BEACON LIGHTS
FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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IN THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL
Not Conformed - But Transformed - Harry Langerak

TRUTH VS. ERROR
The Moffatt Bible - Rev. R. C. Harbach

FEATURE
Thanksgiving - Ruth De Boer
Sleepy People - Rachel Bouwkamp
George M. Ophoff (10) - Prof. H. Hanko

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY
The Church As An Organism - Rev. M. Kamps

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS
Reverend and Mister Jones? - Jenna Postma
Greetings From the First Protestant Reformed Church of Edmonton, Alberta - Geraldine Zylstra
In Romans 12:2, the reference to these two words implies an either-or and not a both-and situation. They are opposites which apply to the life of the child of God as he lives in this world. In these two words, we find a struggle that is expressed in many ways.

God against man, or man against God.

In the world but not of it, or in the world and of it.

The antithesis or synthesis.

The easy broad way to destruction, or the difficult narrow way to heaven.

The apostle Paul knew the struggles of the child of God. He experienced many of the struggles himself, for he was sinful as we are. As a minister of the Word of God, he saw the struggles in the lives of the saints with whom he had to deal. He knew the ease of conformity and the difficulty of transformation. He speaks about the struggle in Romans 7:19. "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." He concludes the whole matter with the soul-wrenching cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me...?"

For this reason, he takes the time to admonish us to be transformed and not to be conformed. He knew the temptation to be conformed. Conformity, in and of itself, is not necessarily bad. It is very much dependent upon the standard or pattern to which one becomes conformed. The apostle, when using the word conformed, is applying it to our adoption of the pattern or standard of the world. and he is commanding us not to adopt their standard. The word conformity implies a ready-made pattern which you and I can follow. It requires no originality to follow a pattern because it is already set. It is fixed. Now apply this idea to our conformity to the world. The world has a pattern which we could call their life style. We might also refer to it as their world and life view. All we have to do is conform to this pattern or standard. Our conformity will obviously be the way of least resistance. There will be no hard feelings, no bruises, no effort, and no battle.

It seems, too, that the idea the apostle is intent upon getting across is that the reason this pattern of the world is evil is because they live out of a principle of hatred of God. They do all things in rebellion against God. From this inner principle of rebellion, they have developed a way of life. This law of sin will show itself in every aspect of life. In speech, they take God's name in vain and blaspheme their very Creator. In song, they excite lust through words and music. Their literature titillates lust by grotesquely picturing the depravity of man in every aspect of life under the guise of realism. They make a mockery of marriage in divorce and remarriage. The family is nothing more than a communal relationship in which the father is some big dummy who cannot quite keep up with the times, and the mother is the habitual nag who drives everyone to distraction, while the children rule the roost. In the business world, a quick buck and a shady deal are the rule rather than the exception. Employee defies employer with impunity by joining the ungodlyiahor union. In science, God as Creator is deliberately denied in favor of the godless theory of evolution. It is a sports crazy, money-mad
world in which materialism is all one lives for. You think I have exaggerated? All you have to do is turn on the television set to bring the stark reality forcefully home. Money, sports, adultery, broken homes, divorce, bratty kids, and rebellious teenagers; it's all there and it is the pattern or standard of the world. All too often we conform to it. We cannot withdraw from it. It would be wrong for us to spend our days in separatistic solitude. We must live in the world. This is why the apostle warns us not to be conformed. We must not follow this pattern and model which is offered to us by the world and let it shape our lives. You see, it is easy to let yourself go downstream with the current trends of this world. The difficulty for you and I is that by nature we want what this world has to offer.

The positive admonition of the apostle Paul is that you and I must be transformed. We must be changed. You see, a change is necessary. We must not stay as we are by nature conformed to and in agreement with the life style of this world. The operation of sin is a very powerful force within our lives. This the apostle knew; yet he also knew that the child of God has been renewed by the regenerating spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have been changed by this operation, and it is because of this that we operate from a new principle which is the life of Christ. It is because of this change that the apostle can urge us to be transformed. He is speaking to you and I as we are changed. With this new principle of the new life of Christ, we can struggle with sin and fight against conformity. And what a fight! The Scriptures say if anyone is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; yet this new man dwells in an earthly body in which the former manifestations of sin are so powerful that the new man is disputed at every turn and is often effectively hampered. This gigantic battle is going on within us every moment of our regenerated lives. Conformation is to copy; transformation is to be original. Conformation is synthesis; transformation is antithesis. Conformation is to be at peace with the world; transformation is to be at war with the world.

Where is our strength in this fearsome struggle to be transformed? God is the only One who can give it. We must cry out to Him when our way is dim and we seem to falter in the battle. The same God who regenerated us and who called us will not leave nor forsake us. We are His. He renews His mercies every morning. He sees our feeble efforts in the struggle and He gives grace sufficient to our need. Given this grace, we will examine every work that we perform to see if it originated from the new life of Christ and whether it is a good and acceptable work of God. Transformation means that we seek to live a life consecrated to the living God.

Let me be so bold as to venture a few practical suggestions on how we can transform our behavior. In the first place, it seems to me that we must have brotherly care and concern for one another. This is best shown when we help and encourage those who need it, whether this be help in school work or encouragement when things do not go right. Secondly, we can pray for one another. In the battle of life, when we see the faltering efforts of one another, instead of ridicule and contempt, we can and should pray that God will give grace to our fellows. This can take the form of praying for our parents, teachers and fellow students. In the third place, we should be ready to defend the name and honor of our Heavenly Father. He is the One who has so wondrously created us and who continues to preserve us by His Almighty Hand. I am sure we would be incensed if someone dared to dishonor the name of our earthly father. If this is true of this earthly relationship, how much more should it be true of our heavenly
relationship. We are never innocent bystanders to those who take our Father's name in vain. Positively, we must let our speech betray that we are of the household of faith. In the fourth place, in our seeking of entertainment, let us be well aware that it must be God-glorifying. Too often when asked why we do a certain thing, we indignantly reply, "I like it," or, "What is wrong with it?" Rather, let us examine each work with the question, "Is God being glorified?" We live in an age that is sports crazy and man-glorifying. Be careful that it does not rub off on you! In the fifth place, we live in a materialistic, self-gratification. We work to supply our selfish wants. I want my car, my clothes, my guns, my bank account. The almighty "I" is first in everyone's mind. Do not let this craze get a hold on you. It could create havoc in the church. Scripture says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and all these things shall be added unto you." First take care of the poor, the distressed, your tuition and all the other kingdom causes; then the other things shall come.

Finally, when you sin, as you will, confess it and pray for forgiveness. Your Father in heaven who is rich in mercy will forgive and so also will your peers and parents and all others that are true children of God. By all means, do not live the lie or shrug off your sins in proud disdain.

All of these suggestions presuppose a humble spirit. Not one of them will be followed by you or I in pride. In this same chapter, Paul mentions this when he states in verse 3 of Romans 12, let no man "think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

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Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

Modern Speech Versions of the Bible
THE MOFFATT BIBLE

This is a popular modern-language Bible, published by Harper and Row with 1,368 pages at $14.95. It may not be the best modern-language Bible, but it is far from being the worst, many rating it among the best.

Moffatt, strangely, begins his Bible not with Genesis 1:1, but with 2:4a, "This is the story of how the universe was formed." But as many books in the Old
Testament, this, the first, got its title from its opening words, which show that it began as most translations, including our Hebrew Bibles, have it. In Exodus 6:3 we read, "I am the Eternal. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty, but I never (emphasis is mine) made myself known to them as 'the Eternal.'" This does not agree with Genesis 4:26, "He was the first to worship the Eternal by name." (cp. The Essentials of Reformed Doctrine, on God's Essence and Names, Lesson 3, footnote question 3.) In Genesis 1, the words "created" and "creation" appear only once, and only once in the Psalms. James Moffatt does not usually translate bara' "create." Striking is the translation in Genesis 4:23:

The man who wounds me,
him I slay,
I slay a boy for a blow!

Genesis 6:3 reads, "Human creatures are but flesh; my spirit is not to be immortal in them," and verse 4 contains a little theosophy: "...angels had intercourse with the daughters of men, and had children born to them." In Genesis 4 and 17 it is not covenant but compact, speaking of "the lasting compact between God and every living creature," a really impossible idea. Also there you find not seed, but the much less preferable term descendants. Also in this section of the Bible you read not of Noah's ark, but "Noah's barge," although in the gospels the James Moffatt Bible has "ark." (The Jehovah's Witness Bible has "box."). In Genesis 15:6, the term is not "righteousness," but in the New Jewish Version it is "merit," and the James Moffatt Bible makes it "real religion." The Hebrew bears out neither "merit" nor "true religion." Especially the former would make Paul in Romans 4:4 contend for "works." Righteousness is the word, and is what the true religion demands! To Genesis 44:4 the James Moffatt Bible adds from the Greek Septuagint, "Why have you stolen the silver goblet...?" In Genesis 49:10, a Messianic prophecy, no mention is made of Shiloh; instead we have:

The sceptre passes from Judah,
not over the staff of sway,
till he comes into his own,
and makes the clans obey.

In Exodus 10:1 it is not, "I have hardened his heart," but "I have made him stubborn," and then again, not "Pharaoh hardened his heart," but "Pharaoh stiffened himself."

At some points the text reads very graphically and colorfully, as in Job (the James Moffatt Bible translates E'yob. Why not lyob?). In Job 15:29 we have:

But what he won he cannot keep,
the harvest of his gain he cannot reap.
Would any man of sense argue so wildly,
or make himself a wind-bag?

James Moffatt often rearranges the Scripture text to suit his imagination of what is a more logical order. e.g., he has the following verse order in Job 40:1, 2, 8, 14, 3-5: 42:1-3, 5-17: 40:15-24. Where are verses 5 and 7? Probably deliberately omitted because they were thought to be copyist repetition error of the eye (Gen. 38:1, 3.). Another modern Bible which also does a good bit of rearranging of verses is the Roman Catholic New American Bible.

Job 23:14 King James Version, "But He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth," is better than, "But who can make him change his mind? He does whatever he may choose!" It will be somewhat strange to us to read in Psalm 51:7, "Purge me with marjoram," while hyssop does appear in the James Moffatt Bible in Hebrews 9:19. This is also strange to us: "So they put a sponge full of vinegar on a spear." (John 19:29). So Psalm 110:1, King James Version, "The Lord said unto my Lord, 'Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool'" is better than, "the Eternal has this oracle for my lord: sit throne at my right hand... " Like other
modern language Bibles, Isaiah 7:14 of the James Moffatt Bible has, "there is a young woman with child who shall bear a son and...." But the prophet was not foretelling anything so ordinary and commonplace. It is the same in Matthew 1:23, "The maiden will conceive and bear a son...." Here we have improper translations of the Hebrew almah and the Greek parthenos. Here at this point, too, we should look at Matthew 1:16, where the James Moffatt Bible actually makes Joseph the father of Jesus in the reading, "and Joseph (to whom the virgin Mary was betrothed) the father of Jesus, who is called 'Christ.'" Yet this very passage, even in the James Moffatt Bible, upholds the virgin birth, plainly declaring that Joseph was not the father of the Child: "what is begotten in her comes from the holy Spirit" (v. 20), and "she was discovered to be pregnant by the holy Spirit" (v. 18). We may also note that in this verse (18), the James Moffatt Bible puts "Jesus" in brackets, suggesting it ought better be omitted, as it is in the New English Bible, but no known Greek manuscript omits it.

In Isaiah 52:15 the King James Version properly translates, "so shall He sprinkle many nations (recall Matthew 28:19), and definitely not, "so many a nation shall yet do Him homage." We much prefer the King James Version to the James Moffatt Bible in Daniel 7:13, 14, "Then in my vision by night I saw a figure in human form coming with the clouds of heaven, coming up to the primaeval Being." Where is the Son of Man? Where are the Old Testament roots for the doctrine of the Son of Man?

In this Bible, the Hebrew names of God are lost to the reader. In our King James Version, Lord with small capitals is Jehovah, and Lord (lower case) God (small Capitals) is Adonai Jehovah; but the James Moffatt Bible makes it all simply "the Eternal." In Judges 6:22 it is "my lord the Eternal," while in 6:24 "Jehovah-shalom" is the "Allswell-Eternal."

It is a little painful, to say the least, to read in Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are those who feel poor in spirit." Jesus was not at that point discussing how certain people feel, but was describing the spiritual character of the blessed citizens of the kingdom of heaven, indicating what they are and what they think, rather than how they feel and how they live (what they do). Then, the omission of the doxology of the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:13b), for the most part omitted by modern Bibles in general, is really unjustifiable. Nor is the American Standard Version justifiable in putting the doxology off to the margin with an inaccurate note: "Many authorities, some ancient, but with variations, add, ‘For Thine is....’" For actually almost all Greek manuscripts have it, and one textual scholar says all but ten have it. (see Lange’s Commentary, Matthew, addenda, 567ff.)

In Matthew 19:9, the last clause, "and whoso marrieth her who is put away doth commit adultery" is omitted by Good News For Modern Man (Today’s English Version), the New English Bible and the Revised Standard Version, but it is retained by the American Standard Version and the James Moffatt Bible and by many other manuscript sources. Where is there any real weight and warrant for these omissions? In Matthew 26:29 we read, "till the day I drink it new with you in the realm of my Father," which is not even as good as the New American Bible’s not so good rendering, "drink it new with you in my Father’s reign." In Mark 15:39 (Matthew 27:54) the centurion is made to confess, "This man was certainly a son of God" (so the Revised Standard Version, Phillips and the New English Bible). This translation is, indeed, modern, even rationalistic; and, as we know, rationalistic exegesis denies the deity of Christ. The Greek does not warrant any article (including the indefinite), but we should have either "God's Son," or hulos theos

BEACON LIGHTS/5
may be regarded as a proper name, as the German *Gotteseohn*. Further, most Protestant modern Bibles do not include Mark 16:9-20, at least not in the same type as the text, or without being bracketed or explained in a footnote. The James Moffatt Bible has it in an appendix with an explanatory note, a lengthy bracketed paragraph expanding verse 14, and two additional sentences attached to verse 20. For more in support of this section of Scripture, see Dean Burgon’s book, “The Last Twelve Verses of Mark.”

According to the James Moffatt Bible, Luke “claims to special inspiration, merely premising that he has taken pains to be accurate, orderly and well informed” (Intro. XXIX, 1926 ed.). Yet Paul calls Luke’s gospel not just accurate, well informed statement, but Scripture (1 Timothy 5:18), which Paul also claims is inspired by God (1 Timothy 3:16). If we will compare Luke 1:68-70 with 2 Peter 1:21, we will see that since the world began God had inspired the mouth (words) of His holy prophets!

In Romans 9:5, the King James Version equates Christ with God, whereas the James Moffatt Bible, the J.B. Phillips and the New American Bible all distinguish Christ from God. (Note: The Reformed Episcopal Seminary, back in the 40’s, taught us that “nearly all modern critics say this word 'God' in Romans 9:5 refers to Christ: so Rothe, Lipsius, Weiss, Schlirmacher, Ritschl and Schultz.”) In Lange’s Commentary, Romans, 309, we find these words, “On no exegetical point, where there is room for discussion, has the unanimity of commentators, of all ages and confessions, been so entire, as in referring this to Christ.” Romans 12:1 begins well but ends strangely: “Well then, my brothers, I appeal to you by the mercy of God to dedicate your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated and acceptable to God: that is your cult, a spiritual rite.”

It is not only extremely remarkable, but simply amazing that in 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25 we have, “after thanking God he broke it, saying, 'This means my body broken for you.... This cup means the new covenant ratified by my blood....'” What is so remarkable about this is that the Greek verb used is “is” and should have been so translated, and not, as Moffatt has it, “this means.” What is so amazing about this translation, contrary to the majority of modern Bibles, is that it includes the word *broken* in “broken for you.” The James Moffatt Bible substantiates this inclusion in a well documented footnote which states that although the (modernistic destructive higher critical) Van Soden Greek text omits (brackets) “broken,” it is upheld by eight and more authoritative sources, so that the text must be read with the word “broken.” We agree. This word is omitted by six authorities, but twelve authorities have it. The claim that the word is an interpolation is worse than weak.

Again, we are surprised to find, as with most of the modern Bibles, that 1 John 1:7 is omitted, with no explanatory footnote. But see the John Gill commentary on this text. Perhaps you, too, will find it good enough for you. Space permits no further examination of the idiosyncracies of this modern Bible. It contains some sections of fine, striking language of high literary calibre which are worth reading. Only God’s inspired infallible Word could be the basis for what it is, the highest form of literature.

The really Reformed believer, the Reformed theologian, and the Reformed textual scholar “will not attempt to re-arrange the date of Scripture, nor will he place a question mark behind this or that historical event. In a word, he will leave the Bible alone. This man will bow before the entire book” (Rev. Prof. George M. Ophoff, TSB, 3, 81). That leaves Moffatt low on the scale of anything like Reformed (biblical) scholarship.
Thanksgiving
by Ruth De Boer

Ruth is a member of our Edgerton Church.

"...the third, how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance."

Soon we will celebrate that holiday called Thanksgiving. On this day, as children of God, we will go to His house to thank Him for the material riches He has given us in the past year: and above all, for the gift of His beloved Son. However, I do not wish to dwell on the Thanksgiving "day" in this article. Rather, I would like to say a few things about the thanksgiving our Heidelberg Catechism speaks of. This is an every day thanksgiving. It is the necessary result of the knowledge of our sins and miseries and our great deliverance. First of all, we must remember that this process of knowing our sins, knowing our Deliverer, and walking in thanksgiving is an every day occurrence. It is not a once in a lifetime "experience." There are some today that would like to have us believe this. Once we turn to God, we live on a higher "plateau" and are "free of sin." This will come only in heaven. We are earthly creatures with an evil nature and we have to struggle with this every day.

Our catechism teaches us that even though Christ's death has made complete atonement for our sins, we must still do good works. Scripture teaches us that our works do not save us: "For by grace are ye saved through faith...not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2:8-9. Rather, we must walk in God's law and do everything to His glory to express our gratitude to God; to assure ourselves that we are elect; and to witness to the world around us — especially to our brothers and sisters in the Church.

Isn't it sad that we are so often afraid to stand up for what we believe among our own brethren in the Church? No one wants to be considered odd — so we go along with the crowd. Is it any wonder that the world mocks our religion and our God, if we do not walk any differently than they?

This applies to the child of God at any age. As children, we must obey our parents and be thankful that God has given us our own schools where we are given an education to God's glory. We must not take this for granted. As young adults, this calling continues as we start coming in contact with the world around us more in our social life and our jobs. The devil works very hard in young people to tempt them with the "pleasures of sin." He also does this as we choose our life partner. We must pray for grace to be strong and remember the words of Ephesians 5:11: "...have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." As parents, we are called as wife to be submissive to her husband, and as husband to be the head over his wife. This also refers to being the spiritual head in the home. Our marriages are a picture of Christ's union with His bride, the church. We are also called to bring forth God's covenant seed. This is a serious calling — we are the instruments God uses to instruct His covenant seed. We must always be an example to our children and the world about us.

What a tremendous calling this walk of thankfulness is! We would fail if it were not for the grace of God. The catechism says, "God will give his grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desire continually ask them of Him, and are thankful for them." The means by
which we do this is prayer. It is the chief part of thankfulness. It is a continual sorrow for sin and a hearty confidence that God will hear and answer our prayer for Jesus Christ’s sake. We are taught to pray for all things necessary for body and soul.

Finally, may God give us grace to "...be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. 5:18-20.

As Thanksgiving Day comes and goes this year, it is good we take time to give God thanks for all His material and spiritual blessings. But let us not forget to make every day of our lives a Thanksgiving Day!

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**Feature**

**SLEEPY PEOPLE**

Rachel is a member of our Hudsonville Church

Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock. It is time to crawl out of that warm peaceful sleep. It is time to step into another day with a new refreshing thought and smile. Glancing out of my window, I am greeted by a world beaming with fresh sunlight. Everything is wrapped in a blanket of yellow sunshine leaving a glow of true warmth everywhere.

I notice that this small city is a little sleepy-eyed this morning and having a hard time awakening to a morning even as beautiful as this. The hush from the midnight hours still breaths heavy through the mornings’ rays of glory so that even the smallest sound can be heard.

Viewing another morning as this it is quite easy to dedicate ourselves with many thanks and gratefully meet each on-coming hour, isn’t it? Also it is rather simple to appreciate a night of rest after a long day of work and to enjoy warmth even though frost may lay on our windows. We are thankful too for our homes that are big and beautiful compared to what others in this world must use to survive in. And of course, we always count it a blessing to have such an abundance of food that we can waste much while everyday people die from starvation and cries from tiny children can be heard as sicknesses resulting from malnutrition slowly eat them away. Then too, we have clothing piled away in our closets for every season of the year when others have nothing but rags to wear.

Maybe we should re-evaluate our thanks and gratitude. Perhaps our thanks really is not so evident after all. How often don’t we just rudely take all of these things for granted each morning that we rise? How often isn’t it that we don’t even consciously attempt to think of our endless gifts. Or how many of us, even with all of these blessings, still reveal the kind of repulsive greediness, that always wants more, always wants better, and always wants bigger? How may of us don’t thrive on the pathetic sin of competition, trying to have or do a little more than the next one. How often don’t you hear of obnoxious complaining inspite of all our wealth!

Let us stop again. This indeed cannot be considered sincere thankfulness. Today
is Thanksgiving Day. What shall we say? Do we spend the day pretending that we are and have been throughout the past year a truly thankful people when actually by tomorrow we will have forgotten to give thanks. If we have not learned honest thankfulness in this prosperity, how shall we and our children even begin to touch the meaning and value of gratitude when all of these things are taken from us. Will we know how to be thankful when we no longer have a home to comfort us or a food supply enough to give us strength for even one day? Will we rise in the morning with a prayer of thanks on our lips when we have no shoes to wear on our feet or clothes to keep us warm when the winter winds blow? Will our hearts sing with thanksgiving when we have no rest when evening shadows fall and we must hide from a world that has lost all of its love? Will we and our children know gratitude when we have no church to attend or possible even no children to call our own! Will we understand how to be an appreciative people when we have nothing? Perhaps we should sit back right now and teach ourselves to daily strive for a more complete and truthful meaning of Thanksgiving.

Still ticking away are the minutes of this unforgettable morning. The town is gradually peeking out of its sleepiness, but we must hurry a bit more or some of us will miss the meaning of the entire day. We have too much to be thankful for and time is not going to wait for sleepy people who drag themselves behind. Don’t lose track of time because we will not be able to make up for that which is lost.

Awake! Rejoice with great thanks and be happy in the Lord!

"Both riches and honor come of thee and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee and praise thy glorious name."

I Chronicles 29: 12&13

With many sincere wishes for a blessed Thanksgiving Year!

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George M. Ophoff (10)

George Ophoff was ordained into the ministry on January 26, 1922, just one day after his 31st birthday. He was ordained pastor in an evening service in the Hope Christian Reformed Church. The congregation had been in existence since 1916—somewhat less than six years. During this period the congregation had been supplied by classical appointments from Classis Grand Rapids West, students and professors from the Seminary. But in all these years the congregation had never had a pastor of its own.

The congregation was a small rural church. At the time Rev. Ophoff took over the work of shepherdizing this flock, it numbered between thirty and thirty-five families. It had grown to this number from the original seven families which organized together into this congregation. These people were farmers from the area for the most part, and had until the time of organization been members of other Christian Reformed Churches. It was not a "missionary" congregation.

For Rev. Ophoff it was the beginning of a life’s work. Perhaps most of his life he had looked forward to this moment. It is certain that he had never seriously considered any other vocation. His heart
had been set on the ministry for many years. There had been many hardships along the way and interruptions of his schooling. There had been times when the goal seemed unreachable and years when he wondered whether the Lord had really called him to this task. But now the time had come to assume his labors as a pastor of one flock in the sheepfold of Christ.

However, the ways of God are far beyond our understanding. In fact, even when we look back over the years of our own life or over the years of the life of another whom we love and have come to know, although we can see indications which clearly show the Lord's purpose in bringing certain events to pass, we can only see these things dimly. There is a wisdom in our lives which is past finding out. Only when we are finally in glory, will we be able to see the total perfection of God's way with us. Asaph confessed in Psalm 73: "Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel...." But for Asaph, as for all of us, this is a matter of faith, not of sight. We sing: "All that I am, I owe to Thee. Thy wisdom, Lord, has fashioned me...." We know with certainty that this is true. But the mystery of the ways in which God leads us remains beyond our understanding as long as we are in this world where we see through a glass darkly.

We have tried to show, in the articles which have preceded this one, how Rev. Ophoff's early life, training, and experiences were used by God to prepare him for his life's work. But our understanding of these things is always very limited and imperfect. There are times in our lives when, looking back upon a particularly unusual experience, we can say: "I see why the Lord led me along this way." But even then we see only in part. For the most part, however, the wisdom of God is hidden from us. Looking back over another's life, this is more than ever true.

Rev. Ophoff himself could hardly have had any idea of all this. He was at the very beginning of his life's work. He had attained a goal for which he had long labored. But he had no idea what the future had in store for him. If he could have known he would have trembled. He could not have seen the terrible struggle of 1924, the whole new direction the Lord would give to his life as his labors became more and more concentrated in the work of the Seminary. The troubles would multiply in the years preceding the schism of 1953. He could not have known the bone-wearying hours of incessant labors as day and night he worked for the cause of the Church — labors which in the end left him a broken man. He could not have predicted the friends which turned against him, the bitter hatred which was hurled repeatedly in his direction, the slander of malice manifested in those who loved not the truth. One thing is sure: when he took up his work in the peace and quiet of a small rural church far from struggle and strife, this too was really part of the preparation which the Lord would use for a far greater work. Rev. Ophoff was not in the first place, a pastor. He would be many things. He would have work to do which is of greatest importance in the history books which God keeps in heaven. But this work was not the pastoral ministry. He was not appointed to the ministry for this. He was not even ideally suited to this work. His early years in Hope were a hiatus, a brief lull before the real work would begin. At the time Rev. Ophoff thought that the pastoral ministry was indeed his calling, but God knew better.

We have to look at his years in Hope Christian Reformed Church from that viewpoint. If we do not, we shall fail to understand the unique place God gave him in the Church and the unique work he was called to do.

I have made these introductory remarks because the time has come to say something about the kind of man Rev. Ophoff was. I take on this part of the task with a great deal of hesitation. There are
various reasons for this. I might, for example, mention the fact that I knew Rev. Ophoff personally only after I had begun my studies in the Seminary in the Fall of 1952. Prior to this I had seem him only from a very great distance. But Rev. Ophoff had been ordained over twenty-six years before this. He had changed in many respects, for change is foreign to no man, and with age comes a certain meallowing.

I might mention as reason for my hesitation that Rev. Ophoff had “warts.” I said, in the very beginning of this series, that the warts would have to be painted in the portrait. But can you appreciate the difficulty of this? When one is painting the portrait of one whom you deeply love, it is hard to force the hand to brush those warts in. Love would rather leave them out. But even this is not all. Can one ever really be sure that he gets the warts right? Can he be sure that they are not too large? or, too small? or, in the wrong place? or, of the wrong kind? That is, can one ever be sure he really knows someone else? Can this ever be true even of one whom we know most intimately? Can a husband ever be sure he really knows his wife? that if he were to describe her so that others would know what she is like, he would do it just right?

The task is really an impossible one. Yet, an attempt has to be made. It has to be made because if our readers are to get to know this stalwart and courageous warrior in the battle of faith, they have got to know more than a vague and ill-defined skeleton. They have got to know a man of flesh and blood. And here is the difficult part. There are, I think, people who knew Rev. Ophoff better than I knew him, who knew him longer than I knew him, and who are going to say after this is all written: “This is not quite the Ophoff that I knew. He really wasn’t quite that way. He was somehow different from that.” And no doubt some will say that we do him injustice in these articles, while others will say that we give him more credit that he deserves.

But God used a particular kind of man for a particular work and a particular calling — a work and calling which could have been done by no other. We cannot see this in all its beauty as God shapes and molds, uses and works through human instruments; but what we can see we must acknowledge, for it is the work of our God to Whom belongs all our praise.

It would not be well, I think, to try to write one or two articles which are exclusively devoted to what may perhaps be called a character sketch. It is the preferable way to try, if that is possible, to let Rev. Ophoff’s character unfold bit by bit as the story goes on. But there must be some idea to begin with. And to that we turn in our next article.

**OMNIPRESENCE**

—by Mrs. H. Brands

How thy ever presence thrills me! How it moves the inmost soul:
Just to feel that as I journey, there is One who has control,
Not a cross that is too heavy, will He give His saints to bear,
Not a road that is too rugged, will He lead us for He cares.

Every trial and temptation, that may come in life’s brief day,
Is to help us, strengthen, guide us, as we’re further on the way,
What a comfort for the christian, when it seems he treads alone,
He has an ever present guide, who’ll watch and bring him safely home!
FROM
THE
PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. M. KAMPS

THE CHURCH AS AN ORGANISM

The Church of Christ as an organism is very little understood today, and the idea is appreciated, I fear, even less. We do not live in the consciousness that the Church is an organism. Consequently, many of the beautiful truths bound up in this concept make no impact upon our lives. I believe that if we appropriate this biblical concept and from the heart live out of it, our church life will be greatly enriched.

The concept of the Church of Christ as an organism is directly related to the idea of the Church as institute. Scripture plainly shows this relationship and, in fact, by implication demands that the Church of Christ as organism become instituted in the world. In this connection, and by way of introduction, how often do you, believer, give account before the face of God for your present church membership? Some who claim to be believers have to give account to God for the lack of membership in the church instituted in the world. Do we as individual members of the instituted Church ever ask ourselves the questions which follow? Is it my responsibility to preach the Word? What does it mean to be the Church of Christ in this world of sin and rebellion? Believers, you claim you are the Church. Do you know what it means to be the Church, and do you actively seek to fulfill that calling?

In order to later discuss the Church as an institution in the world, we must first discuss the truth that the Church is a living spiritual organism. For it is out of the organism of the Church that the institutional church arises. We have to lay a foundation for future discussion.

Brethren, it is undoubtedly a most beautiful happening and experience when a few persons or families, who have come to conscious faith in God and His Son through the preaching of the gospel on the mission field, say: "We want to be organized as the institutional church in this place because we know through faith that we are the Church and we desire in obedience to Christ to manifest His
Church and serve Him through it.‘’ That’s what the brethren in Houston, Texas wanted to do. In a somewhat different context our fathers in 1924 also saw the need for a new institution of the Church of Christ. They had been cast out of their ecclesiastical home. Our fathers understood, in part at least, what hardships and trials would necessarily attend the reorganization and establishment of a new institution of the Church of Christ. But in the knowledge that they could not for conscience sake continue in what had been their home, they accepted ostracism and scorn in order to fulfill the demand of Christ to be obedient to the Word, and thus, they re-instituted as the truly Reformed Church. This is what our brethren recently did in Edmonton, Canada. This is what believers have done again and again.

But we, who are third and fourth generation members of an institutional church, possibly have no intellectual understanding of such a desire and possibly cannot identify with those who desire, at all costs, to be the church in the world. This lack of ability to identify with those who desire to be the church is indicative of our spiritual degeneration and to our own hurt as churches.

* * * * *

The Church of Christ is an organism. By the term Church in the preceding sentence we mean all believers, who have been regenerated or quickened (Eph. 2:4-5) by the Holy Spirit, and who walk in repentance and faith. The Church of Christ as organism is the number of the elect as they are gathered and preserved by the Son of God and finally presented as His Bride clothed in the fine linen garments of the righteousness of Christ. The Church of Christ as organism is holy by virtue of the redeeming blood of Christ and by virtue of the sanctifying presence and work of the Spirit of Christ in her. The Church as organism has no unbelieving, carnal, reprobate members. She is the one glorious number of the elect in Christ, redeemed by Him, called irresistibly by His Spirit, preserved by Him from sin and death, and brought to final glory by Him according to the will of His Father, who chose the Church in Christ to be that one living organism...the people of God, and who gave and entrusted the Church to His loving care.

That Church is an organism. What is meant by the term organism? Let me answer by way of example first; a tree is an organism. A wooden chair is not! A cow is a living organism. Your rawhide belt is not. An organism is a living thing, it possesses life. A car, boat, or house are not organisms, but are dead things mechanically bolted, glued or hammered together. The constituent parts of the car, boat, or house are forms of various different natural resources forced together without any other unity than that necessary to serve the functional purpose conceived of by the builder. But a tree is an organism. It is a living something. It grows from within; it has a seed form beginning. The whole oak tree (branch, bark, leaves, and roots) has its beginning in the seed and has coarsing through its fibers, the organic life of an oak tree.

From this we may and do conclude that an organism is that which has “a common life principle” of which (or in which) all the members of this organism share. More succinctly I cannot express the idea of an “organism.” The one common life principle of the oak tree and of all its various aspects is that of the “life” of this particular tree. So also for the human person and the many members of one’s body. So also for the rose plant with its leaves, stems, root, thorns, and lovely fragrant buds. Each specific kind of organism had its own unique “life principle” which is common to all the members of that one organism. Consequently, and in summation, we repeat, an organism is that which has “a common life principle” of which all the members of this organism share. To speak of an
organism is to speak of “life,” living unity wherein all the members of the one organism serve the purpose and life of this one organism. The living tree is served by every leaf, every inch of bark, every stem, and every root. An organism is that one living, vibrant, active whole or entity wherein all the members of the one whole share a “one common life principle.”

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Now let us apply this to the Church of Christ. The Church, the totality of elect believers, is an organism. A spiritual organism to be sure, but an organism nonetheless. That is, the Church has a “one common life principle.” The Church of Christ has many members. These members are the saints of all ages who have been gathered from all nations and who shall be gathered. There are many accidental or peripheral differences to be found among these many members. Differences of disposition, temperament, race, color, language, knowledge and understanding, physical appearance, etc. But all these members of the Church have one thing in common, i.e., they have a common life principle and, therefore, the Church is said to be an organism. The identity of this “one common life principle” of the Church is the life of Christ Jesus our resurrected Lord. His life is the life of His Church. Jesus’ resurrection life is imparted to every member of the Church elect in Him. This resurrection life of Christ is given in regeneration. This life is eternal life. It is sinless (1 John 3:9). This life is the intimate knowledge of love towards God (John 17:3). This life is faith in God and obedience to His Word. This life is the unity of the many members of the Church. The Church is not a crowd of people who have no internal unity or essential oneness. The Church is one, i.e., all the members are inseparably united as one whole motivated by love towards God as each member of the Church partakes of the life of Christ. This life is given us now in principle to be fully manifested in the day of Christ’s coming again, when we shall be delivered completely from sin, the old man, and Satan. In the day of Christ’s coming again we shall be given our resurrection bodies in order that we, The Church, may serve our God in Christ in perfect obedience.

Christ Jesus clearly points the way to understanding the Church as an organism when He specifies the relationship of all believers to Himself as being one harmonious to that of the vine and its branches. “I am the vine, ye are the branches.” (John 15:1-5). The branches live out of the vine. The branches that bear fruit share one common life principle with the vine. Thus, believers living out of Christ by faith in Him bear the fruits of His life in them. The Church is an organism. She has “a common life principle” and that one life is the life of our resurrected Lord. In God’s Word the Church is frequently called the body of Christ. This term too obviously points toward the organic character of the nature of the Church. Ephesians 1:22-23 reads: “And hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body.....” The Church of Christ is depicted as an organism also in Romans 12:5: “So we (believers, MK) being many, are one body in Christ.....” This organic relationship which exists between Christ and the Church is also the underlying concept in the oft repeated expression, “people” of God as in 1 Peter 2:9. As a people, a spiritual organism, believers have one faith, one hope, one baptism, one God and Father of all, One Savior, one life....the life of Christ Jesus. (Eph. 4:4). The Church of Christ as an organic whole is able through the many differences of its members (peripheral and accidental though they are) to manifest a wide spectrum of spiritual gifts and diversity, all of which in one way or another manifest the one common life principle of the Church as the living body of Jesus Christ. (Cf. 1 Cor
In parenthesis let me state that this manifestation of a wide spectrum of spiritual gifts and diversity in the one organism of the Church is what has been termed the multiformity of the Church of Christ. This truth of multiformity is possible only because the Church is an organism. Again this idea of multiformity is corrupted to mean that the Church is composed of persons of varying “faiths” and “hopes” as represented by all institutions of the church. But true multiformity is based on the fact that the Church is one in faith and hope because it lives in and out of Christ Jesus.

Life is activity. The life of Christ is the activity of obedience to the Word. faith in God. It also includes prayer, love of the brother. This spiritual activity is the life of the Church, for it is the life of Christ Jesus. The Church in all ages and in all nations ever manifested that one life, that one beautiful, irrepressible activity, of which the many facets bear the spiritual names...obedience to the Word, faith towards God, love, kindness and compassion for the neighbor, repentance, sorrow for sin, a holding fast to the truth in Christ, etc. Life is activity and this activity of the Church of Christ is the fruit of the grace of God wrought irresistably in the hearts of the elect in Christ to the praise of the glory of God’s grace. (Eph. 1:6). The Church of Christ is inexpressibly beautiful! She radiates with the beauty of God’s grace as a clear, brilliant diamond. She radiates forth as a living organism, (the body of Christ) the wondrous beauty of Him who conceived of her in His eternal will, who has begotten her by His Spirit, and who dwells in her and with her forever! The life of Christ is the life of the Church.

The Church of Christ is an organism! The Church as organism lives eternally in the mind and will of God. The Church as organism will live forever in the new heavens and earth where righteousness dwells. The Church as organism can never be destroyed...the gates of Hell cannot prevail against her, for her life and head is the eternal Son of God in our flesh, Jesus Christ of the city of Nazareth, who is now set at the right hand of God, i.e., “Far above all principality and power and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come...” (Eph. 1:21).

On the basis of Scripture we hold fast to the truth that the Church is an organism. The Church is the spiritual organism of the body of Christ! Of this Church you and I are members now and we may be assured that we ever shall be living members thereof.

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**Current Events & Comments**

**REVEREND AND MISTER JONES?**

by Jessica Poortinga

Things have changed considerably since the days when our grandparents and even parents were our age. For one thing, acceptable clothing for women has changed. Once, it was considered a sin if her ankles showed; yet, we have just passed through a time when the mini-skirt was the style. Now, women are seldom seen in dresses, and pantsuits are acceptable almost everywhere; even in church!

Not only has women’s clothing changed, but their whole attitude toward life has changed. According to the ERA, women are men’s equals and deserve equal treatment and opportunities. They
feel that they are able to do the work traditionally done by men and do just as well, if not better than the men. The attitudes of men toward women have changed accordingly.

Because of these changes in the attitudes toward women and their roles outside of the church, there is also a change in the attitudes inside the church. More and more there is a trend toward letting the women vote in congregational meetings, and even toward voting women into consistories. In fact, this is already being practiced in some Reformed churches.

The next step, as I see it, is the reason for the title of this article. There are some women in the seminaries studying to be ministers. Although they claim that they only want to study and learn more about the Bible, this will eventually lead to women in the ministry. Hence, "Reverend and Mister Jones."

The people who are in support of women voting in congregational meetings, as members of consistories, and as ministers, have little that they can even say to prove their point. One text which they quote is Galations 3:28. This reads: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." They have taken this text out of context. Instead of referring to roles in the church, as they suppose, it refers to salvation, which can be seen when one reads the whole chapter.

Another thing they use for support is the United States Constitution. The Constitution states that all men are created equal, and that also refers to women. I fail to see what significance and bearing this has with regard to the church, seeing that the church and state are separate. Also, if this is their support, they place more confidence in man (the Constitution) than in God (the Bible).

Finally, they use texts such as 1 Timothy 2:12 to say that Paul was affected by the times in which he lived. Paul, they say, didn’t want women to teach, but there is nothing wrong now with women teachers. In chapel at Illiana we had a young man from the Reformed Church say that Paul wrote this because in his days the woman was insignificant and couldn’t teach because she wasn’t educated enough. The same, he claimed, goes for woman’s place in the church when Paul states it is wrong for women to be leaders in the church. What this youth and many people fail to see is that Paul is writing about the teaching office of the ministry and not about teaching in schools. Also, claiming that Paul was affected by the time and age in which he lived or that the Bible is cultural, is denying the infallibility of the Bible, which is much worse than placing women in places of authority in the church.

There are many texts which prove our stand on this matter. 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 states that the woman must keep silence in the church and that it is a shame for women to speak in the church. 1 Timothy 2:11, 12 states that the woman’s place is to learn in silence with subjection and that a woman should not take the teaching role of the ministry or usurp authority, which she would do when she voted or as a member of the consistory. In 1 Timothy 3, the requirements of elders and deacons are listed, one of which is husband of one wife. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, the Bible states that the head of the woman is the man. The woman is to be in subjection to the man, not have authority over him, which authority she would have as a voting member of the church.

We, as young people in this day and age, should know the truth concerning this and stand up for what we know to be the truth. We should show others the error of their belief and stand firm in the faith, for we are the future church of Jesus Christ, and we must see to it that the truth is not lost!
Greetings From the
First Protestant Reformed Church
of Edmonton, Alberta
by Geraldine Zylstra

We just recently celebrated our first anniversary and already we have shared joys and sorrows, trials and tribulations. Most of all, we have experienced the blessings and grace of God. We are glad to be a part of the Protestant Reformed denomination and under the care of the reformed truth.

We, as a small church, are very close, and unity can be genuinely felt even after only one year. Two members joined shortly after we were established. A young family was blessed with the birth of their third child. God then blessed us with the safe arrival of our minister, Rev. Moore, as well as nine other additions. Two older couples celebrated their prosperous 25 years of marriage last summer, and one of the younger couples were joined in holy matrimony in September. But "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the Name of the Lord." He saw fit to take a young member from us, by way of an automobile accident, into His Holy Presence. We remember that this is also a means of grace shown to us.

We haven't organized any societies as such, but the young people have a coffee party every Sunday night where we play games and drink coffee. Occasionally, the older people also get together.

Catechism, held every Monday night for the young people, and every Saturday morning for the children, seems to be going very well. The Essentials class, consisting of all confessing members as of October 24, proves to be very interesting and applicable to life today.

There is also a Bible Study class every Thursday night to which outsiders are heartily welcome. We are happy to say that there is outside interest shown, and valuable discussions take place. As of now, we are talking about the Canons of Dort.

Rev. Moore and his family, on behalf of the congregation, extend a warm welcome to anyone who wishes to come up here if they get the chance. We would enjoy having you here to worship with us in Spirit and in truth. We already have experienced that joy with some of you.

In conclusion, our congregation is very thankful for the truth and God's revelation of it to us. Without it, it would be impossible to lead a healthy, Christian life.

The starting-point of every motive in religion is God and not man.
Man is the instrument and means.
God is alone here the goal, the point of departure and the point of arrival, the fountain from which the waters flow, and at the same time the ocean into which they finally return.

Abraham Kuyper
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