

# BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT  
REFORMED YOUTH*



JUNE, 1975  
CONVENTIONS  
PAST AND ANCIENT



# BEACON LIGHTS

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## Editorial

# A Parable of Solomon

by Tom De Vries

The book of Proverbs is one which introduces a new method of instruction in the Bible. In this book Solomon uses a short sentence, generally unrelated to its predecessor, which contains a complete idea. Proverbs contains observations and instruction in nearly every area of the life of the child of God. Many of these ideas are easily understood by the youngest of school children.

The author, Solomon, is a man who is intriguing to most of us. Our earliest Sunday School memories bring us back to Solomon and his wisdom. He was also important in secular history as a rich, powerful leader of an important nation. Solomon in all his splendor was also a humble child of God who could recall his own past sins. He could then warn others of his failings in the past and give advice for the future.

Chapter seven contains a number of these short proverbs, but is also contains a parable. Like other chapters, Solomon gives a warning to young men against the sin of adultery. Solomon, who was the possessor of one thousand wives and concubines is no mean authority on the subject. He does not speak as the hypocrite, however, but as the sinner who knows and can well warn.

Thus to Solomon's parable.

Solomon stood at his window in the evening to view the activities of the city. Below him he saw a group of young men, "simple ones" he called them. We may understand these young men to be representative of young men of most generations. They were not retarded, nor were they lacking in worldly knowledge.

They were "street-wise", but foolish in their knowledge of the ways and effects of sin.

One of these took leave of his fellows to look for something to do that evening. Idleness was his way of life in the evening and a search for excitement was his main activity.

At this same time, but some distance down the street, Solomon saw a woman also looking for excitement. She also was idle, but had a particular goal in mind for the evening. Although she was dressed "with the attire of an harlot", she was from all outward appearances a well-respected woman. Her husband was a merchant, gone away on business, and would not be back for some time. Her attire might almost be excused as simply being flashy or quite in the style of the rest of the world.

Of course the two met. She made certain of that. She threw herself upon the young man most immodestly upon seeing him, and declared that he was the very young man she had been waiting for. Really? Me? How flattering to our simple young man.

Yes, he was the very young man. Not because he was handsome or because of his pleasant personality, but because he was simple. Any one of his fellows could also have filled the bill.

She quickly explained to the young man that he had nothing to fear from her. She was, she said, sincere in her speech, having that day been to the temple to pay her vows and to worship. She could now cover any new evil with what she had paid that day.

Solomon saw the young man resist her initial advances. No, he didn't want to go home with her. But, "with the flattering of her lips she forced him". She described the beauties of her house and especially of her bed. She told him that surely they would not be found out. She promised him love and the adventure that he sought that evening.

The young man followed the woman to her house. Perhaps he had not looked for something as serious as adultery. He had wanted only a little fun, nothing of consequence, that evening. His conscience had been pricked, but certainly not enough to overcome his earthly desires. "He went after her straightway as an ox goeth to the slaughter."

A parable with this plot could be made much fun of today. Imagine the delight of a modern audience seeing a play involving a reversal of roles, a somewhat timid young man being enticed by a subtle woman. The woman would certainly be the heroine with the young man being a near hero, somewhat befuddled, but altogether pleased with the night's results. A mockery would be made of sin.

Solomon saw the consequence of that man's activities, however. To Solomon, this young man had nothing to brag about the next evening to his friends. Rather, he had been led into a sin, in which Solomon saw the young man as gone, and the young man "knoweth not that it is for his life."



## *God's Covenant Promise*

by Mr. Vern De Vries\*

\*Mr. De Vries is a member of our Pella Church.

I have been asked to write a short article for "Beacon Lights" in connection

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with the 50th anniversary of our Protestant Reformed denomination. The period of time that I've been requested to write about is the year 1953. Keeping in mind the theme of our Church's anniversary,

"God's Covenant Faithfulness", I will try to put down on paper my own experiences of that year.

January, 1953, found me 1300 miles from home in the uniform of the United States Marine Corps. My bride of six months, and I were living in a small apartment near Camp Le Jeune, North Carolina. This was the time of the so called "Korean Conflict" and most of the young men my age from our congregation in Pella had answered the draft call.

This was the first time in our lives that we were away from our Pella Church. We found a lot of truth in the saying "you never appreciate what you have until you have to do without it." How we longed for the Sundays we had known, friends and family gathered together to hear God's Word preached and to sing together God's praises. But God was faithful, we found churches to attend and we made friends with other Christian young people. Now we fully appreciated the years spent under the preaching, and in catechism, and Young People's Society in our Pella Church.

Spring came. My wife went back to Iowa and I was off to Puerto Rico for training in amphibious warfare. The months under the hot sun of the island were tiresome and lonely. But always there was mailcall! Letters from family, members of the congregation in Pella and our minister brought home and church life a little closer. Rev. Gritters started a "round robin" letter among the seven young men of our congregation who were in various branches of service. So across the miles from Puerto Rico to Korea we shared our experiences and knew also God's faithfulness in these times.

July, 1953, was an important month. I became a father. I was back in North Carolina at the time and heard the good news on the phone from my wife. Six weeks later I was home on leave and saw our new son. What a joy - what a responsibility. As I presented my son for

baptism I thought of God's Covenant Faithfulness - 3 generations, of our family, were now sitting in the pew of the Pella Protestant Reformed Church. It brought to mind the lessons I had learned in catechism. The Heidelberg Catechism in question and answer 74 mentions three grounds for infant baptism.

1. Children are included in the covenant and church of God.

2. The promise of the covenant (that is - the promise of redemption and of the Holy Ghost) is for them as well as for the adult.

3. Baptism, as a sign of the covenant, must be applied to infants as well as adults.

"For as they (our children) are without their knowledge partakers of the condemnation in Adam so they are again received unto grace in Christ." Form for administration of Baptism.

Genesis 17:7 states: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

Acts 2:39 says: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Why are children included in the covenant? Because God establishes His covenant in the line of continued generations.

The questions and answers that I had memorized, sometimes reluctantly, rather than with an eagerness to learn, now took on a new and beautiful meaning.

Life in the congregation, as I remember it, was one of love and unity. The Pella congregation numbered about 35 families at this time. Our minister and consistory and fellow members were faithful in writing letters to us servicemen. Each Sunday we were remembered in the congregational prayers. We felt a very real bond of fellowship with the people of the church.

In later years, the year 1953 has come to mean a year of trouble and strife in our denomination. But 1953, in the Pella congregation was not so. We heard, of course, of trouble in the "East" but at that time we were united in life and doctrine in Pella.

I had almost a year of active duty ahead of me yet. This meant separation from family and church but always the knowledge that God was with me and all things work together for good to them that love God. And in His providence, all the servicemen from the Pella congregation returned in due time to take up life in their families and church again.

The life of a serviceman away from home is not one I would choose for myself or my sons. But looking back, I can see how God uses all such experiences to show His children that He is a faithful God.

It is always interesting and profitable to reminisce on bygone days, but more important we must live in the present and look to the future. May God give us grace to pray, "Oh God, cut us not off in our generations, but continue thy covenant with us, and with our seed after us, even until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."



## *THE 50's*

by Charles H. Westra

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**Mr. Westra is a member of our Faith Church**

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When first asked to write about the 1950's, they appeared in my mind as a shapeless, featureless segment of history. But a little more concentration and the perusal of some "Standard Bearers" of

the era began to give it dimensions. One bit of information suggested another and soon the "50's" came alive again.

January 1, 1950 was the beginning of what was supposed to be a great decade of peace and prosperity: World War II was ended, the GI's had almost all returned,

there were plenty of jobs available, so here we go! But what was this "police action" in Korea? This "police action" soon flamed up into a fighting war, and the reserve units of the army and navy, and the National Guard (which many of our young men had joined in order to stay at home and continue their education) were being called into active service. Activating an already organized and half-trained unit was a lot faster than drafting new recruits, and every company had its favorite rumors. The most persistent rumor heard in the 3rd battalion, 126th Infantry (a Grand Rapids Unit which a half dozen of us from First Church had joined) was that we were to be transferred to the state of Washington in a week or two and then shipped to Korea. It never happened. Although not as unpopular as the Vietnam War, we were all relieved when it ended in a half-hearted compromise at the 38th parallel.

Being a Protestant Reformed student at Calvin during the early 50's gave one plenty of opportunity to debate the common grace controversy, which of course, was fresher in our minds than it is now, twenty-five years later. The scene of many of these debates was the infamous "Boiler Room", the closest accomodation Calvin had to a Men's Lounge and the only place where smoking was allowed. It was no difficult trick for several of us to point out the absolutely illogical position one must assume when he (only men were allowed in the Boiler Room) dared attempt to defend his church's position re common grace. In just a few minutes our task would be completed: with his arguments reduced to ashes, our victim would be left leaning against the wall, mumbling incoherently to himself, while we re-grouped into our "Little Consistory" formation and marched down the center aisle of the auditorium for chapel exercises, smugly satisfied that once again we were technically correct and had been able to "prove" it. Was our action a positive

witness for either Christ or the P.R. Churches? I don't think so. We had merely used sacred matters to satisfy our own egos!

The number one subject in the P.R. synod in 1950 was the Declaration of Principles, a document which was requested by the Mission Committee to show prospective new members exactly what the P.R. churches believed. Both the content of the document and the need for it were debated in the 1950 and 1951 synods. Generally, Classis West opposed it while Classis East, which had experienced the need for such a document more keenly supported it. The Declaration opposed the doctrine of the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands which had been infiltrating into churches in Classis East. Several ministers had met with Dr. Schilder of the Liberated Churches and were enamoured with their doctrines. The debate in synod was long and hot. Such terms as "conditions" and "conditional promise of salvation" were beginning to crop up in our church papers. These eventually became important in the "split of 1953".

The validity of the newly adopted Declaration of Principles was debated in societies and in official church gatherings. Protests against the document were processed through consistories, classis, etc.

In 1951, the year the bride and I exchanged our vows in First Church, firecrackers punctuated the September evening. One of those creating the racket told me later, "We were trying to make your mother-in-law believe in conditions!" When I appeared puzzled he explained further: "We were waiting for her to say 'What a terrible condition'. If she did she would then realize how valid conditions are!" They might just as well save their firecrackers!

Prior to the split, feelings ran very high. Christian brother refused to shake hands with Christian brother if he were

“on the other side” of the rapidly developing dispute.

By 1952 the protests had been processed up to the synodical level, and Synod, in two separate sessions, verified the legality and validity of the contents of the Declaration.

The critical shortage of P.R. teachers was discussed in two articles in the “Standard Bearer” and a reader contributed an article deploring the lack of representation in church matters experienced by single women (And this 20 years before “Women’s Lib!”).

The first of our six daughters made her appearance in 1952. This changed our life style, and eliminated any chance of my being drafted to fight in the Korean War which was still consuming men and materials. The Reformed Free Publishing Association asked all consistories for the addresses of servicemen so they could be sent free subscriptions to the “Standard Bearer”.

The “Period Theory” of Creation was being taught and generally accepted at Calvin, and the “Standard Bearer” responded with a series of articles on creation. The Convention was at Hull.

1953 - the “year of the Split” arrived. First Church divided into two factions. The one led by Rev. De Wolf changed the church locks and assumed ownership of the building, the other met in the G.R. Christian High Auditorium. The legally constituted consistory of First Church was reluctant to take the matter to court for settlement, but eventually did. A few members opposed this action, but the majority favored it as being the proper exercise of “stewardship”. Feelings ran high, even families were split, and “The Other Side” is referred to with words and phrases which Scripture uses in reference to the reprobate. GI’s who have been away for several years are returning to a time of turmoil in the church, procedures which were totally adequate in the past, failed under the pressure of the times and

groups within the groups debated minor issues. These were unhappy times for the churches. Late in the summer, Classis West recognized the suspended Rev. H. De Wolf, and now the denomination as well, was split.

Attending classis and synod becomes the “in” thing to do among certain groups. These same spectators were in evidence a few months later in the courtrooms where the evidence of the various “sides” were weighed by the judges. No verdicts were awaited with greater eagerness nor debated with greater heat than these. I personally felt that we reached our lowest level of witnessing when we resorted to the worldly courts to settle mundane, material matters between Christian brethren.

The years following were years of reconstruction. Societies were reorganized, choirs re-formed with new zeal, and the congregations generally experienced a resurgence of unity and brotherhood. Even the meetings of classis and synod became demonstrations of peace and unity, to the comfort of the participants and the churches generally.

One of the more popular groups which formed during this reconstruction era was the Protestant Reformed Men’s Chorus. This group met at First Church on Sunday afternoons to practice their particular blend of close harmony and exuberance. One particular anthem, “Creation”, still resounds in my memory, especially the climactic line: “And there was light.” The Chorus gave concerts in Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and South Holland, Illinois.

It was during the late 1950’s that the Loveland Congregation joined our denomination; followed soon after by the congregations at Isabel and Forbes.

Late in 1957 the Russians orbited their first satellite, Sputnik, much to the surprise of most of the world who wondered that such a marvel could come from such a backward country. The U.S.

government reacted in many ways, but the one which effected us the most was the number of scholarships suddenly available in the sciences and educational fields. A few month later the U.S. orbited a satellite also, and somehow our national pride seemed to be salvaged.

Space does not permit me to recall and relate much detail of other significant bits of history from these years, so the mention of them will have to suffice: The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the appearance of the controversial Revised Standard Version of the Scriptures, the uprising in Hungary and the resultant drive in our churches for relief goods which were sent to Protestant churches there; and Professor Ophoff's temporary incapacity due to a stroke.

As for the setting in which this history took place, again, a few words will have to suffice.

The downtown districts in our various cities were still the centers of activity; groceries were purchased at the super-market or at one of the many neighborhood grocery stores which were far more numerous than today. Corners not occupied by a grocery store had one or more gasoline stations. Again, many of them are still visible, but have been closed or

converted into something else. Only a few tourist attractions gave out bumper stickers, so they constituted the vanguard of what has now become the rage of today. The fifties was a pre-pizza, pre-Kentucky Fried Chicken era. TV sets were just beginning to be sold in large numbers during the early part of the decade and countless millions of hours were spent watching fixed wrestling matches and the children's "Howdy Doodie Time", the latter probably making more sense.

Looking back at the fifties has been satisfying, not as if reviewing a superior age, but seeing in a slightly different way how God's will progresses continuously. Our churches experienced a reformation and emerged from the experience as a stronger and more united group. Our attitude towards each other and towards Christians of other denominations has been changed. Our mission activity was strengthened and several churches were added to our denomination.

During a few years in the mid-fifties it seemed to some of us that our denomination simply couldn't survive. Humanly speaking, it couldn't.

But God had plans for us, and we were not only brought through the fifties, but were strengthened by the experience.

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## *Feature*

# CONVENTIONS A QUARTER CENTURY LATER

by Agatha Lubbers

The house-cleaning season is both frustrating and amusing. When one engages in the annual ritual called house-cleaning, the boredom and drudgery of

the activity can be somewhat lightened by intriguing discoveries. In remote corners of closets, in neglected boxes, and in fragrant cedar chests one finds old hats,

out-dated shoes, musty scrap books and treasured photo albums which seem to have been saved and stowed away for just such a time as this.

Humorous anecdotes are rehearsed and retold accompanied by gales of laughter as old hats and antiquated shoes are fitted and returned to their dust-gathering storage spots. Photo albums are fondly examined and each picture extracts an additional comment and reminiscence or chuckle.

As I prepared for this article, I did some house-cleaning and collating to refresh a memory gone stale because it has been several years since I last attended one of the highlights in the Protestant Reformed young person's life. That highlight is the Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention. One of the speakers at this year's convention called it "the focal point of the society year" when he wrote the annual message from the president's desk to the conventioners in 1960.

The 35th Annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention will convene in August, 1975, and my mind must travel back to the year 1947 to remember the first convention I attended as a naive, tender teenager. That was the 7th annual convention. Now it is about three decades or 28 conventions later. That really dates me, doesn't it?

I won't easily forget that convention because I was only 15 years old then, and I had just finished my first year in high school. I was going to be a sophomore in high school. I also won't easily forget this convention because I was one of four delegates, who had travelled in my father's forest green 1935 Chevrolet from Randolph, Wisconsin to Grand Rapids, Michigan. I had been to Michigan, the place of my birth many times before, but this was my first trip to attend the Annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention. John De Vries, member of Hope Church, and Gerry De Vries,

member of S.E. Protestant Reformed Church, and my sister Greta (spelled Garretts Lubbers in the convention booklet of 1947), now Mrs. Thomas Newhof, Jr., and member of the host church this year, were the other delegates from the Young People's Society of the Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin. The host societies that year were the Young Men's, Talitha, and Esther Societies of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids.

This was a memorable year for the Protestant Reformed Y.P.S. of Randolph because one of the proposals from the Federation Board to this convention was that the Y.P.S. of Randolph be granted membership in the P.R.Y.P. Federation. Doon, and David Society of First Church also became members of the Federation that year.

For a teen-ager from one of the small Western churches, a trip to attend a first convention is both a spiritual and exhilarating experience. I will always remember the inspirational mass meeting that year. That mass meeting was held in the spacious confines of the First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. It was one of those typical warm August evenings in Michigan, when the locusts had been singing all day. Throngs of people poured from Bates Street, Worden Street, Neland Avenue, toward the corner of Fuller and Franklin where they would fill every corner of a structure that could seat nearly 1300 people. The building was packed. Additional chairs had been set up in aisles and spare corners.

Another convention that I will personally not soon forget was the convention that was sponsored jointly by the societies of Hope and Creston P.R. Churches. The theme of that convention was, "Hold Fast to That Which We Have." The theme of this convention was based upon Revelation 3:11, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." This convention held in

1958 had several unique features. The inspirational mass meeting was held at the Zeeland City Park. Zeeland City Park was a central location for many people of Western Michigan and those who came could hear the late Rev. H. Hoeksema speak for the 16th time, but this time under the open sky. Rev. Hoeksema spoke on the theme: "Holding Fast to the Truth."

The outing of this 18th annual convention was held at Long Lake and the program included a debate and a survey of the history of the P.R.Y.P. Federation and of **Beacon Lights**. This historical survey was entitled "This Is Your Life." Several, although certainly not all, of those who had been instrumental in the founding of the Federation and **Beacon Lights** were invited to this meeting and were introduced to the young people assembled in the shelterhouse at Long Lake. I remember particularly that Mr. Homer Kuiper, member of Kalamazoo P.R. Church, and first president of the Federation could be present at this meeting.

I said that we could have some but not all of those who had given leadership in the Federation. This is true because 1953 preceded 1958. 1953 was the year of the most disturbing split in the Protestant Reformed Churches. This split seriously affected our Federation too.

The Federation president, Edward Knott (Rev.), had written in the convention booklet of 1947 as follows: "It is also a pleasure to be able to write seventh annual. And although annual is not quite correct due to the fact that we were unable to meet for a few years during the war, the seventh is correct, and for it we rejoice. For it means that we are no longer an infant organization, but by the grace of God are growing up."

That was 1947, my first convention.

But the convention of 1953 was drastically affected by the doctrinal controversy which had been waged and which swept across the Protestant

Reformed Churches as a denomination. This doctrinal controversy resulted in a split which decimated the numbers of people who had previously called themselves Protestant Reformed. When the roll was called at the convention hosted by the First Protestant Reformed Church, some societies could not send all of their delegates, and some societies were simply not represented because they would not attend this convention.

I remember vividly and with sorrow the events of this year. I became the secretary of the Federation in the midst of these distressing circumstances and had to correspond with society secretaries to determine the exact status of the Federation that society year, 1953-1954.

Doctrinal controversy and the serious matter of being Protestant Reformed was on the minds of the members of the host society and the conventioners at that 13th annual convention in August of 1953. The program plans included a debate on Thursday morning with the resolution: "Resolved that Doctrinal Controversy is Healthful for the Church of God." The afternoon session of the same day featured an essay on the topic, "What is Protestant Reformed?"

Two decades have passed since the wounds inflicted by the split of 1953 were first felt by the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. These wounds also affected the united and federated cause of P.R. young people. Those, who were members of the host society of 1953, the same society that hosts the 35th annual convention, and other members of the Federation have become parents of many of those who will attend the convention this year. God has been good to us. He has established His covenant with us and with our covenant young people.

As we celebrate the Jubilee Year of our Churches, we are particularly reminded of God's unchangeableness and His faithfulness in the midst of the strife and the turmoil of the times in which we

live. We feel a profound affinity with the poet, who wrote Psalm 48. "Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments. Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death."

In this year of Jubilee we, who see our sons and daughters, our nephews and nieces, become active in these important areas of Christian living, say with Joshua,

"... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Covenant young people of 1975, the torch has been passed! Run with it. As you run, **REMEMBER!!!!** Don't forget and don't merely remember the past but "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, . . . .Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

Have a blessed 35th Annual Convention! This is my prayer for you.

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## Feature

# CONVENTION REMINISCING

by Mrs. Susan Van Overloop

### Sue is a member of our Hope Church

I must say I was really taken by surprise when I received a letter asking me to reminisce about the conventions I have attended. Reminisce? Has it been that long ago that I attended a convention as a member of a young People's society? Alas! I've been forced to realize that my last convention was at First Church in 1968, almost 7 years ago.

I guess it doesn't seem that long ago because being a minister's wife I have attended several conventions since then. Also I have to admit the older one gets the faster time seems to go.

To reminisce means to recall to mind past events and experiences which have impressed me. Thus in this article I am not going to give the complete agenda of each convention I attended, for these can

be found in past issues of the "Beacon Lights". I will only try to give some highlights and comparisons which were impressed upon my mind.

My first convention was held in Edgerton in 1963. Its' theme, "More than Conquerors", is the theme I best remember. Here I was privileged to hear Rev. H. Hoeksema speak at what would be the last convention he would address.

I can remember how scared and nervous I was, especially of the "get-acquainted-hour", which was and is commonly held after the mass meeting. It consists of playing a game designed to mix thoroughly the group and separate close friends. This proves to be a very trying experience for someone who is attending their first convention and has a hard time meeting strangers.

I also attended the Southeast convention at which the first delegation from

Redlands was present. Only two years later I participated, as a member of the Federation Board, in making the seemingly impossible plans for the first convention ever to be held in Redlands. This Southeast convention was also the first convention to be held over a weekend. That made it possible for out-of-towners to attend the worship services at one of the churches in Grand Rapids. This also made it possible for people in the area to attend more of the convention activities without taking off more time at work. This practice of having weekend conventions has since been revised.

Recalling the convention which I attended in South Holland, the thing I best remember is the terrible storm we had the night of the banquet. I believe that there were tornado warnings, too. The group I was with were happy to arrive safely at our place of lodging after driving in hail, high winds, flooded streets, and seeing trees which had been uprooted as well as many lights going out around us.

I have attended conventions by car, bus and train, but never by plane. The plane ride to the Redlands convention, which my husband-to-be worked so hard to see happen, I never took because somebody decided that that week would be a good one for a wedding.

I say my husband, who was President of the Federation Board, worked hard for that convention. There are some things which you would like to forget about but somebody likes to keep reminding you of them. For it was really my fault that the Federation Board had to work so hard. The previous convention, held at First Church, most particularly the outing which was held at Jack and Jill ranch, left the Federation in debt. I happened to have been chairman of that outing committee.

This particular outing closed with the group singing Psalms, led by Rev. Lubbers who, many will well-remember, did so at other conventions, too. He seems to know almost all the Psalter numbers by

memory and he thoroughly enjoys singing them. He is almost a necessity at a singspiration which is held without the aid of piano or organ.

At this convention our souvenir booklet had a symbol on the cover, for which, I believe, there was a contest to see if anybody could figure out what it meant. I'm still trying to figure it out. If anybody recalls it, please let me know!

I would like, at this point, to say something about our attitude toward conventions. Our attitude toward what we do or what occurs greatly determines the effect it will have on us. If we go to conventions strictly to have fun we are going to miss the spiritual benefits. If we go only to find a boyfriend or girlfriend we may be disappointed and have the convention spoiled for us.

It seems it's only when we are through a period of our life that we see how we should have behaved in it. I should have gone to conventions seeking to be edified by the speeches and discussions, to work hard at having Christian fellowship, and to be more conscious of God's glory and honor and not my own. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgement." Ecc. 11:9 "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth...." Ecc.12:1a

Many conventions have come and gone. In them we see God's covenant faithfulness towards us also in this aspect of our denominational life. Other young people's groups seem to need popular rock groups, worldly movies and secular discussion topics to have a "good convention". In our conventions we see discussions pertinent to our Christian walk, Psalms sung, ministers asked to speak and a principle desire to be antithetical in this life. This covenantal

faithfulness of God toward us can also be seen in the themes which our young people have chosen: "Be Ye Holy", "How Great Thou Art", "Faith", "Preserving our Heritage", and "Soli Deo Gloria".



## *Truth vs. Error*

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

## GAIUS

*Gaius, Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou doest toward them that are brethren and strangers. - John*

The name among the Greeks was as common as Tom, Dick and Harry, while among the Romans it was used by eminent persons for their distinctive name, as by the emperor Caligula (Caius Caesar). The New Testament, originally written in Greek, reveals how common the name was among those speaking that language, for it owns four Gaiuses. There was *Gaius of Corinth*, whom Paul baptized and said was "mine host" and host "of the whole church" there (1 Cor. 1:14; Rom. 16:23). Then *Gaius of Derbe*, with Timothy of Lystra, accompanied Paul with contributions of the churches for relief of the brethren in Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). *Gaius*

*of Macedonia* was caught with Aristarchus by the Ephesian mob as one of Paul's accomplices (Acts 19:29). *John's Gaius* (III John 1) is not a disciple of Paul's but one of John's own converts (v. 4).

The story has it that Christiana and her company, travelers of the Narrow Way, weary from their journey were looking for suitable overnight accommodations. It was late at night. Their good guides led them to the home of Gaius. He was well recommended for his love before the church because he faithfully entertained strangers and pilgrims, and did well in sending them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God. Gaius settled his guests comfortably, and had his cook, Taste-that-which-is-good, as late as it was, to prepare them a supper. Now Gaius was

a host who thought it the host's duty to entertain his guests, while waiting for supper, with a generous flow of talk. Rather the opposite was Mr. Mnason (Acts 21:16) as a host. He believed that the host should start the conversation but allow the guests to take it up and continue it. Also he was more concerned that this be done while they were eating, and not while awaiting the supper bell. Nonetheless, Gaius was a host deeply concerned for guests who were true strangers and pilgrims in the earth. Both he and Mnason were family men, believing few things more important in life than the family unit. Convinced that the family is of divine origin, they knew that anything tending to mar or destroy it was a direct blow against God and what He had instituted. It was, therefore, their purpose to be of practical aid to Christiana and her family. Gaius counselled her sons to choose heartily their father's way, walk in their father's steps and come to their father's end. These young men, taught to do just that, responded delightedly that such was their resolve and purpose of heart. Further, Gaius, knowing that a godly family cannot fatally fall although it could be diminished, counselled Christiana to prepare her sons for the meeting of godly young women, to secure themselves wives approved of heaven. There was reason behind this: that the name of Christian never be forgotten in the world. So Gaius suggested that Christiana's young friend, Mercy, be given to her eldest son, Matthew. Samuel, a younger brother, immediately loved the home of Gaius so much that he blurted out his desire that they all stay there until Matthew was married to Mercy. About the time this happy union did take place, Gaius gave his daughter Phoebe to James, Matthew's brother, to wife. Days later, after leaving Gaius, when Mr. Mnason was their host, they were introduced to such good company as Mr. Love-saint, Mr. Dare-not-lie and the host's lovely daughter, Grace. In process of time, Mnason gave his daughter Grace to young

Samuel to marry, and his daughter Martha to Joseph. Thus finally all Christiana's sons were married to women of a good stock originating in Antioch (Acts 11:26).

All the New Testament Gaiuses were of that same stock. They were, principally, one-woman men. Gaius was no crude match-maker, but he had a practical loving concern for the young people of the church and the preserving of the Christian family in the earth. His name is connected with true hospitality, and true Christian hospitality consists in throwing open the family circle to let young people get well acquainted with one another in connection with its peace and sweetness. Old Honest, one of the beloved guides of this Zion-bound company, was also deeply concerned that their young people have both good harbor and good company. He agreed with an old saying of a wise man, "Marriage with a good woman is a harbor in the tempest of life; with a bad woman it is a tempest in a harbor." Mr. Mnason had welcomed them modestly with, "For harbor, you see what it is, but for good company, that will appear in the trial." But for these fellowshippers in tribulation it was no great trial to endure one another's company, for often they would sit up discussing hard texts of Scripture till late at night, as though they could not tell how to part.

At these family gatherings, the young men and women present, the conversation would begin. "You must understand, Mercy and Matthew, how holy the state of matrimony is," Gaius would caution. "There is great reason for calling it 'holy matrimony.' For it is a tie which God instituted in the union of our first parents, a tie so holy that He made it stronger than filial ties. Let me read you this from the little book we all carry, 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh.'" Interjecting, Mr. Love-saint said, "Yes, and the ties between husband and wife must be based on pure and holy love, if they are to *leave*

father and mother and *cleave* to one another. What a tragedy it is when it becomes quite the reverse and a man *leaves* his wife and *cleaves* once more to father and mother! What do you think, Brother Dare-not-lie?" "It is my opinion." that worthy replied, "that one of the saddest things in these days of apostasy is marriage relations *not* based on pure and holy love. If based on other grounds, it leads to trouble and heartache sooner or later. You all know the old saw, 'Marry in haste, repent at leisure.' Being instituted by God and made holy by Him, everything else that might endanger it is to be forsaken for the sake of that relation. Unfaithfulness to marriage vows is the cause of untold misery, sorrow and suffering to family and family life." Turning to Old Honest, that latter continued, "True; and these ties bind, so that we cannot be unfaithful without being responsible before God, for we must all give an account to Him. When ordained of God, it was a union for life, and death the only dissolution. Whatever breaks up family life ruins the home. We've all seen ruined lives and ruined homes. It not only ruins the state, but also the church, the worst ruin of all . . . Greatheart?" "I would add this," said Greatheart, "that people no longer have a true sense of family life. People are no longer covenant-minded. It is a wonderful thing, yes, a *normal* thing, when all in the family know the Lord, when they walk together in the Lord; when father, mother and children go to the house of God and have reverence for Him, and where Christ is in the home and in the lives of all. Where these things are forgotten, you have the seeds of anarchy, strife, trouble and discord. Gaius, what is the next point for our consideration?"

"Just this, brethren: marriage is to be contemplated only in the light of the Word of God. Scripture says, 'And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among

whom I dwell: but thou shalt go into my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac" (Gn. 24:3, 4). Also remember this: 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?' (2 Cor. 6:14). Should a Christian girl marry a man who is not a Christian? Not according to the divine directive that she may marry 'only in the Lord.' If there is a Christian young man, and the girl whom he wishes to marry is an unbeliever, or unsaved, should he marry her? The Word of God forbids it. Should a Protestant marry a Catholic? No, not until they can alike see that it is the Lord Jesus Christ alone who saves by grace, apart from works. It only causes division, discord and the worst kind of trouble in life."

Speaking up again, Mr. Mnason pointed out that "it was my good friend Paul who emphasized that marrying 'only in the Lord' when he said, 'The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; *only in the Lord*'" (1 Cor. 7:39). The only sanction the Holy Spirit gives on to remarry, in the case of death, is that it is to be *in the Lord*. Mr. Taste-that-is-good, you haven't spoken a word tonight! Would you care to speak out of your rich experience?"

"With Gaius' permission I will, for it is late." Gaius graciously nodding, he went on. "If the husband thinks one way, and the wife another, what are the children thinking? Unity must be in the home life. The wife, if the husband does not know God, cannot depend on him for help, and will have to be *husband* as well as wife in the training of the children in the way they should go. The husband, if a Christian and the wife not, will have to be mother as well as father. Both husband and wife must show their walk with God in the home. The godly home, the godly father and mother, and the godly children in that home, are a type of Christ and His

church bound together in covenant love. What are we here on this earth for, but to see that our families, now and of the future, be godly centers of covenant faithfulness and abiding love?" Then all quietly arose, Christiana and her boys taking the lead, making their way "up the wooden hill," the last sound of the night to echo in that living room being Samuel's response to being prodded on to bed - "Oh, mother, do we *have* to?"



*Critique*

## THE EXCELLENCY OF THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN

by Agatha Lubbers

The position of the woman in society is under serious attack. The woman is being systematically destroyed by those who support the proposed Equal Rights Amendment. The woman is being viciously annihilated by the Women's Liberation Movement. Most tragically of all the woman is being attacked by the church, when she is given a position in the government of the church which the Scriptures do not assign to her. Christian men and women are called by God to defend to their very death the high calling of the woman in the church and in society.

I write in defense of the enormous importance of the woman in society. Women of the world have destroyed themselves. In addition the vital position

and the excellency of the Christian woman is in a state of decay and of imminent ruin. Christian men and women are called to thwart the incessant erosion of the woman's excellent position in the world and in the church by those who have no fear of God. Happy is that people whose God is Jehovah. Happy is that people who will defend the ways of Jehovah God.

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The woman occupies a significant place in society because of her unique creation. Genesis 2 teaches that the woman was created as a helper fitted for man. God saw that it was not good for man to be alone and so the woman was

created for the man. Man had needs that only a creature like the woman could satisfy.

The Scriptures teach that the woman was created as a wife to assist her husband. Eve was called to respect Adam and was called to reverence him as her lord and as the God-ordained king of creation. Adam loved his wife and cherished the creature called Woman because she was taken out of him. She was bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. She was from the Man and therefore she was called Woman.

In a world which has been made captive to SIN, it is virtually impossible to understand the beauty of the love which Adam displayed toward his wife, Eve. Eve was an obedient wife, who honored her husband. The mutual love and respect that existed between the Man and his wife was not marred by sin or lust of any form. The Scriptures profoundly and simply describe that relationship of love and purity in the simple sentence, "they were naked and they were not ashamed."

But the Fall came. Adam fell and with him the whole creation was brought under the curse of God. Adam had been tempted by the Woman, and she had been led away by the surreptitious temptations of the devil. She, who had been obedient and loving, became disobedient and rebellious. She tempted her husband to sin. Man yielded to the temptation and the Fall was complete.

The world has developed in SIN ever since that fateful day; but the ordinance of God remains.

To the woman God said: "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you."

The rule of the husband over his wife is an ordinance of God. It was not abrogated by the Fall. It was continued after the Fall. The man was called to be a ruler, and the woman was commanded to

be subject.

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That which was normative and regulative in the New Testament Church of the apostolic times. Paul writes as follows: "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. If they will learn any thing, let them ask their husband at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

The apostle Paul writing, that which we believe is normative for the church of New Testament, says that women are commanded to be under obedience. This is the exalted position of the woman, who promises with her Christian brother that she will be obedient to the discipline of the church, when she confesses the faith that is given to male and female alike.

The apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 teaches the New Testament church that the godly woman who is a member in the church must learn in silence and in submissiveness. She is not to teach and to have authority over men in the church. Paul appeals in this passage to the creation of the woman and says that Adam was first formed and then Eve. In addition Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Her desire shall be to her husband, and she will be saved in child bearing if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

The woman has an exalted position in the church. She is the mother of believers. She is to be an example of godliness and faith to her daughters, and if she is an older woman, she must be such an example to the younger women in the church.

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The woman will lose her exalted and God-ordained position in the church if advocates of women for ecclesiastical office achieve their goals. The church that disregards the Scriptures will bring the church down the pathway of imminent destruction. If the foundation stones of the Word of God are disregarded, the church cannot stand. The church will be destroyed. The woman must insist that she has a God-ordained position in the church, and that she will only live godly if she lives in that position of subjection to God-ordained authority.

The woman is being systematically destroyed by those God-less card-carrying women libbers. They have no fear of God. They are those described by the apostle Paul in Romans 1, as those who know not God but have become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened. They profess themselves to be wise, but they are fools, and they have changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man. And God has given them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts to dishonour their own bodies. They have changed the truth of God into a lie and worship the creature more than the Creator.

They are the worst kind of prostitute. Young men and young women are warned to beware to them!

The E.R.A. is systematically destroying both the woman and the church. It is a Satanic device to wipe out the Church of God.

The E.R.A. says, "Equality of rights under law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. The Congress shall have the power to enforce by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article."

The E.R.A. is opening up a completely new area of undesirable and unwanted effects. Churches which today are ordaining women as ministers will

continue to be tax-exempt. Those churches which maintain the Scriptural mandate that God has assigned a different role in this life to men and to women, and that these different roles are basic both to office in the church and the family unit, will lose their tax-exempt status.

The E.R.A. which is being actively supported by the women's lib movement is making a determined drive against churches that allegedly discriminate on the basis of sex. The National Organization for Women, in its official booklet called "Revolution: Tomorrow is NOW", makes the following demands: (1) that churches and seminaries immediately stop their "sexist" doctrines that assign a different role to men and women, (2) that seminaries recruit, enroll, financially aid, employ and promote women theologians and theological students on an equal basis with men, (3) that Federal statutes be amended and enforced to deprive churches of their rights to discriminate on the basis of sex, and (4) that tax-exemption be withdrawn from any church actively opposed to abortion.

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Christian men and women! We are living in perilous times.

God grant us young men and young women who will continue in the things which they have learned.

We are living the times when men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, without natural affection, trucebreakers, profligate, fierce, despisers of those that are good, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

# Article Response

by Elaine Koop\*

**\*Elaine is a member of our Southeast Church**

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I received my Beacon Lights today and read immediately the article, "Women's Lib in the Church". Certainly I must agree with the writer of the article that any part of the women's liberation movement has no place in the church of Christ. Furthermore I know of no women in our churches who believe themselves to be equal to their husbands either in the home or in the church. But what this has to do with wearing pantsuits to church, I really couldn't follow the reasoning given.

I have no reason to believe that female members of our church that have worn pantsuits to church, have any desire to become card-carrying members of the Women's Lib movement or have not remained in subjection to their husbands by donning a pantsuit.

When the writer states "Even though these women may not consciously realize it, they are competing with men." I feel that to be a pretty heavy judgment to make on your Christian sister sitting in the pew next to you, because she has worn a pantsuit. Nor is there reason to believe that because a female member of the church chooses to wear a pantsuit to church, that she will expect a seat in the consistory bench in a year or two. Women

in the Reformed churches were given that "right" years ago and they did this without pantsuits. I hope and surely believe that our churches are strong enough in the truth that we are not that easily swayed by women's apparel in the church.

Also, let us consider the women of whom we speak. We are not just talking about any women. Many of these women are mothers of covenant children and co-heirs, along with their husbands, in the church of Christ. And because this is of utmost importance to them, it should not be implied that they have become women-libbers.

I personally have not been offended in the least with the pantsuits that I have seen in church. The ones I have seen are very pretty, feminine, modest and cover a lot more than many of the short-short skirts and dresses that have been prominent on many of the female parishoners of the past few years. The question of attire in the church, male or female, providing it be modest, should not be a prerequisite to proper worship. As I wrote this article, one Scripture text kept coming to mind. Although it refers to the place of worship. I think that the spirit of the text can be applied here. John 4:24. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." That after all is most important.

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**For yesterday is already a dream, and**

**tomorrow is only a vision;**

**But today, well lived, makes every yesterday**

**a dream of happiness, and every tomorrow a**

**vision of hope.**

# REPLY

by Gwen Van Eenenaam

I believe Mrs. Koop may have misunderstood the point I was trying to make in the article through no fault of her own. No, I am not backing down, women's lib in the church is wrong and women are to remain in subjection to their husbands. But even though wearing pantsuits in church may not lead directly to women in the consistory, it is still a liberalizing in our attitudes which may very well lead to it! This was and is my point. Therefore I believe we should be concerned with this problem of dress, and in particular, pantsuits as proper or improper apparel in the church.

Why is there now such a rush to undermine long standing traditions in all areas of life? Women in the church have always worn dresses. But certainly, tradition does not make holy, as many will hasten to point out. The early church must have had some reason to set the standard they did in the first place, and I believe this reason was basically modesty. This does not include modesty in the physical sense alone!

If, then, a woman chooses to wear a pantsuit to church because it is more modest and covers more than a short miniskirt, what is wrong with this? But here the basic argument is at fault. Women in the church who choose to follow the fashions of the world by wearing miniskirts are already forgetting the concept of modesty in the physical sense. Then should pantsuits be allowed because they cover more than short skirts? Certainly not, for two wrongs do not make a right in any case.

We should not be concerned with modesty in the physical sense alone, but also in the spiritual sense, that is, in the sight of **God**. It seems to me that those who wear pantsuits to church are putting

their values in the wrong place. Why are these women so interested in change all of a sudden? Why must we continue to imitate the world? Are we placing more emphasis on apparel than proper spirit of worship? Maybe so.

Certainly we are speaking of covenant and elect mothers. I will agree wholeheartedly with that. But these mothers in the church of Christ are but sojourners here in this wicked world. Even though elect children of God, they are still sinful and prone to fall. We must strengthen ourselves in the truth, and uphold the brethren. This includes dressing modestly before God so we do not lead the weaker sister and children into sin.

This issue of Women's Lib and pantsuits in the church is just another of the disguises which Satan uses to destroy the morals and values of the true church. Yes, this may be a small issue, but if we repeatedly compromise on small issues, what will be our stand when we are confronted with an issue of major importance? We can't afford to gloss over even "small issues" in this day and age. We can afford to split hairs somewhat to reach the proper conclusions.

The church's calling in the midst of this life is to remain separate unto God. How are we to be distinguished from the world and the Modernistic churches of today if there is no distinction in our dress?

Mrs. Koop writes of women in the Reformed churches being given the "right" to sit in consistory without wearing pantsuits in church first. Can't she see that this was a big step towards liberalization with none of the minor issues in-between?

What this whole issue boils down to is really a question of right or wrong and

also a matter of principles. The true church is called to stand fast and remain firm in the midst of the wicked world. As we near the end of time, we should remember that Satan is trying ever harder to destroy the church. We should be aware of this and thus look at any attempts at doing as the world does with extreme caution. We must maintain our distinctly Reformed heritage.

1 Timothy 2:9-10 have something very relevant to say about the whole matter.

Just remember, whatever you do, say, think, or wear, do it all to the glory of God alone, not man. Follow the rule of shamefastness and sobriety.

Finally, women in the church of Christ, rejoice in the position that God has given you. Don't be a discontent, and don't change for change's sake. Be happy with what God has blessed you. I know I am, and I have no desire to change my status in the least.

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## **NEWS** From, For, and About Our Churches

by Karla Kalsbeek

### **FROM OUR HOPE, WALKER, CHURCH:**

The public confession of faith of Neal Hanko, Chester Hunter, Jr., & Luanne Terpstra took place on May 4.

Mr. & Mrs. Larry Meulenberg were blessed with the birth of a son, David John, on April 15.

The membership papers of Mrs. Larry Koole (nee Pat Alderink) have been received from the Christian Reformed Church.

The Hope Young People's Societies sponsored a casserole supper May 7 at Hope School.

The membership papers of Kurt Griffioen have been sent to his home at his request.

Mr. Dann Heyboer & Miss Marsha Westra were united in marriage on May 16 in Hope Church.

The membership papers of Mrs. John Moelker have been sent to our Faith Church upon her request.

Mr. Bruce Bomers requests that his membership papers be sent to our Southeast Church.

Mr. & Mrs. David Hop rejoice in the birth of a son, Marc Allen, born May 14.

### **FROM OUR SOUTH HOLLAND CHURCH:**

Mrs. Lois Nelson (nee Poortenga) requests that her papers be sent to her home.

Mr. Ryan Regnerus & Miss Nancy Schaver were united in marriage April 18.

The public confession of faith of Anita de Jong & James Haak took place May 25.

Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Zandstra rejoice in the birth of a daughter born May 17.

The Young People's Societies went out to dinner June 3 at the White Fence Farm.

### **FROM OUR LOVELAND CHURCH:**

The Choral Society presented a program of Easter Music April 6.

Mr. & Mrs. Ivan Griess were blessed with the birth of a son.

Our Loveland Christian School presented a program April 11. The theme was "Rejoice, the Lamb Reigneth".

The Young People's Society sponsored a roller skating party May 5.

**FROM OUR RANDOLPH CHURCH:**

Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Huizenga rejoice in the birth of a daughter, Caroline Joy, born April 17.

**FROM OUR REDLANDS CHURCH:**

The Young People's Society sponsored a hymn sing March 30, after the evening service.

The Young People's Society sponsored a soup supper Friday, March 14.

**FROM OUR HULL CHURCH:**

The membership papers of Mrs. Carol Anema (nee Van Maanen) were sent to her home upon her request.

The spring banquet of the Young People was held April 21. Rev. Slopsma spoke on "The Influence of a Friend".

Mr. & Mrs. Dave Groeneweg were blessed with the birth of a son April 29.

**FROM OUR SOUTHEAST CHURCH:**

On May 16, Adams St. School celebrated its 25th anniversary.

The public confession of faith of Bonita Rietema & Barbara Boomers took place May 11.

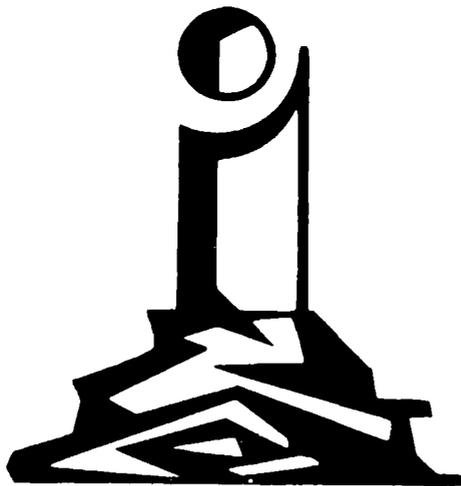
The Young People's Society sponsored the annual Pot-Luck-Supper May 1.

"Light" was the theme for the singspiration in Southeast Church on April 27.

The Federation Board sponsored an All Star Basketball game May 2.

**FROM OUR FIRST CHURCH:**

Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Vink were blessed with a son, Darren Rhyn, born April 15.



An urgent message to our Protestant Reformed Young People and to the readers of **Beacon Lights**.

There will be only **ONE** opportunity to order your copy of the 50th Anniversary book of our Protestant Reformed Churches, **GOD'S COVENANT FAITHFULNESS**-and that is **now!!!**

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