BEACON LIGHTS
For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME IV  NOVEMBER — 1943  NUMBER 2

ALL CALIFORNIA ISSUE

A Scene taken near Redlands, California
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Beacon Lights is published by the Protestant Reformed Young People’s Federation, 706 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Subscription Price $1.25 per year.

Beacon Lights is published Monthly except July and September.

Application for entrance as 2nd Class mail has been submitted on October 15, 1943.

CONTENTS

THE HOLY ART OF THANKSGIVING .................................. 3
Rev. L. Doezemaa

OUR RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS .............................................. 5
Rev. L. Doezemaa

THANKSGIVING DAY .................................................... 7
Miss Ida Kort

THANKSGIVING .......................................................... 8
Miss Hilda Kimm

BOOK REVIEW ........................................................... 10
Mrs. L. Doezemaa

SKETCH ................................................................. 12
Miss Harriet Schipper

THE READING OF HOLY SCRIPTURES ................................. 15
Miss Dora Poortinga

A REFORMATION IN REDLANDS ......................................... 16
Mr. T. Feenstra

TO OUR BOYS IN SERVICE ............................................. 19
Rev. G. Vos

LETTERS FROM OUR BOYS ............................................. 20

LIFE IN THE ARMY ....................................................... 24
Pfc. Louis Kikstra

BIBLE OUTLINES ....................................................... 26
Rev. Geo. Lubbers
The Holy Art Of Thanksgivings

By REV. L. DOEZEMA — Bellflower, California

This issue of *Beacon Lights* comes out in the month of November, which is the month remembered especially because it is the season of thanksgiving. Harvest time is just past and we as a nation have the custom of setting a day of the month of November aside to give thanks to Almighty God. Although this issue is prepared and received in the United States before the day itself arrives, there undoubtedly are some of our young men who will receive it many days after Thankgiving Day. Nevertheless as Christians we are always interested in the subject of thanksgiving; the subject is never “old news”. We remember our calling to give thanks to God always for all things. This remembrance is the occasion for my writing something about the holy art of thanksgiving.

The expression is often made that we have many things for which we ought to be thankful. If we mean that the same things of the totality of received things from the hand of the Almighty we make our “ought”, our duty, easier. We have excluded some things then, which always lightens our burden. If we even mean by the expression many things, good things in our eyes, we change it from a duty to a pleasure. Such is our experience as children of God. It is very easy for us to single out some things for which we can say it is a pleasure for us to give thanks to God for them. All children of God have
some things about which they can say, for these I give thanks. We above all can and do thank God for His salvation in Jesus Christ. We thank Him that we may know Him in His Word, which is our guide to that salvation, the source of our pleasure. We can easily thank God for some of the means He uses to lead us to His revelation, to Himself. Some of these are: the preaching of the Word, our Protestant Reformed preaching; fellowship with the saints; our religious papers, The Standard Bearer and Beacon Lights; these and many other things which we are now enjoying or have enjoyed. For these we ought to give thanks and with pleasure we do give thanks for them. We give thanks to God too for each day that He gives us, in which there was plenty of everything to give us pleasure.

We do not consider such thanksgiving an art. And in our present time we know that for some, all of the above mentioned pleasures are no more. Probably the days are filled with misery. One child of God was once in such misery that he cursed the day in which he was born. And, who has not misery? For that reason we must reflect more upon the art of giving thanks. An art is something which must be learned. To fulfill our calling to give thanks always we must learn the art of it. Paul writes, “I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”

How are we to learn that lesson? It isn’t one of the “arts”. It is a holy art. The Holy Spirit must teach us and lead us to give thanks, true thanksgiving, always. He shall teach us to say about all our experience: it is in God’s providence, it is well, for He shall turn it to our profit.

We feel the need of prayer. Pray without ceasing. Even prayer is the chief part of true thankfulness.

We wish to introduce to our Readers, Rev. Lambert Doezena, pastor of the Bellflower Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. Doezena has not only written the editorials for this issue but also assumed the responsibility of helping the Board in their effort to make the November Beacon Lights, All-Californian.

* * * * * *

Although Rev. Vos is now in Edgerton, Minn., we still think of him as a California man due to the many years he served as Redlands’ Leader and so we are glad we can also place his contribution in this issue.

Ed.
Our Religious Customs

These customs are many. To celebrate a thanksgiving day is one of them. There are many others in our religious life. We have the custom of worshipping together on the Lord's Day, the custom of praying at certain times—though we do not call prayer a custom, the custom of reading the Bible at certain set times. Our religious life as well as our whole life has customs. Such is inevitable. Therefore the question is not, shall we have set forms of religious activity, customs? The question is, what is the value of our religious customs? Is it detrimental to religious life to break some of them?

A custom is an habitual or usual course of action. We all have customs just as we all have habits. We may distinguish habits and customs. A habit may sometimes be defined for purposes of distinction as the disposition or tendency due to repetition. A custom is defined as the fact of repetition rather than the tendency to repetition. Without a doubt human nature has the tendency and disposition to repeat its action. It is natural to have habits. We either have good habits or our habits are bad. There is not the alternative of no habits. In that same sense we have as religious people actions of worship which are repeated—some every day, some every year. These customs may change but then others take their place. If we do not have Reformed religious customs we have others which are not Reformed. If we have no religious customs we have nevertheless irreligious customs. Society is regulated by its good customs. In general we can immediately see the value of customs for society and for our religious life. It tends to make action smooth and regulated if there are established and recognized customs.

Maybe some of us have often asked how certain of our religious customs arose: how they have become the set action for us as Christians? And is there value in them as such? Are they necessary to serve God? Or, can they be discarded at will by an individual? Ours are certainly not commanded as were the ceremonies of the Old Dispensation. It seems to me that all we can say about our religious customs, our old recognized customs is that they have arisen from the desire and will to serve and to seek God. The New Testament doesn't lay down any outward regulations for our Christian living. Yet we know that it was inevitable that the true people of
God repeated their actions of service of God and their earnest desires to seek the God of their salvation in His word caused them to have the custom of gathering together on the Lord's Day. Jesus Himself had the custom to do certain things. As was His wont He went to the synagogue; His perfect love of the Father was the motive for His very repeated action to seek solitude in prayer.

Upon the word of Paul we can say that our customs as such have no spiritual value; they do not merit and give benefit in the exercise of them as such. Paul writes to the Galatians about the ceremonies, the weak and beggarly elements, which were of the Old Dispensation: 4:10,11, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you lest I have bestowed labor upon you in vain." It is evident that Paul refers here only to the exercise of these customs as such and as they were considered necessary for spiritual benefits. To say that customs have no value is a wrong conclusion. We still maintain that they have value as instruments for expressing ourselves. And there is a certain natural connection between the spiritual life and the customs that are formed to give expression to that life. A river seeks its own bed and follows a natural course. Therefore when someone desires to break our customs we frown and see a definite evidence of lack of spirituality. When the spiritual life that seeks God is there it seeks the best ways to serve God and follow those customs to enjoy spiritual life with God. If there isn't that spiritual life the customs become repulsive and a burden, and are thrown off at the earliest convenience. The breaking of established and recognized customs is a strong sign of loss of spiritual life. Circumstances may change our customs. Our soldiers cannot serve God in the customs as they are at home.

Is there a danger in this present life of change? There is. And we can all realize that for those who are not children of God these times afford an opportunity to cast off the old yoke. When the boys return again many will have lost the old habits and customs. It will be a different church life. That does not mean that those true to God will not naturally seek to serve God in the best and tried ways. They shall. However, then, when many do differently, the practice of customs becomes a part of our confession. As our custom of prayer at meal time becomes a confession when we are in public, so will our whole life of religious customs become a confession to the world of our inner walk and spiritual life.

L. D.
Thanksgiving Day
By MISS IDA KORT — Redlands, California

Another year has passed and we will again celebrate Thanksgiving day. In many homes you will find a vacant place when the family gathers for their Thanksgiving day meal. Sons, brothers, and husbands cannot be present. They are far from home, some in one of the many camps of our country, and others somewhere across the ocean on far-flung battle fronts, or on warships. In a few homes they have received word that a beloved son or brother shall never return home again.

So much has happened this past year, are we ready to give thanks unto our God? We know that a terrible war is raging — but we have every thing we can wish for as far as earthly things are concerned. We have our homes, plenty of food, clothing, more than that — we live in luxury. We are still given the freedom to worship our God; a privilege many people in foreign countries do not have.

The world will also celebrate Thanksgiving day. In some homes you will find anxiety and grief, but they try to forget, and they say when this is all over we will have a better world to live in, and they go on having a good time in this pleasure mad world.

"But we know that all things work together for good to them that love God," whatever happens. Should not our hearts be full of thanksgiving to our heavenly Father for the many blessings He bestows on us? That God has given us Christian parents; that they have given us a Christian education, and above all that we as young people confess His name
and live according to our calling—are included among the things for which we are thankful. Therefore let us as young people of the Church attend Bible class or any of our church activities which will be of spiritual benefit unto us.

Frequently we hear from boys in the service who cannot worship as before, who now admit that they miss the communion and fellowship in the study of God’s word. Therefore let us put forth every effort to labor and live according to our calling.

In Habakkuk we read: “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither fruit be on the vines; the labor of the olives shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat: the flock shall be cut from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

If we have that faith in Christ Jesus our hearts will overflow with thanksgiving unto our God.

“What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of Salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.”

“Oh give thanks unto the Lord: for His mercy endureth for ever.”

---

**Thanksgiving**

By MISS HILDA KIMM — Redlands, California

Soon Thanksgiving Day will be at hand again. The celebration of this day dates back to our Pilgrim Fathers. It was born through the experiences of much hardship: cold, poor crops, and almost continuous danger of Indians, followed by the blessing of an abundant crop. The people realized and accepted this great crop as a gift from God and decided to set aside a day in which to thank God for His many blessings. Ever since, Thanksgiving Day has been kept from year to year.

However, today, Thanksgiving Day is spent by the great majority of people, in seeking their own pleasure and little thought is given to God as the giver of all things. But the Christian and especially the Reformed Christian thinks differently about it. He has the deep conviction that each day must be
Thanksgiving Day. He knows that, according to God's Word, all things are blessings for them that love God, for all things must work together for their good, even trials and tribulations. And knowing that from the Word of God, we must give God thanks for all things.

First of all we are thankful for our Christian parents, who teach us to fear God. We are thankful for food, drink, clothing, shelter, etc. But we are not only thankful for the things we would call good and pleasant, but also for sickness, hardship, pain, and hunger. They also must be accepted as blessings for they all bring us closer to Him and that really is the only thing worth while—to be near to God and to experience His love and mercy. Then only can we have peace. But those blessings can not be obtained unless we first have Christ because Christ is the channel through which all blessings flow. If we have Christ, we have all things. In Christ we have forgiveness of sin on the basis of His atoning work, a work that we were unable to do because through the fall of Adam we fell from a state of perfection to a state of total depravity. We have lost the image of God and with His favor and communion. Instead of being just, we became unjust, instead of righteous, unrighteous. The result? Everlasting punishment! But it was Christ Who paid the penalty and now we are again righteous in Him, by Grace. We are now justified before God. Again we can enjoy His love and communion and can never fall from it. What a blessing! Shall we then not praise Him and be thankful!

But there is more. In this life, sin still works in our hearts and causes many tears and sorrow and misery. Every night we must confess our sins and ask for forgiveness. But some day, when we are in heaven, we shall be free from all our sin. Then we shall know God as He is and shall serve Him in perfection. There we shall have perfect peace and happiness forever. And the ungodly? They shall have no rest, no joy but everlasting sorrow, pain, and misery bearing the curse of God eternally. And we, although no better than they, and also deserving the same punishment, are saved from it by grace through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. Seeing what Christ has done for us, our hearts are filled with love and happiness. We fail to find words to express the overwhelming joy and gratitude with which our hearts are filled and so we speak the simple words, "Our heavenly Father, we thank thee!" That is thanksgiving!
Book Review

By MRS. L. DOEZEMA

Bellflower, California

Small Sects in America
by Elmer T. Clark.

This book is the result of a lengthy and extensive investigation covering a period of fifteen years, in which the author studied the official literature and doctrinal pronouncements of the sects about which he writes, and even paid personal visits to the headquarters of some of these religious bodies. The book reveals a rather thorough study of the subject.

The author does not give a definition of a sect, but it is evident from his treatment of the subject that many small organized denominations are classed as sects and although the Protestant Reformed Churches are not discussed in this work, I would not be surprised if he had found our denomination, we too would have a paragraph in his book. In my opinion, many of these churches he writes about are not sects at all, many of them we also would consider sects.

The book outlines the sects in a rather new way, discussing them under the following heads: Pessimistic Sects, Perfectionistic Sects, Charismatic Sects, Communistic Sects, and Legalistic Sects. Many of the sects the author mentions are almost unknown, partly because of their small size, often because of their extreme peculiarity, or because of the race of the adherents. If some of the teachings were not so sadly wrong and misguided, they would be ludicrous. The names of some of the sects tell their own story: The Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God, Two Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists, United Zion’s Children, Yorker Brethren, Church of God and Saints of Christ, Church of Daniel’s Band, Pillar of Fire, Free Christian Zion Church of Christ, Hutterian Brethren, Old Order Amish, House of Prayer, Order Amish, House of Prayer, Church Triumphant. The existence of many sects would be surprising information to many people, especially to those living in the eastern part of our country. Here in the west many of the religious
groups mentioned by Clark are not quite so strange, and just by scanning the religious page of our Saturday evening paper we could perhaps add a few names to his list which are just as strange. One finds many more fanatical religious groups in the South and in the West than in the Northern and Eastern parts of the United States.

Lest you obtain the impression that only the obscure sects are mentioned—here are some others that are rather freely and lengthily discussed: The Mennonites, the Seventh-Day Adventists, Adventists, Four-Square Church, Father Divine's Peace Mission, and others.

The author tells a little about the origin of each group, gives statistics about size and money used for the maintenance and work, goes into considerable detail in discussing the doctrine and customs of each group, and if there is one outstanding leader or founder he characterizes that person.

This book is not the type of work a person would choose to pick up and read through at once, but it is a book to have around to read in occasionally. For any society member to own it would be a worthwhile book and would give much information necessary for Bible discussion or for essays for after-recess program. It would be considered a fortunate choice for some church library.

Naturally the author's ideas are brought out, even in a book of this sort. One does not have to read far into the book to find that the author's ideas about inspiration of the Bible are far from correct. The author can perhaps be classed as a higher critic: at least he is a modernist. In the last paragraph of his book, the author says: “Total depravity is in conflict with very fundamentals of modern educational theory, but it is the first principle of most sects. In curriculum building the sects defy everything that modern religious education teaches. Still the sects average well with their competitors in winning and holding the people. Such facts challenge the workers in the field of religious education to inquire whether, after all, the modern developments are really as efficient as they are claimed to be, and whether the sects do not possess elements of value which others have omitted and might well incorporate.”

COVER

The picture on the front cover is a scene in Redlands, California, taken by Miss H. Schipper. Since Redlands was left without a shepherd just while our California Issue was in the making, Miss Schipper took over as far as Beacon Lights was concerned and gave us her full cooperation. Ed.
For a civilian there are many interesting things about a town located near a large air field and troop training area. There are three roads leading to San Bernardino from Redlands, the scenery is never monotonous. Along one road there are orange groves on both sides, branches of the trees hang over the curbs. Right now the fruit is green and cannot be picked until Christmas-time. Another road takes us along a large olive grove but the drive down Orange Street to the point where the road is cut between two high banks, a sudden drop into the Santa Ana river bed, called “the wash,” is the most interesting. We have just left an orange grove behind us and now the broad expanse of the valley comes into view, before us lies a desert. The river bed at this time of the year is dry and the uneven ground is covered with what were wild flowers in the spring but now are clusters of dry sticks with dried blossoms still clinging to them. Cacti is plentiful, their fan-shaped prickly leaves punctuated with red cactus apples. Little lizards dart here and there among the rocks.

Looking up across the valley we see the foothills in the distance, orange groves on the hillsides, the even rows of trees seemingly cling to the side of the mountain. tall palms look small against the background of the towering mountain range which stretches as far as the eye can see to the right and left.

Turning left we pass the San Bernardino Army Air Depot which stretches for miles along Third Street. Olive drab buildings now stand where only a year ago were dairy farms. Outside of one building is a line of soldiers waiting for the door of the mess hall to open. In a field we see a group of soldiers playing ball, a little farther are several going through drill practice or calisthenics. Alongside the road may be seen soldiers waiting for a ride, army buses, often driven by women, messengers on scooter-bikes, now and then a Wac in khaki or a Wave in a blue or white uniform and police women.

A sign posted near one gate states “CRASH TRUCKS ONLY.” A truck piled high with rumpled parts of planes enters to unload in the “boneyard,” from it parts will be reclaimed and put back into use. On a run-way is a plane
warming up, a little farther we see a plane taxi into the wind and take off.

On Redlands' streets boys clad in khaki are often seen as Camp Haan and March Field are less than 20 miles away. Part of the University of Redlands is now a training center for marines and sailors. Almost every Sunday there are one or more soldiers in our Protestant Reformed church led hither to worship with us from a neighboring camp or desert training center.

Some we recognize as boys from our Fuller Avenue congregation in Grand Rapids. Roosevelt Park and Creston congregations have been represented.

One Sabbath, not long ago, one of our boys from Holland, Michigan had compassion on a "buddy," a homesick youth, barely nineteen years old. He was Irish and a Catholic.

Mike, for this is his nickname for Michael Patrick—immediately felt at ease in the environment of one of our Protestant Reformed homes. How the boys relish savory home-cooked meals, (like mother used to serve), a cozy living room, the happy chat of a family circle!

And O, how our boys enjoy the family altar consisting of prayer, bible reading, a discourse concerning our soul life, a good old fashioned Psalter or hymn sing around the piano. It brings back a taste of their own "home, sweet home."

However, Mike was not accustomed to this. Instead it was foreign to him. At length, he too, at first reluctantly and timidly, began to discuss spiritual things. Being a Catholic he argued, keeping Rome's views and doctrines in mind. That evening he attended church and before leaving he said: "Now I have something to write home about, what will my mother say when I tell her I've been to church!" Now he is on the ocean bound for somewhere "over there". The other received an honorable discharge: his path led him home to wife and tiny daughter.

Then there was the boy who contacted Rev. Vos as he was lone-some at camp. It was Christmas Day so the pastor went to the camp but was unsuccessful in locating him. Returning home he spoke of it to friends, they tried and were successful, took him to visit in Redlands for an hour or two as much of the day had been spent before finding him. But that was not the end—the "friends" who had called for him at camp had been two young ladies, a lasting friendship sprang up. That was over a year ago, now one of them is his wife.

Hospitality is not wanting here in this sun-soaked land. The cli-
BEACON LIGHTS

mate is ideal and Sunday afternoons during the month of February we have enjoyed tea out of doors on the patio. Just two nights last winter the temperature dropped so low that it became necessary to light the smudge-pots to keep the oranges from freezing. It was a beautiful sight, smudge-pots all aglow in an even row—one beside each tree. The next morning however, a curtain of black smoke hung over the surrounding country. It was oily too and seeped into the houses even though windows were closed. It was noon before we saw the sun. Because there is very little wind in this valley it took a long time for the smoke to clear.

Besides being a land of sunshine California is a land of flowers. Roses bloom the year around. At Christmas-time we have poinsettias, they are to be found in almost every yard. At Easter the calla lillies bloom. There are many different kinds of trees, pepper trees, eucalyptus, acacia and sycamores are a few of them. But we miss the wide-spreading maple, the tall elm and sturdy oak trees of the East.

A grove of walnut trees is a pretty sight, persimmons are beginning to ripen, before the fruit is fully ripe all of the leaves fall from the tree leaving only the bright red-orange fruit hanging on a tree bare of leaves.

Fig trees do not blossom but pomegranates do. they have a pretty bell-shaped flower.

Looking at this beautiful creation we are reminded of how great God is and how weak and frail man is. Here we can lift up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help. Our help is from God who made heaven and earth.

I love to stand in my cottage doorway and watch the day fade away into night.
I love to see the snow-capped mountains as the sun sheds its last rays of light.
No artist could paint such a picture, no poet could tell of its worth.
For it is God who paints this picture, the Maker of heaven and earth.
The God who loves His people and His love is ever the same.
The King who rules the universe;—Praise be to His glorious name.

Mrs. Gertrude Braaksma.
The Reading of Holy Scriptures

DORA POORTINGA, Bellflower, California.

In the present day in which we are living, more than ever before, we need the Scriptures. I don’t mean to imply that we didn’t need it before, but the present day trials bring us to the realization that this earthly tabernacle is falling away, and the day when Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead is near at hand. A Christian will find much comfort in reading God’s word and will look for the Resurrection Day, while the world will develop in science thru the problems which this war bring and think it is growing bigger and better.

Truth is to be sought for in the Holy Scripture, not eloquence. We know it to be the only truth written by men inspired by God. What do we as sinful creatures so often do when we sit down and read the Bible, or when we hear the Word? I think many times our minds wander off to some happening in the past week, or our work, or whatever it may be. Many times a so called “Interesting Book” will hold our attention for hours. Let us fight these temptations and try to educate ourselves spiritually and to benefit ourselves through the holy word.

We may also remember that we get out of our societies and Bible Class just as much as we put in them. We take up a commercial course to advance in our work, but are too busy to thoroughly study and understand our Bible Class. Inquire willingly and hear with silence the words of Holy men. Romans 15 vs. 4. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort might have hope.”

God’s way is always best, and although many of us do not understand His purpose, Christians will be drawn closer to the word and love it. God speaks to us in strange ways, without respect of persons.

Give that we may earnestly desire and seek the Holy Scriptures, for heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of our God shall stand forever.
In the fall of 1932 on a Sunday morning the bulletin stated that services were being arranged. Instead of Holland in the morning and English in the evening we would have English morning and evening and Holland in the afternoon. This was in the Christian Reformed Church of Redlands and Rev. Schans was our pastor.

Out of over a hundred families about forty were dissatisfied with this arrangement, we formed a group and met at the home of one of the members to discuss matters.

A little later the time of services was changed again and it was announced that the Holland service would begin at 9 A.M. Immediately after at 10:30 there would be an English service.

Beside being dissatisfied with the way the time of services was being changed we did not like the way sermons were delivered. The pastor made of the “preekstoel een steekstoel” when he preached a sermon on Korah, Dathan and Abiram and likened our group to them. We protested against such preaching and this action was followed by a letter sent to each of us. The letter stated that we were barred from partaking of Communion. On the evening of the day the letters were received by us, a consistory meeting was held at which they decided to place us under the first step of censure. Again we received a letter informing us of this action. A third letter asked us to appear individually before
the consistory. There we were told we had been placed under censure because of organized rebellion.

The matter was taken to Classis which met at the Christian Reformed Church in Los Angeles. There they decided to send a committee of two ministers to Redlands to investigate the case. Instead of conducting an investigation they called on our families and insisted the consistory was right, we were wrong and must repent.

The next Sunday we as a group resigned and our names were listed on the bulletin to that effect but we were refused our membership papers.

Now we were cut off from all church connections and our next step was to meet in one of the homes to decide what we should do.

First we discussed the proposition of joining the Reformed church. That proposition was rejected, it would be like jumping from the frying pan into the fire. Someone spoke up and said he had heard of a Rev. Hoeksema in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He knew very little about him but we voted to write and inquire, also to ask him to come and preach for us.

In a short time Rev. Hoeksema was in our midst, we met in a Seventh Day Adventist church, and heard a sermon on Isaiah 50:4. 

"The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in seas-

— 17 —
on to him that is weary."

A timely sermon indeed. Rev. Hoeksema started with the words "Als ge in nood gezeten geen uitkomst ziet, wil dan nooit vergeten, God verlaat u niet." We certainly were in need, it was a word in season. In all the years we had attended the Christian Reformed church we had never heard such a sermon! We had lost confidence in our church leaders and when the text was announced the thought arose in our minds—"now Rev. Hoeksema is going to tell us that he possesses the tongue of the learned."

One of his first statements put our minds at ease when he said "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned and that learned tongue is the Christ of God."

All through the sermon Christ was the center and theme. He emphasized that God is God and the words fell on our minds as water on a thirsty land. We returned home gladdened and spiritually strengthened, thankful to God that out of evil He had willed that good should come.

We did not leave the Christian Reformed church for principle's sake for we did not realize that God is God in the sense we now do, having been educated in the Reformed truths since then.

Not long after we made a trio and called Rev. Vos, located in Hudsonville, Michigan. God sent him to us and for eleven years he was our pastor. In his fourth year at Redlands a new church was built. The following year we acquired a parsonage and two years later we laid the foundation for the first Protestant Reformed school of our denomination. Our school now has 42 pupils and the attendance of children from our congregation is one hundred percent.

Looking back over the years we can say with Moses in Psalm 90 "Lord thou has been our dwelling place in all generations."
To Our Boys In Service

Edgerton. Minn.
October 12, 1943.

Dear Fellows:

This number of our Beacon Lights is supposed to be an all California issue. And therefore I hear some of you fellows say: "What is Vos doing here? He lives now in Edgerton, Minnesota?" Well, you will have to bear with me for this one time. It is true: I am no longer a Californian. but my 11 year stay there and my very recent departure prompted the present editor to suggest that I, nevertheless, write something for this issue. So here goes.

Let me begin by saying that for many days I have endeavoured to enter into the world in which you men are moving. but to a large extent it is in vain. And I know that you men understand me. How could we enter that world even in our thoughts. It is so horribly different from the peaceful life we have led and are still leading here in the States. Many of you will read these lines in far-away countries. Some of you will read this issue in between hellish battles where man tries to slaughter man. You wash away the powder stains from hands and faces and once more breathe calmly. Others may even read these lines in first aid stations behind the lines or in hospitals amid the stench of putrifying flesh and the obnoxious odours of morphine and chloroform. I can well believe that you delight in reading the Beacon Lights so far, so very far from dear old Mom and Dad. It somehow brings back to you familiar scenes never to be forgotten and now delightfully remembered.

Men! our hearts are with you. our prayers are ever for your welfare. When we think of some possible future day when you come marching home again, our hearts are overwhelmed, our eyes grow strangely dim; no, we are not ashamed of the tears that somehow will come. You are part of us. a living part of us in more than one way. You are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Should our hearts then not long for you? You are part of the army and navy which defends our shores. It hath pleased God to use you also for that purpose. And whether you have the victory or not: we shall be ever proud of our sons, our husbands, our friends that went and fought for the country of our birth or of our adoption. But, much more, you are part and parcel of the church of the living God. One God we love, you and we: One Saviour saved us by His precious Blood: One Spirit groans within us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And therefore I love to write this letter to all of you. Because since God is your Father and Christ your Saviour. I know that unutterable peace is yours in the midst of shot and shell: one promise is given to you and to us here at home.
It is this: I will bring you to your everlasting home when the last soul is saved and time ended. And there shall be no war any more. There you shall make heaven musical forever in the song of Moses and of the Lamb of God. Think on these things, men! And may the God of all comfort keep your hearts and minds in obedience to One who is infinitely greater than all kings and princes, from Whom, through Whom and unto Whom are all things: also this war and your poignant suffering.

God be with you till we meet again. If not in the States, then at Jesus' feet. Till we meet for the praises of Him who called us from the darkness of sin to the Light of His blessed Face!

I am yours with kind thoughts and prayers on your behalf.

Rev. Gerrit Vos.

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Letters From Our Boys

Oct. 5, 1943

Dear Friends:

While we picture a fall of beautiful changing trees and cool weather in Grand Rapids, we here in Taft, Calif. notice no change in the season as yet. In fact we are experiencing severe heat in the desert. But fortunately most of the homes and buildings in Gardner Field are equipped with coolers which are still in use most of the day. In the summer time the temperature reaches a high mark of 125 degrees. However, the winter weather is ideal and we are hoping that this will start soon.

Gardner Field is situated in a valley surrounded by mountains on the north and on the other sides by hills covered with oil wells. When one looks at the barren waste places in the desert he would think the land to be useless. Yet its worth is remarkable because of the great quantities of oil it contains. The city of Taft whose population is 18,000 was entirely built on the oil industry. Otherwise this locality has no attraction.

Gardner Field is a basic training field for airplane pilots. and all military personnel besides the cadets work to maintain the planes and instruct the cadets. Most of the soldiers work as mechanics on airplanes.

I have been stationed at this field since my induction two years and three months ago, working as a draftsman all the while. My work consists of drawing the plans for additions to buildings and also the reconstruction of buildings. I also design the necessary furniture needed on the post. For example some time ago I designed a confessional stand for the Catholic chaplain. In addition to this work I also do the surveying such as laying out runways and staking out new buildings.
I really enjoy my work because it is the nearest type of work to my line I could expect in the army.

As far as the christian's social life in the army is concerned I find very little if any at all. The entertainment offered in most cases is not fit for a christian soldier. Even the squadron I am in has several parties which I cannot truthfully attend. They usually consist of wholesale drinking and dancing. Summing it all up a christian is very much alone in the army.

However, now that I am married and live away from the post I am separated from much of this life. We are able to attend our Bell-flower church every other Sunday. Bell-flower is about one hundred thirty five miles south of Gardner Field.

Hoping this will give you a picture of another U. S. point reached by the "Beacon Lights."

I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Sgt. Wm. Doezeema.

* * * * *

Tunisia.
May 25, 1943.

Dear Friends:

I have been neglecting my letter writing lately, not only to you but to all.

I have no real excuse, only that we were kept pretty well on the move. We being the only Armed Infantry with the American forces here in Africa, were always in demand, and when opportunity did allow I just didn't seem to have the desire to write whatsoever. Now that the war is over here in Africa, we are peacefully enjoying a little rest, and I am slowly catching up on my letter writing.

We now expect to return into garrison, possibly near some town. It will seem swell to be able to dress up and go to town again. There are parts in North Africa which have really beautiful cities; while others are merely Arab villages. If I had my camera here with me I could have had chances to take some really interesting sights, such as Arabs plowing either with oxen or camels, also fields and hills covered with beautiful colored flowers.

You asked in your last letter how long it takes for the letters to reach me. Well it takes about 30 days, but of course that can be cut down in the future, for we were mostly on the front. Other things are considered more important than letters, so it takes a while before it catches up to us, after it lands on these shores.

Still under conditions as rain and mud we are well supplied, and they did all they could to satisfy the man such as P. X. rations and mail.

After six months of war through danger and what not, I have had but one comfort in my heart and that was God. He has given me peace at heart when times looked worse for me.

I know that He guides all shells that burst and bullets that whistle through the air, none shall fall unless it is His will. He and He alone has spared me
through this campaign and what is in store for me now is also in His hand. no matter what it may be, I am in His care.

Many were the times He eased my mind. and gave me courage to go ahead.

Well, I'll close for now, hoping to see all of you soon again. So I'll say cherrio and God bless you.

I remain,
Your Friend,

* * * * *

Sept. 5, 1943
83rd. Inf. Training Bn.
Camp Roberts. Calif.

(Dear...)

It is Sunday morning, I just had breakfast. We had hot cakes and they were pretty good but as usual it is a dry Sunday. I intend to go to church this morning but it does not start until 11 A.M. and now it is 8:30 so I decided to start the week off by writing a letter because that is really my biggest enjoyment in the army. I am glad we don't work on Sunday anyway. that makes it feel a little bit like Sunday. although it is not like the dear old Sundays in Redlands. I really miss hearing Rev. Vos preach and having the good old Sunday dinner at home with the gang. Just put me in Redlands any old time! But it is the Lord's will that I must be here and whatever He does is good although sometimes it is hard to understand. Yet we can always go to Him and find the comfort that some day this old world of sin and darkness will pass away and we can look forward to the time when we and our loved ones will be united, not only for a time but for eternity and I am really thankful that I may know that God is my refuge and strength. That He will guide and direct me in all circumstances of life.

The first day of our training wasn't bad at all. This morning we stood in formation in front of Major General Arth. He gave us a speech but before he started the chaplain of our battalion offered a word of prayer which was very nice. About 1100 men had arrived the week before, all starting their training with us. After a while we all marched in columns of twos on the big parade grounds while the band played. It was a beautiful sight. all in step and right on the ball with our rifles on our shoulders. I wish you could have seen the whole thing. You would have enjoyed it.

The other day they took all of us new fellows to see the parade on the field, that finished our training here. Boy! it makes the tears come to your eyes when the band is playing and the huge bunches of men come marching in front of you with their rifles all at the same angle and in perfect step. They marched before all the high officers while the band played the national anthem. We all had to stand at attention and salute. It made the chills go down our backs and I mean every one. It was beautiful.

Pvt. Andrew Van Voorthuysen.
October 2, 1943

Dear Beloved Christian Friends:

I was asked some time ago, by a friend, to write a few lines to the Beacon Lights. Being a member of the Protestant Reformed Church I consider it most thrilling to comply with this request. First of all, my reason for not writing any sooner is due to the fact we are so busy supplying maps to the vital units of the Armed forces.

We are stationed several blocks from the Monterey Bay, and many sights are visible from where our quarters are. Right now I am sitting in the dark room of our Camera truck and here's hoping I'll not be interrupted by any one while I'm trying a little visit with you.

Much has happened since war was declared and our Army has grown very much. Millions of our men are across the seas, while others are busily training on this side. Already the battle of Midway, and the battle of New Guinea and the African campaign have been brought to a victorious end. Behind our flag march the great American soldiers fighting to preserve and bring liberty. To me the beautiful part of it all is God has heard and answered our prayers and victories have been won. I know sacrifices were made in defeating the enemy. In the African battle buddies of mine are sleeping on the soil. When I hear these reports that these precious lives have been lost, then I, too, can thank our Great Captain, our Lord who has so dearly protected me.

Having been in the service for sometime, we sometimes discover the environment pretty bad. But the soldier living up to his everlasting faith hasn't any trouble at all. Before entering the service and in the early part of my infantry training I had already learned of the narrow path and as I go along, comfort has been added to my life. So often when I'm busily training I think of those beautiful words of Matt. 28:20, "And lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." How true this is.

On July 3rd of 1941 when falling to the ground with Sun Stroke on the training area it was impossible for me to even speak but these words were on my lips—Lo, I am with you always—and was that ever a great promise to my lonely heart. So we must realize wherever we are fighting we are never alone one second. I'm sure our boys that are on the different fronts fighting bitterly have been drawn near to God because nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ. I for one thank God for faith and courage and the unspackable joy of heart and the peace that passeth all understanding.

It is time to close for now and in behalf of my Beloved wife and baby daughter, we are all in the best of health. Now its goodbye and remember we miss all you friends at home more than you can fully realize. May God bless you.

Your friend,

Everett Franken.
Life in the Army
By Pfc. Louis Kikstra.

The request came to me to write on a subject in the California issue of Beacon Lights. I am not from California but ever since I have been in the army California has been the scene of my labors. Many Sundays were spent in Redlands and a few in Bellflower. It was difficult for me to decide on a subject to write on, the above subject finally occurred to me so I will tell you about life in the army. My experiences since being in the army are about the easiest to write on and I truly hope they will be of interest to all our Beacon Lights readers.

Most of our boys who are now in the service will agree with me first of all that we get lonesome away from home, sweet home, our own church and all our friends. I have never been away from home for such a long time in all my life and never before realized what home meant until having been away for a while. Now that it is 13 months since my departure I'm getting pretty well used to it. The worst part for me was the basic training the first 3 months and getting used to army life in general. It was so difficult those first months and the longing to return home was strong. After the first months were over I didn't mind it so much.

A year ago on September 8, farewells were said in Grand Rapids and we were bound for Camp Grant, Illinois. We arrived there in a heavy down-pour. The next few days were very confusing, we were given aptitude tests, a couple of shots in the arm and our army clothing and some equipment were issued to us. Somehow we got through all of this but I don't know how. The following Friday on the 11th we were notified that we would leave Camp Grant that afternoon at 4:30. At noon I called home and told mother I was leaving, that my destination was unknown but I'd write as soon as I arrived, wherever that might be.

Upon boarding the train in camp I noticed right away that it was a pullman and realized I had a long trip ahead of me. In one way it was a nice trip but in another way it was different. None of us knew where we were going. Some said Florida, others Washington and still others said California. Yes, California! When the train stopped and we were allowed to get off we were in Camp Callan near San Diego. The camp was on the shore of the great Pacific Ocean. A beautiful scene, as I noticed the next morning after the fog had cleared. It was the first time I had seen the Pacific.

At Camp Callan I went through my basic training which lasted about ten weeks. It was hard, rugged training and I was glad when it was over. After 10 weeks most of the boys I had trained
with were transferred to Camp Haan, California for further training. A few of us remained behind another month, over Christmas and New Year. Then we four were also transferred to Camp Haan but with another outfit. Only the boys I came with were known to me. In another month, however, I was pretty well acquainted and with some pretty sensible fellows. Our next move was to Camp Irvin in the desert about 125 miles from Camp Haan. another ten weeks of training and of firing our heavy anti aircraft guns and machine guns at aerial targets. Then back to Camp Haan a week before Easter.

While out in the desert I met James Offringa and chummed with him on our off time. He was also from Camp Haan but with another battalion. We talked about church and he said he had been spending his free Sundays in Redlands while at Camp Haan. We immediately planned to go to Redlands together when we returned from maneuvers. About the same time my mail contained a letter from Harriet Schipper, originally from Grand Rapids but now in Redlands. She had seen my name and address in a Fuller Avenue church bulletin and had invited me to spend a Sunday in Redlands. so the very first Sunday I was back in Camp Haan I ventured out to spend the day there. It was Easter Sunday. In the evening service I heard Rev. Vos and on the whole the day was a very enjoyable one. Everybody I met was friendly and invited me to come and visit them. Since then my visits there have been frequent and each time is more enjoyable than the time before.

When Rev. Hoeksema was there this summer I made a special effort to see and hear him. It happened that I could hear him twice in Bellflower and once in Redlands. It seemed good to talk with him and hear his sermons once again.

In May I had a seven-day furlough but was allowed to go only as far as Denver, Colorado. I wired my parents and girl friend to come to Denver, there we met and spent three days together. I was so glad to see them once again. The time passed altogether too swiftly. It would have been nicer to have had more time and be able to go all the way home but we had to be satisfied to meet each other half way. They boarded the train just five minutes before I had to take the west-bound train back to California. By that time I had been in the army almost nine months and was getting used to army life in general. Spending Sundays in Redlands among my own people made it more pleasant. It makes a world of difference if a fellow, far from home, has a place to go on his time off. Redlands is only 20 miles away and it doesn't take long to get there.

All in all army life isn't so bad; it's what a fellow makes it. It's very easy to go astray and temptations are all around us but as long as we know that the Lord is always near us wherever we are we have nothing to fear. My only comfort is that I belong to my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Introductory remarks:

We now come in our outlines to the study of Peter’s Pentecostal address. The material in this address is compacted and weighty, and it requires some thought to apprehend its sense. When we studied this chapter in my society we found that we could not cover this address of Peter in one session. We trust that this will be the case with most of you. Consequently we take the liberty to treat this address of Peter in two installments; to wit, in the Outlines V and VI.

Outline V

THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PENTECOSTAL MIRACLE
Acts 2:14-21

Pentecost is a miracle. It is the last great “moment” in the development of God’s covenant before Christ’s return on the clouds of heaven. But unbelief cannot see. And in its blindness of sin it mocks and scorns. But the truth of God and His mighty work triumphs. The mouth of fools is always stopped. Thus also on Pentecostal Sunday morning in Jerusalem.

For Peter stood forth with the eleven. The wonder, the miracle of “speaking with tongues” has a divine and revelatory significance, which must be apprehended by faith.

This speaking with tongues is not an isolated event understandable without viewing it in the light-rays of prophecy. The Pentecostal work is begun at Jesus’ baptism by John (Matt. 3:13-17) and is continued here in the event of the outpouring of the Spirit—continued also as fulfillment of prophecy. Mockery here again errs “not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God. Matt. 22:29. For “these men are not full of new wine. . .but this is that which is spoken by the prophet Joel! Vss. 15, 16.

Peter’s “standing forth with the eleven” reflects the same authority as that manifested by the prophets when they repeatedly say: Thus saith the Lord! This observation is corroborated by the form of his address “Ye Israelitish men, hear these words” (vs. 22) as also in the damning evidence so fearlessly brought against the audience on Pentecost, not to forget the entire tenor of this address.
To have the Christ one must listen to Moses (John 5:46): to be blest in Pentecost one must give ear to Joel. There are two matters in the prophecy of Joel which are in this quotation brought to the foreground.

1) The more positive side of the meaning of Pentecost with its accompanying signs, which stress the advancement of the New—over the Old Covenant. Vss. 17-19. (Compare Matt. 11:7-15; II Cor. 3:4-18). In this part Joel speaks of:
   a) That the Spirit of God would be poured out upon all flesh. It would no longer be merely within the orb of Israel at a nation, but also upon the gentile world. It would be for every tongue, tribe and people. This is the meaning of the speaking in dialects of the peoples mentioned in vss. 8-11. b) All shall consequently know God with a saving knowledge, being heirs to the promise of Abraham. (Vs. 39) "Dreams," "Visions," and "Prophecy" are descriptive terms, old testament in character and must be understood in new testamental conceptions. c) In Joel God has said that this advancement of the new—over the old testament would be "in the last days." Hence on this particular feast day the hour of the ushering in of these "last days" has struck. The Lord has come to dwell in His holy temple—His church. Let all the earth keep silence! Ps. 11:4.

2) Joel places the "judgment day" in this perspective. We notice: a) That the description of the judgment day here in Joel is the same as in all the prophets. Compare Isa. 13:10 ff; Rev. 6:12-17. Always the presentation is that heaven and earth participate in the judgment of the world, even as they also do in the salvation of the redeemed. Rom. 8:18-21. b) That with the "advancement" of God's work from the old—to the new covenant and with the greater glory of God's revelation in His Son in these last days (Heb. 1:1) judgment is also greater. Compare on this thought Heb. 10:28, 29. Thus is also the explicit teaching of Jesus in Matt. 11:20-24 where in the preceding context He had spoken of the superiority of the new testament over the old testament. The powers of grace and of the "coming age" work with greater force in the New Testament dispensation, but the greater powers of judgment are here manifested from heaven. Even a hasty study of John 3:16-21 will convince us of this. Compare further John 16:8. c) That Joel should see the "judgment of the world" within the perspective of Pentecost is due to two factors. 1. This is partly due to the distant view of the prophet. From where he stood the details are not discernable in the beacon light of prophecy. 2. On the other hand it should not be forgotten that Pentecost is very really the last typical day of judgment in Israel. It is the day of judgment for them. The "axe" of which John the Baptist spoke, suddenly coming to God's temple, as Jehovah's messenger, here falls on Israel's national existence. The sceptre departs from Judah. Pentecost leaves the old
tament temple an empty, desolate and deserted place, according to the word of Jesus two days before “good Friday,” as recorded in Matt. 28:38.

Outline VI

THE EVENT UNDERLYING PENTECOST

Acts 2:22-36


1. Briefly stated this event is summed up in the appearance, person, official work, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ. Peter calls to mind the awful event of the crucifixion of the Jesus of Nazareth. 2. In doing so he focuses the attention of his hearers and of us on the following elements:

a) That Jesus was a man proven, pointed out by God, evidenced by Him as being the Messiah. This God did by the powerful works, wonders and signs, which Jesus wrought. We notice: Powerful works—stressing His divinity, that God was with Him. John 3:2: wonders—stressing the effect it had on the spectators, rousing interest and amazement. Vs. 12: signs—indicating that these powerful works had a divine message which they communicated, they were revelatory in character. John 6:26. b) That in spite of this revelatory fact, and in spite of the knowledge of it the men of Jerusalem had “with lawless hands” put this God-attested Jesus to death. c) That nonetheless God’s purpose stands. The crucifixion of Christ is according to the determinate council and foreknowledge of God. This, however, does not make God the author of this heinous crime. for this deed was perpetrated “through lawless hands.” “Ye killed Him. God raised Him up” thus the truth of the matter explodes in their midst. This is the event which underlies the outpouring of the Spirit. The Stone rejected by the builders became the head of the corner. Ps. 118. d) God raised this Christ because it was not possible that He should be held by the grave of corruption. Christ’s death was the expiation of sin, and therefore the grave could not hold Him. Rom. 4:25. e) In Scripture the resurrection implies ascension. Thus here as is evident from verse 33. A comparison with John 3:14; 12:32 and Eph. 1:19-21 will verify this.

Proof From David For This Event. Vss 25-35.

1. Peter quotes two passages from the Psalms. The first passage from Ps. 16:8-11 to sustain the resurrection of Christ. The second from Ps. 110:1 to support the ascension of Christ.

a) That the grave would not be able to hold Christ David had prophesied. It might seem at first glance that David in this Psalm is speaking of himself. There are according to Peter two reasons why this interpretation must be set aside and branded as false. The first reason is taken from a well known fact to the men of Jerusalem. David died and his sepulchre was in Jerusalem in the burying place of the kings. And David’s flesh saw corruption. Vs. 29. Hence he could not truthfully have been speaking of himself without implying...
more. The second reason is that David is a prophet. The Spirit of Christ as the Spirit of prophecy testified in David also concerning the “sufferings that should come upon Christ and the glory that should follow.” 1 Peter 1:10,11. And Peter points out that David had good reason to prophecy as he did, for God had sworn to him with an oath that He would raise up a Son to him out of his loins. This Messianic promise David embraced by faith, and of this faith the prophecy testifies. Compare further II Sam. 7:12, 13. Ps. 89:3, 4; 132:11. What marvelous instruction we here have as to the sound method in the interpretaion of Holy Writ!

b) Peter also shows that in Ps. 110:1 David could not possibly be speaking of himself when he speaks of “sitting at the Lord’s right hand.” This Messianic power and dignity David could never claim. He had not ascended to heaven. There is but one thing left. David was speaking of the “Promised Son” (Ps. 16 see above) who at once is also His Lord. See Matt. 22:41-46; where Christ quotes this Psalm and applies it to Himself in such a masterful way, that He stops the mouth of the unbelieving and arrogant Pharisees. We are told that the people gladly heard this, but that the Pharisees “from that day dared ask Him no more.” Those who would like to investigate this matter and see more of the divine revelation on this point can study I Cor. 15:25 and compare it with Heb. 1:13; 10:11-13. For other passages quoted in the New Testament from this Psalm we refer to Heb. 5:6 and 7:17,21.

Application. Vs. 36.

1. Pentecost is the work of God in the risen and glorified Lord, who was killed by the wicked hands of sinful men. He is Lord and Christ by God’s promise and faithfulness to David.

2. Christ is Israel’s king indeed. Let “All the House of Israel” take cognizance of it. Ye men of Israel ye stand by virtue of your lawless hands under the threatening clouds of judgment. Such is the force of Peter’s address.

Outline VII

THE EFFECT OF PETER’S ADDRESS

Acts 2:37-41

Pleading For Help. Vs. 37

1. The flashing of this awful reality in the mind of the audience convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment. John 16:8. They are “pricked in their heart.” We have the following remarks:

a) As appears from the sequence of this chapter this being “pricked in the heart” was more than a momentary disturbance of the emotions. The waters here stirred were not shallow. It was a matter of the “heart” whence the issues of life are.

b) They are consequently stirred to the depths of their being with the fear of God. For this moment is far more terrifying for them than for Israel at tempestuous Sinai. For the question which moves them is the fundamental question of the relationship to God, the promises, the covenants, the hope of Is-
rael. Amidst these pressing questions they feel hopelessly at a loss. And they cry out, “Men and brethren what must we do”?

2. Those crying for aid and succor show in their petition:
   a) The question “what shall we do” means: How can we escape judgment. They must have felt as John the Baptist’s audience did under that preacher of repentance. Luke 4:1 ff.
   b) They show that they have complete trust in Peter and in the “eleven.” They call them “brethren.” The power of Peter’s address had wrought in them this confidence.
   c) They recognized in this address the voice of the Shepherd, whose voice is that of Him standing between the seven candle-sticks, (Rev. 1:12-20) who not only speaks comfortably but who also makes war with the sword of His mouth. And in this latter sense He also says, “he that hath ears let Him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Rev. 3:6. 13. And was not this Spirit on Pentecost speaking direct and understandable and sin-convicting language to the church?! Only Way Of Escape Disclosed Vss. 38-10

1. The way of escape preached by the Spirit both in Joel and here on Pentecost is that preached also by the forerunner of Christ. It is: Repentance:
   a) Repentance is a complete change of “mind,” i. e. of the deepest and most fundamental attitude of man toward God and His kingdom.
   b) It is the changing of the whole

man as required by the spiritual nature of the law. A turning from sin unto the living God, and thus calling upon the revealed name of the Lord in Mount Zion. Verse 21.

2. In the way of repentance enter into vicarious atoning work of Christ; into the work of Him who was indeed rejected by the builders, but approved of God as the cornerstone of salvation. For baptism is a sign and seal of entering into the death and resurrection of this rejected Christ. (Rom. 6:3. 4; Col. 2:11, 12.) Furthermore it appears to be a personal matter. Baptism also belongs to the way of Escape. It places one in the positive work of Pentecost, providing the corresponding “repentance” is present.

3. Thus there is an entering into the blessings of Pentecost, and a reception of the Holy Spirit with His blessings. It is the entering into the Pentecost, receiving the first-fruits of the final harvest. For it is the “feast of harvest” blessing that may and must be eaten in the form of “bread.” Thus it is stated in Rom. 8:23. And Eph. 1:14 and 4:30 speak of the Holy Spirit as the seal and pledge of the final redemption. Thus we enter into the promise of God made to Abraham Gen. 17:10 and as worked out according to David’s prophecy, and the Pentecostal perspective of Isa. 57:19; Joel 2:32 and Eph. 2:17.

Three Thousand Saved

1. They believed and were baptized. Think of it. Three thousand were baptized. What a first fruit of the full
harvest. What profound impression this must have made on the leaders. Was "the whole world" following this teacher of Nazareth? Well could they now say: see we profit nothing.

2. Were these all submerged? Or was “sprinkling” the order of the day. Were the children also counted with the three thousand? If not the number baptized must have far exceede three thousand. Questions: Is salvation always presented in Scripture as escape from wrath? Rom. 5:1-10. Is this question of the “Wrath of God” popular? Is it sufficient to merely be baptized with water? Does real baptism always consist in cleansing from sin by the Holy Ghost?

Outline VIII
THE FIRST PICTURE OF THE MOTHER CHURCH
Acts 2:42-47

Model Picture. Vs. 42

1. This picture is not one of photography, neither that drawn by a human artist, but it is a picture sketched by the pen of the Spirit showing us the delicate spiritual structure of the life of the church. He has left it as a model for all ages to be copied and aspired after. There was vigor, vitality, unity and life in the church. The life of the unity of the Spirit. Compare Eph. 4:3. 4.

2. In this model church, or ideal spiritual life there are four pivotal points brought out by the writer. Not one of these elements may ever be lacking at any time, neither brought out of its proper proportion. They are:

a) Adherence to the "teaching of the apostles." We notice here that "teaching" can have reference to either what was taught by the apostles, or to the actual impartation of the instruction. In this instance it can very well refer to both of these elements. It then refers to the teaching of which we have an excellent example in the outlines V, VI, and VII. It is the teaching based on Jesus Christ the chief cornerstone laid in Zion. See Eph. 2:20-22; I Cor. 3:10-15. It is the teaching concerning Christ's resurrection in which God fulfilled the Promises made to the fathers. Acts 13:33 ff.

b) Adherence to "the fellowship." The writer does not further define this fellowship. He leaves it as general as possible. We therefore take this fellowship in the widest scope. Beautiful commentary on this fellowship we first find in I John 1:3. Here it is the true fellowship of love with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ and therefore true fellowship with the brethren. It is also important to notice the connection of the fellowship there spoken of with "what was preached from the beginning" concerning the word of life. It is a fellowship full of joy and of joy that is full. There were not parties or schisms. Compare by way of contrast I Cor. 1:10-17. It was the covenant life of the Spirit based on the apostolic teaching.

c) Adherence to "the breaking of
the bread." This is the standing term to denote what we call "Lord's Supper." It also included the pouring of the wine. See Luke 24:35. The church because of it's pure preaching is very conscious of vicarious atonement and of the need for salvation, salvation from the wrath of God.

d) Finally adherence to "the prayers." They worshipped in their own gathering of the saints and also continued to go to the temple at the hour of prayer. See Chapter 3:1.

How essential the latter is we may see from the general idea of the temple as being the house of prayer, as also from the various admonitions both by Christ and the apostles that we shall pray without ceasing. Are not the people of God always portrayed as those who cry day and night unto the Lord?

Active Apostles. Vs. 43

1. Many "wonders and signs" were done by the apostles. The sign recorded in Acts 3 is but one of the many performed. And Peter was not the only one who performed miracles. And great is the testimony of these signs in the streets of the desolate city, where the Lord was crucified—the city which in Rev. 11:10.11 is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt, upon both of which the vials of God's wrath were poured out. That the signs should testify loudly here is as it should be. Remember the Spirit is here sketching the work of God. Now we see the foot-prints of Him who dwells in the holy place in the sands of time.

Apostolic activity is Divine Testimony!

2. The result of this activity is twofold. For those who are without it is an occasion of fear and wonderment. Positively they are the means of grace bringing the elect to the unity of the faith and knowledge of Christ. Thus indeed the active apostles are indeed a sweet savour of Christ both in those who are saved and in those who perish. II Cor. 2:14-16.

Practical Christianity. Vss. 44-47.

1. Faith was not so much dead capital in this church. It was the very opposite from that pictured in James 2:14-16. It was a vital force in practical life after the pattern of believing Abraham. It was brotherly love of a practical nature. The poor were cared for. Deep consciousness of stewardship in Christ Jesus prevailed.

2. It was the fulfillment of the law of love, now realized through the Holy Spirit in the hearts of flesh. Heb. 10:15; Jer. 13:33, 34. This picture is the standard held before us as proof of what God has wrought. It is the pledge, the first-fruits of the final perfection when the tabernacle of God shall be with man. It beckons us ever on to the goal of perfection.

Questions: Was this sharing of goods "communism"? Was this exhibition an over attempt to have heaven on earth? Was it possibly due to the believers thinking that Jesus' return was imminent? Or is the reason to be very soberly sought in the work of the Spirit?