. Daryle Kuiper were blessed with the birth of a son on May 7.
Mr. Henry VanderWaal and Miss Deb Schimmel were united in holy marriage on May 14.

FROM OUR SOUTH HOLLAND CHURCH:
Mr. Craig Derks and Miss Sharon Stouwie were united in marriage on April 30.
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Lenting were blessed with a son, Dale Steven.

FROM OUR SOUTHEAST CHURCH:
The membership papers of Mr. Gerald DeVries were received from the Mayflower Christian Reformed Church.
The Young People's Society sponsored their annual Potluck supper on May 20.

FROM OUR HUDSONVILLE CHURCH:
Mrs. Cliff (Willa) Lubbers has been received as a member from Forest Grove Reformed Church.
Mr. & Mrs. Roger Berens have asked that their membership papers be transferred to our Faith Church.

FROM OUR HOLLAND CHURCH:
Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Haan were blessed with the birth of a daughter.
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Drnek were also blessed with the birth of a daughter.

FROM OUR LOVELAND CHURCH:
Mr. & Mrs. R. Campbell were blessed with the birth of a baby girl.