

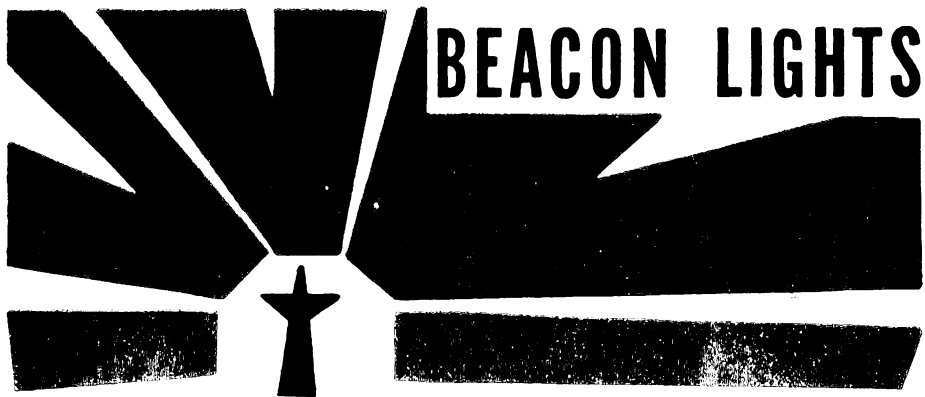
# BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT  
REFORMED YOUTH*



**MAY, 1979**

**WHO ARE  
MY FRIENDS?**



# BEACON LIGHTS

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## IN THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL - What Do You Think? - D. Harbach	1
The Mother's Influence in the Home - Mrs. De Vries	4
CRITIQUE - A Proof of Discipleship - Ben Wigger	5
Crossword Puzzle	8
The Christian Insurance Salesman - Pete Schipper	9
FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY - Who Are My Friends? - Rev. G. Lubbers	11
THOUGHTS ON OUR WORSHIP - The Reading of the Law	14
What Are Young People's Societies? - Jim Schipper	15
Rev. Moore's Mailbox - Rev. R.G. Moore	16
Learning From Tragedy - Randall J. Groenendyk	18
News, From, For, and About Our Churches - Cindi Dykstra	21

# **WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

*by D. Harbach*

1. Why do I have to go to school?
2. Why can't I be friends with wicked children?
3. Should I be concerned about other students in school who are not my closest friends?
4. How should I treat those outside my group in school?

In today's pleasure seeking world, with the many evil influences that work their way into our lives, the Christian school student needs to pause daily in order to take a close look at who he or she really is. The benefit to the student is overwhelming. The time spent in reflection serves to make clear the purpose for which God has created us and placed us in the world as Christian school students.

A couple of initial remarks are in order. First, the church, the particular Protestant Reformed Church of which we are a member, serves the purpose of directing us to always look at ourselves in the light of God's Word. This comparing ourselves to God's Word is essential for us in order to be spiritually aware of our great need of the grace of God. We daily pray to our faithful covenant God for grace and forgiveness. We see our sins rise up against us day after day. We find the forgiveness of those sins in the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on the cross and in His resurrection from the dead the third day. We realize ourselves to be Christians by God's grace, because we now live by the faith of the Son of God who reigns in the heavens. As Christians, we have certain responsibilities. We are prophets, priests and kings. Therefore, as Christian school students, we daily take time to reflect about the day's events. That reflection is through the way of prayer, God centered prayer. Knowing these responsibilities will enable you to answer the four questions above, sincerely.

Secondly, we are Christians; while in church on Sunday, the first day of the week; while in school (public school included) Monday

through Friday; and while in our homes or while out in the world. We are Christians whether we are a student, a child, a brother or sister, a niece or nephew, an aunt or uncle, etc. To put it simply, we are God's people in the midst of the world.

I have decided to present two situations that will help you to understand the meaning of these questions. A comparison will be given to show you possible answers. I hope you will compare your answers with mine.

"Ouch! You dumb moron! Why don't you watch what you're doing!" yelled Marci into Roger's flushed face. "Hey, get off my case! It was an accident, O.K.?" replied Roger, as he bent over to pick up the book.

These short tempered comments were exchanged because Roger had accidentally dropped his large, heavy English Literature textbook onto Marci's left foot. Marci's locker was to the right of Roger's locker, which did not make Marci very happy. She simply did not like Roger, nor did Roger care at all for Marci.

What do you think? We would readily condemn the words Marci spoke to Roger, but would we readily condemn Roger's reply? To me, both persons' comments are wrong because they are centered in hate towards each other's person. We can kill our brother with words. How easily we violate the sixth commandment.

Don't stop in your thinking. You will recall that Roger and Marci do not like each other. How often this is true in our own lives, while in school. How often we openly show a dislike for a person, which means we are not concerned for the other person's well being. Now ask yourself this question: Is this situation possible between God and His people? Of course not. Then neither should the above situation be a part of our lives. We are brothers and sisters in the Lord. We are bonded together by the love of Jesus Christ. Now let's correct the situation given before.

"Ouch! That really hurt my foot, Roger!" said Marci. "Oh, look what I've done. I'm very sorry, Marci, that your foot is hurt. Maybe you should go to a foot doctor to have it examined," replied Roger. Marci then says, "That's O.K., Roger. It was an accident, and besides, my foot doesn't hurt very much now."

What do you think?

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“Hey man, how are you doing, Blair, good buddy?” asked Kevin. “All right, Kevin,” replied Blair. They shook hands, thumbs pointed up. “How’s school going, Blair?” asked Kevin. Blair pauses, then says, “A real drag, man. Study, study, study! And for what purpose? You spend thirteen years of your life learning a head full of goofy facts. Who needs them anyway?” Kevin replies, “Yeh, you’re right, man.” They both walk over to Kevin’s new, dark blue Trans Am. “Hey, Kevin, how fast can your car go?” Kevin replies with a big wide grin, “Get in and we’ll find out, man.”

Kevin goes to a public school, does not attend church, and lives near Blair. Blair goes to a Christian school and attends church twice on Sunday.

What do you think? Were you surprised at Blair’s reply to Kevin’s question of “How’s school going?” Does the reply that Blair spoke familiar to you? Sometimes we make similar remarks about our own school.

Let’s look at a quote from Rev. David Engelsma’s book, “Reformed Education,” page 16, which I hope he does not mind my using. Rev. Engelsma writes, “We certainly desire our children to have a good education, the best possible; to develop their abilities to the utmost; and to prepare themselves to take their place in life, according to their calling. Also this is simply part of the covenant; the children are God’s and must serve Him with all they are and all they have. Certainly, the education must be in accord with the doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Churches and will serve the welfare of these churches. Even though the education does not evangelize the children, it certainly is not divorced from their salvation, not if it is covenantal education.”

Do you think Kevin would be friends with Blair, had the above quote been the main point of Blair’s reply? I do not think they would be friends at all.

Don’t stop in your thinking. You will recall what happened next. All too often we think we can be friends with the world of darkness. We sometimes readily conform to their way of thinking and join with them in sin. It is wrong for us to think like the world and join with them in sinning against Jehovah.

The conclusion now is, not what you think, but, what does God say in His Word?



# THE MOTHER'S INFLUENCE IN THE HOME

*by Mrs. De Vries*

This is the day of infant nurseries, day care centers, and baby sitters. More and more we hear how unfulfilling and boring a woman's life, as homemaker and mother, is. After all, every woman has the right to be herself and find an exciting and rewarding career.

And...who's taking care of the children? According to an article under that title, 17 million mothers, with children under 13 years of age, are at work outside the home today. Nearly 30% of these children are home alone after school.

Why write these facts in a Christian magazine? We are all affected by the trends and thinking of those around us. Whether because of necessity or desire, many Christian mothers are included in these numbers. I only want to make the point here, that to be an influence - there must be time spent together. Old Testament scriptures say, "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." This presupposes alot of togetherness, doesn't it?

At what age are children influenced by their mothers? Authorities say even the first hours and days are important in a baby's life. The feeling of closeness and loving care, by a mother, is essential for healthy development of the child. How about the toddler, and the pre-school years? Every waking moment of a child is a learning experience. The child imitates, investigates, and needs a loving, guiding hand. These are years when habits are formed, that are likely to remain all through life. Habits of cleanliness, personal hygiene, orderliness, good behavior, and honesty are just a few. Already the child is learning about God, the Bible, and prayer from his mother. We all are familiar with the text, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6.

As the child becomes older, he is busy with school, catechism, and various activities. How very important it is now that the mother be there, with a watchful eye, a listening ear, some words of advice and a helping hand.

Does the mother's influence end here? In Titus 2 we read, "The aged women likewise...may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."

Young girls, looking forward to marriage and motherhood--can you think of a more rewarding, more fulfilling calling? "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord." Psalms 127:3.



## A PROOF OF DISCIPLESHIP

*by Ben Wigger*

By nature we are all selfish people; and we would have to admit, if just to ourselves, that we normally live for ourselves and *not the brother*. We tend to place the importance on what our wants and desires are. If we were to rate our needs as opposed to those around us, I am afraid that ours would come first, in order of importance.

But, have you ever stopped and given any thought to the responsibilities that you, as a born again Child of God, have toward the church around you. Not just your brothers and sisters, mother and father, but the entire sphere of the membership of the church where you are a member.

In fact, we really have no choice in this regard; love for each other is demanded of us by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. John 15:12, "This is my commandment. That ye love one another, as I have loved you." So you see the importance of expressing this love. By showing this love toward fellow saints, we are testifying first of all in our love for the truth of God's Word; and secondly in our love for Jesus, for the work of Salvation which we have experienced in our own hearts, and which we have seen in the lives of fellow believers.

As followers of Christ, our lives must constantly reflect this love for the brother, regardless of who he is in the church. There can be no respect of persons in our hearts. And I am afraid that especially with you, the youth of the church, there is perhaps a tendency to forget about the old saints. Now I will admit that "old saints" includes quite a broad range of people. It's possible that some of you might consider anyone over forty years of age to be an old person. However, whether these be widows or widowers, or couples who are shut in by reason of advanced age, or perhaps just saints who are lonely; they must not be forgotten.

Even though I am not familiar with all of our churches, I feel somewhat safe in saying that in your church right now you can think of someone who fits into this area in the church membership.

In the past, some of our young people's societies have visited these people. Traditionally, the young people will visit these older members around the holiday season. The idea is to convey to them that the youth of the church does indeed care about them. And from the success of this practice, it should be continued. But it would be a serious mistake on our part to assume that this is enough. How can we say that we have loved fellow saints enough? The idea is that we can never sit back and say that now we have done enough for Christ and His Kingdom. To visit a rest home at Christmas time is not enough. To visit each older member with a fruit basket at Thanksgiving is not enough.

We can confess that we do indeed love Jesus, and that we are born again. But this is a dead faith unless it expresses itself in a true life and in true Christian activities. James 2:17, 18, and 20, "Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

There have been times when I was called upon to visit some of these people in the congregation; and it was with a certain amount of nervous anticipation that I went. You find yourself saying, what will we talk about? What do we have in common? But more times than not, you



find yourself completely overcome by the charm of the people you visit. Each is different, but you have that common bond of faith that runs through your hearts. And it is quite often the case that you receive a blessing from them when you expected no more than a wasted evening.

You, as young people, can fill a unique role in the church by paying attention to these older members. There is nothing quite to welcome to them as a visit from young people.

There are so many things that you as an individual can do for these older people. But I think that the most impact would come from the young people as a whole. It is the feeling of safety in numbers that would make the difference. It may be asking a lot to expect a young person to visit a shut-in by himself, but if the entire society were involved it would give any attempt a good push.

There seems to be so many things that the youth could do; and what your society does would depend primarily on the needs of your church as you see them. It need not be much, perhaps just sending out birthday cards to each individual would do. Or you could go as far as preparing taped messages from the society. These could include the singing of a few psalter numbers and perhaps one member reading a portion of Scripture.

It would be such a terrible waste in the church if we had no appreciation for what the older generations have accomplished. They have preserved the truth so that by God's grace we may carry that truth forward and in turn teach it to our children.

The world would just as soon be rid of any responsibility regarding the older generation. They have no time or concern for them. This should never be the case for us, the Church. With the love of Jesus in our hearts, there can be nothing less for all true disciples of Jesus than to love one another.

*“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”*



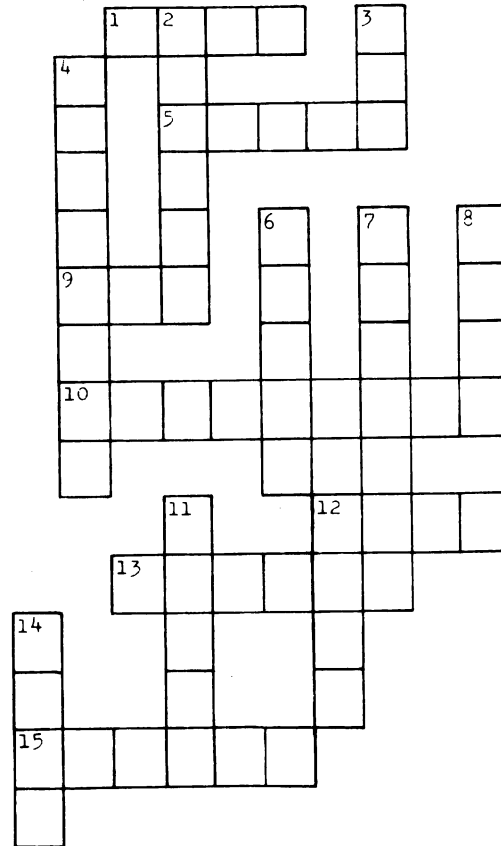
### BIBLE MOTHERS

#### ACROSS

1. The mother of Judah. (Gen. 29:35)
5. The mother of Mahlon. (Ruth 1:2)
9. The first mother. (Gen. 4:1)
10. The mother of John the Baptist. (Luke 1:57-63)
12. The mother of Jesus. (Matt. 2:11)
13. The mother of Samuel. (1 Sam. 1:20)
15. The mother of Joseph. (Gen. 30:25)

#### DOWN

2. The mother of Timothy. (2 Tim. 1:5)
3. The mother of Hezekiah. (2 Kings 18:2)
4. The mother of Moses. (Exod. 6:20)
6. The mother of Ishmael. (Gen. 21:14)
7. The mother of Esau. (Gen. 27:42)
8. The mother of Obed. (Ruth 4:13-17)
11. The mother of Isaac. (Gen. 21:3)
12. The mother of James. (Luke 24:10)
14. The mother of John Mark. (Acts 12:12)



# The Christian Insurance Salesman

by Pete Schipper

Our calling as Christians is to carry out the sovereign will of God. That sovereign will of God calls each and every individual to their respectful place in life. Some men are called to be factory workers, others construction workers, teachers, preachers, etc. With every position given to man by God, we have a calling to witness the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour; if we refuse to do this, we are not seeking the will of God, but rather seeking our own sin and pride.

However, to think that there is no place for a Christian in the insurance business today is not true. Many times when someone asks, "What do you do for a living?" and are told, "I am an insurance salesman," they think bad of you, that you must be a crook or a dishonest person to be selling insurance. To even think this is a terrible sin, for we must remember that we are placed in our respectful occupations by our Heavenly Father.

People wonder if it's right for an insurance salesman to prepare other people, as well as other Christians, for a financial loss caused by the increasing cost of medical care, knowing that God holds the future in His hand anyway. God did not create man as stocks and blocks, thinking in a fatalistic frame of mind; but rather He created man with the knowledge to perceive what is taking place around him at the present time. We must see the rise of power of a socialistic government, which is trying in every way possible to seize control of all citizens, as well as the church itself. For us not to see this, we must be blind. This is why the cost of

medical care cannot be controlled by the government today; they don't want it controlled. They want the cost of the care we need to go higher, therefore forcing the people to either continue to pay higher costs in premium rates or fall into their ungodly programs of medic-aid and other socialistic programs. They want us to look to them for all our help and, therefore, make us give allegiance to their anti-christian rule. Christ warns us to be separate from the world, not to join these powers. In being separate from these powers, God still yet supplies our needs with insurance programs. These are means given to us by God, and we must not misuse these means.

What I mean is, that we must not go way overboard with insurance programs, putting our faith and trust in money; but rather insure our responsibilities equably to the glory of God and not ourselves. Not long from now, we will be without these means, for when national health care arrives, it will put an end to all major medical programs which exist today. Therefore, I feel in my heart that God gives us means to protect ourselves and our families from falling into the arms of this ever so popular national socialism. We must not say it's wrong to use these means God has given us, and throw our hands in the air and say, "Why should we carry insurance? God holds the future anyway, and if I have to join their medicaid and national health care programs, I might just as well for this is the way it's supposed to be anyway." This way of thinking is dead wrong. God gives us wisdom to see what is happening; and, therefore, we must put off the devil and

his anti-christian forces for as long as we can.

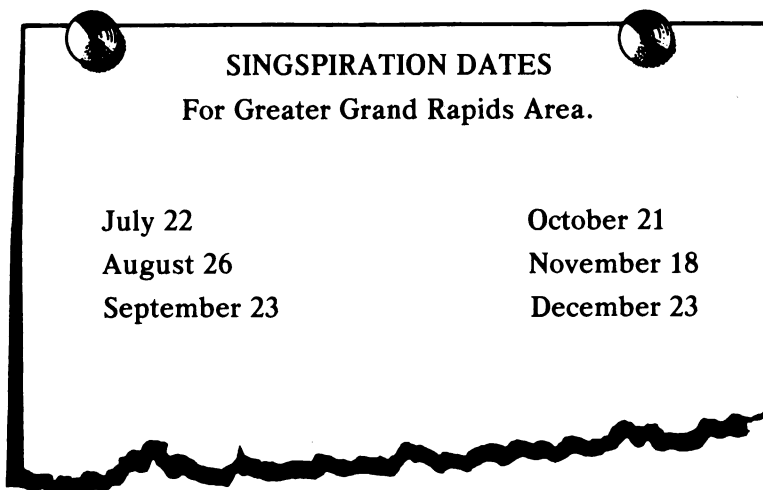
Getting to the question of whether there is an opportunity to witness Christ's suffering and death in the insurance business, I can say before God that we Christian salesmen are given a great opportunity to witness. In many instances when working with the public, our spiritual walk in life is greatly discussed. We must bring to the surface how we stand concerning the truths of scripture. Many times the expression we receive is welcomed, but then there are times when it is not received greatly. Christ teaches us never to back down because someone doesn't want to discuss scripture, but rather to let our light shine in the dark and grim world.

I, as a Christian insurance salesman, feel I can distribute the means given us by God to believers as well as non-believers, and in doing so point out to them from whom they have received those benefits. It's a good feeling to know that God uses us many times through the Holy Spirit to make His name known unto others. Sometimes while at a policyholder's home, we are called to open with prayer when asked to stay for lunch; this also strengthens us greatly. We must say in our hearts, "I thank thee, O heavenly

Father, for the opportunity given to me to witness Thy name." We as Christians must never forsake the opportunity which God places us in, when witnessing His name. We must always be ready and eager, and never ashamed, to speak the truths concerning our salvation in Christ Jesus. Through it all we are fed and nourished spiritually.

This responsibility should be looked to in every occupation that we as Christians hold down. God has given us a calling to worship Him in everything and to witness His name at any time. We must never be ashamed to discuss the things pertaining to our salvation with others in the world. We must pray, "Lord God, use me to witness Thy name whereby my faith in thee will be strengthened."

So remember, people of God, pray that we will not be offended in Christ, but rather rejoice in the salvation He has given us; that our daily walk in life will be filled with the Holy Spirit; that the world will be able to see the reflection of Christ on our face when taking up our occupations, and when called to witness for Christ's sake. This is not how all insurance salesmen picture their calling, but to the Christian insurance salesman, this is the only way.



**SINGSPIRATION DATES**  
For Greater Grand Rapids Area.

July 22	October 21
August 26	November 18
September 23	December 23

# FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY



“A man who has many friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” Proverbs 18:24

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” Proverbs 27:6

The Bible has some things to say about who our friends are, and what constitutes real friendship in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we ask the question: “Who are my friends?” we might merely have in mind that we make a count of them, tell exactly which young man or young woman is our friend at the present moment. And, in thus doing, you might assume that he is your friend or that she is your friend simply because you have rather close association with them. However, when we ask who our friend is, we might have in mind the deeper and more profound question: Is this person with whom I

associate really a **friend** in the Scriptural and profound sense of the word. And this latter we have here in mind!

Who are my friends?

It ought to be very clear that not every acquaintance is a friend. We might look at this matter from the point of view of experience. In the Bible, David complains about one, who was not really his friend, who had turned against him. Thus we read in Psalms 41:9, “Yea, mine own familiar friend (the man of my peace, in Hebrew) in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel (magnified) against me.” There is ever an Ahithophel with whom the true child of

God has to contend in this life. The worst kind of friends leave you in the lurch when you need them most. They only were near to you when they could use you for their own selfish purpose and ends. Every acquaintance is not a friend with whom you can confide your secrets. Many will betray you and me. Yet there is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother!

Who really are my friends? Perhaps we might turn this around and ask the question: Whose friend am I? When Jesus' listeners ask in rather unbelieving vein; Who is my neighbor whom I must love, then Jesus turns this around in the parable of the "Good Samaritan" and asks the question: Who was a neighbor to the man who fell amongst thieves? Whose neighbor, whose friend are you? This places the matter of our choosing of friends on a higher level than the purely natural likeness. It requires spiritual affinity of mind and heart in the Lord. Such it is at bottom! Make no mistake about it! True friendship is a relationship which even death cannot take away! It is eternal!

Let us try to understand this a bit in depth.

When you turn to the Bible (and that is where we must go!), we notice that the term "Friend" in Hebrew is from the verb "**ahab**" which means to **love**. It is the opposite of to **hate**. A friend is a lover. This is not mere erotic love of the sexes as taught by the Greeks and the modern day pagan America in which we live, and as written about and portrayed in every wicked dive and cheap drug store on the news stands. But this is the "love" which is rooted in God; God is love! This is the love of God revealed in Christ's death and resurrection, and which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The Bible joins a friend and lover in the church very close to each other. In David's deep affliction, he cries, "My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore, and my neighbors stand afar off." (Psalm 38:11).

And again, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintances into darkness." (Psalms 88:18).

How profoundly spiritual and eternal true friendship in the Bible is we notice from the teaching of Scripture concerning Abraham in his covenant relationship to God, as a believer saved by grace. This Abraham believed God with a faith which **works** by love. Love was the very life's **energy** of Abraham's faith whereby he was justified and accounted righteous before God. (Genesis 15:5,6). This is interpreted by James as constituting the bond of friendship with God. (James 2:23). Abraham is called in the Bible subsequently "A Friend of God." (II Chronicles 20:7). It is the great prophet Isaiah who writes of Abraham when he says, "But thou, Israel art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend." Here it is the LORD Himself, who calls Abraham His friend in His eternal covenant of friendship. God confided His secrets to Abraham concerning the destiny of the Church and of the wicked world. (Genesis 18:17-19). God makes His secrets known to His friend, that he may tell it to his children in their generations. The secret mysteries of the Kingdom of God makes known to those who fear Him and love Him; to these He will shew the secret life of covenant faithfulness. (Psalms 25:15). Such is the eternal friendship of the relationship of God with man! We must learn to live profoundly spiritual and Biblically! This we must do, else we shall never understand that there is a "friend who sticketh closer than a brother"!

This matter of spiritual friendship is underscored and taught by Jesus Himself in the night in which He was betrayed, in His last address to His beloved disciples, seated at the table of the Lord. Here He tells the disciples that He is relating to them some of the most intimate secrets of the heart of God His Father. These secrets are God's plan and purpose in His

Covenant and kingdom with His own elect Church and people, His "friends," His lovers! Says Jesus, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." (John 15:13-15). Truly, here we have some real teaching on true friendship of the love of God.

This all points up, that, shall we have real friends on earth, we must be friends in the Lord. Outside of the Lord there is not any real, lasting friendship! Many of the youthful and childhood acquaintances prove not to be of lasting character; they do not answer to the touch-stone, that there "is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother." Let it never be forgotten that truly being friends of each other implies that we **both** know the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, as **our** friend, and that His friendship is our **first** commitment; it is the relationship which **determines** all other relationships. In this relationship, our true friends will at times "wound" us, rebuke us, convict us of our sins. They will not shower us with a flood of Judas' kisses, which caused Jesus to say, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" No, the wounds of a friend are faithful friendship, while the kisses of an enemy are deceitful! Let us not be deceived, young people.

When we are "friends in the Lord" then we are **both** controlled by the Lord's **law** and **will** to us. Says Jesus, "Ye are my friends, if ye **do** whatsoever I command you." (John 15:14). These are Jesus' lover-friends, as is evident from Jesus words, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:14). Here both walk the straight and narrow way which leads to life. Few there be that find it and that look for friends on this way in which the gate is strait and the way is narrow! They find friends here where they look

for them and seek them out. How shall two walk together in intimate friendship lest they agree where to walk? Tell me who your friends are, and you will be telling me who you are!

Yes, James thunders it in our ears, does he not, when he says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whoso, therefore, will be a friend of the world ~~is~~ the enemy of God." (James 4:4). Is the world your and my friend? You can tell the worldly unbelievers your secrets about your new and living relationship with God your Friend? Come, Come! You know better, don't you? Don't you feel strangely out of place when you come in the gathering of the wicked, who know not God; the wicked within the circle of those who claim to worship God? God has made His secrets of salvation known to you, has He not? He has inscribed it in your heart, and caused your inmost being to thrill with the joy of salvation and of the forgiveness of sins? And now walk with the scoffers? Court with them? Marry them? Be unequally yoked with unbelievers? Perish the thought!

There is in the Bible the beautiful friendship of David and Jonathan. After David slew Goliath, Jonathan did not merely admire his bravery, but he became a lover of David, his lasting friend. We read, "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan **loved** him as his own soul." Jonathan would lay down his life for his friend, David. Later this becomes evident. This friendship endures the test. Are not the parting words of Jonathan and David, "Go in peace, for as much as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, the LORD be between me and thee, between my seed and thy seed forever." What a parting of friends in the Lord! Here vows are made and performed. Ah, how much is this not the case also in our lives. Friends with whom we make vows to keep them: Thy God is my God, thy

people are my people.... This is promisory of solid marriages and eternal friends in the heavens. (Ruth 1:16, 17, 18; Luke 16:9).

Who are my friends? Now the question presses us to give the biblical answer of faith in the covenant of God, with Abraham, God's friend. It is not any more: Who are my friends, but, What **kind** of people really constitute friends in the Lord.

Are these your friends before the face of God?

Yes, there is a friend which sticketh closer than a brother!



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## *THOUGHTS ON OUR WORSHIP*

### THE READING OF THE LAW

No passage in Scripture enjoins the Church to read the law in the worship service. It is striking that the Church has done this almost since the apostolic age; even Reformers, who simplified the liturgy, kept it in their services.

The description which Scripture gives as the purpose of the law makes it ideally suited for worship services.

The idea of worship seems to require the reading of the law.

The purpose of the law is to remind us of God's sovereignty, to be a mirror by which we know our misery, and to function as a rule for gratitude.

The law is included in the order of worship because the people of God must approach God in humility. This humility comes through the knowledge of their sin, which knowledge comes through the law.

At the same time, it is the rule of gratitude for the salvation in Christ.



# What Are Young Peoples Societies?

by Jim Schipper

Several months ago I was asked to put some ideas concerning Young Peoples Society attendance in writing for the **Beacon Lights**. The following article shares some of my ideas which should be applied to our present '78-'79 society season and any future society season.

One question came up about the age of those attending. For some eight years, I taught the oldest group of Sunday School students at Southwest Church. I tried in that class to treat those young people as belonging to a society, and to encourage discussion in the group as is done in Young Peoples Society. I was not always successful because many of them never studied or even looked at the lesson material prior to the meeting. Many also attended because that's what the parents required. This, none-the-less was the stepping stone to Young Peoples Society.

Because I've never led the Junior Young Peoples, I cannot speak from experience about those coming into society. But thinking of those beginning Senior Society, I see varying degrees of interest and ability. Some seem to think society is to have fun and never contribute anything to the discussion. Others give evidence of some study or at least attention and contribute to our discussions. The PURPOSE is the discussion of God's Word and not only getting something out of it for yourself—growth in the knowledge and faith of God—but, more importantly, contribution for the spiritual benefit of the others in the society.

I know many feel the society is a "drag", others a way of getting away

from the folks, and whatever the reason, the discussion of God's Word is farthest from anyone's mind. "Fooling around" is the thing to do. And lack of preparation is evidenced by lack of discussion. The younger the individual, the more timid they are and consequently discussion is limited. The leader usually has to pry the discussion from the members.

I don't believe that raising the age for entrance into society would help. To be involved for a year or two in society meetings and discussions is the only way to overcome that fear of talking and maybe making a mistake, or to take the devil's advocate side of a discussion for the purpose of bringing the truth to light. I also love to have those who have attained the ripe old age of 21-23 still attend the meetings for the purpose of discussion. Again bear in mind that they can give far more than they receive.

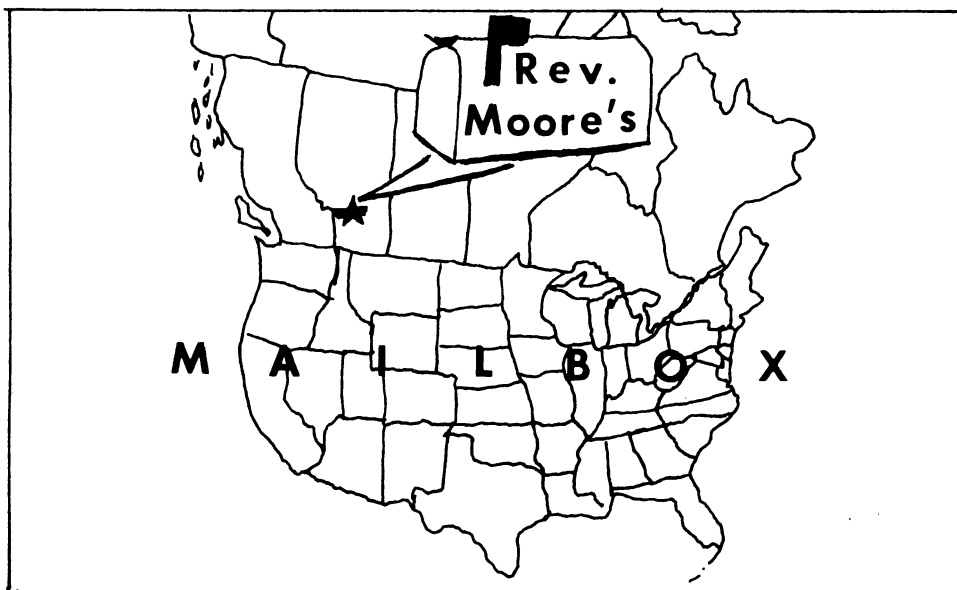
I'm also convinced that the leader can be a deterrent to good society discussion. If he knows his material as he should, there is no need for him to do all the talking; in fact, after a few introductory remarks, the young people should carry the discussion. There's no reason why the leader should ask and answer all the questions. In Southwest Senior Society I have difficulty sometimes maintaining control of the discussion because too many want to talk at once.

Study is one of the most important aspects of the Young Peoples meetings. But leading the discussion, and pointing to various aspects of God's Word such as using everyday examples to make a point

are absolutely necessary to a good discussion and profitable meetings. From that respect, there's no reason to leave Young Peoples Society until one gets married—and then only because they should attend Mr. and Mrs. Society or something similar in our churches out West.

In conclusion, we should have a good reason for attending a Young Peoples

Society, and if we don't, we'd better examine our lives. Sin lies at every doorstep, and it's so easy to go along with the people who like to fool around. But if each realizes that we get out of the discussion what we put into it, and work toward the spiritual promotion of the fellow members, we'll all have better Young Peoples Societies and discussions.



by Rev. R.G. Moore

First, a note: if you desire your question to be answered in this column, then please sign your letter. I will not use your name in answering, but I will not answer unless signed. The only exception being the question I treat in this article, as I had not made this plain before. The questions have been rather slow coming in; however, now I have several to answer so the mail box should appear regularly at least for the present. But this column is dependent for its existence upon your

questions.

The following is a question from a reader in Kalamazoo: "This is in regard to the prayer of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39), 'not as I will, but as Thou wilt'; and His remark in John 5:30 that He seeks 'not mine own will, but the will of the Father who hath sent me.' It would seem that since the Father and Son are one, that their will would also be one. How could Jesus deny His own will and pray that the Father's

will be done instead? Was there a difference of purposes here?"

In answering this question, we must be mindful that this prayer is brought before the throne of God's grace by Jesus Christ come in the flesh. Jesus petitions God as He stands before Him in the human nature. And this as the "Man of Sorrows,"—the suffering "Servant of Jehovah", and as the Head of the Church, our Savior. As such, He is like us in all things excepting sin. And this includes the whole of the moral-rational nature, including a human will. Then, too, we see this particular prayer as one that reveals Christ's perfect obedience before the Father, in contrast to the disobedience of the elect—those for whom He has entered our flesh to save.

In Gethsemane Jesus stood in the full consciousness of what was still ahead of Him. He knew of the bitter cup of suffering that awaited Him at Calvary, as the Son of God come in our flesh. But as our head, He walks that way of suffering obediently and willingly as our Savior. He could have turned away from that walk of obedience, except that it was His meat and drink to do His Father's will! And all of the events leading to the cross show plainly that our Lord was laying down His life as a sacrifice for the sheep given Him of the Father from eternity.

Gethsemane was the place where all the height of His suffering would open unto Him. Even now, the plotting of the betrayer and the chief priests was begun, and the soldiers were being mustered to take Christ to the cross. It is then, at this point, that the Son of God in the flesh gives voice to unspeakable sorrow and grief of soul, with a view to suffering the eternal wrath of God against the sins of His blessed church. And Jesus prays to the Father, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matthew 26:39. Jesus prays that the cup be removed from Him, if it were possible, and if this could

be done in harmony with Father's will. This gives to us some small insight into the tremendous suffering which was our Lord's portion to deliver us from sin! So great, that the perfect Son sought after the Father, whether there be another way to deliver God's Church and His sheep, than the way of the cross and the suffering of God's great wrath.

But there is no other way! His church has sinned and the wrath of the Holy One must be borne! The answer is that Christ must go the way of the cross, that He must taste the terribleness of the wrath of God; but, as the Father so answers, there is the assurance that He will be sustained in the depth of it all. And this answer is sufficient to the beloved Son.

Not once did Jesus think of disobedience; this never entered His soul! Had this been true even for a moment, there would be no atonement. And it is exactly at this point that we understand Christ's perfect work as the Suffering Servant of Jehovah. Whereas we always satisfy our own will by nature in the way of sin, Christ does not look to His own ease, but doeth the will of Father in heaven. Perfectly He submits His perfect will in our flesh to His Father's—even when it means that in His human nature He shall be forsaken of God! Without condition, Christ walks in obedience, even unto death, praying, "Thy will be done." Thus in each step of His life of suffering, He submitted His will to His Father's. How blessed is this for the elect sinner! Christ as our Head satisfied God's Word and law, and quenched His wrath in our stead. And in the power of His merits He sheds forth His Spirit upon His redeemed, and by His Word and Spirit conforms them unto His image. Now already in principle so that we begin to pray, "Not my will, but thine"—but soon perfectly when He brings us to glory. Then we shall perfectly walk in the Father's fellowship and communion in Christ.

# LEARNING FROM A TRAGEDY

by Randy Groenendyk

The article in the San Francisco *Examiner* wasn't very big, nor did it command very much attention. It simply noted that Congressman Leo J. Ryan and several other people from California had left for Guyana, South America, in order to investigate the People's Temple, a cult which had several members living in a settlement called Jonestown. According to several rumors, the People's Temple had been abusing some of its members, and Congressman Ryan, a "get-involved" type of person, had decided to personally check out the situation. And so, accompanied by aides, reporters, and relatives of some sect members, Ryan left for Guyana the week of November 13.

As we all know, the Ryan investigation, which at first seemed to be so routine, ended in one of the greatest tragedies in recent years. Ryan and several members of his party were murdered, and over 900 members of the People's Temple, including its leader, Rev. Jones, committed suicide. The story of the murders and suicides was gruesome, and it dominated the news for over a week.

But that was last November. Now, a few months later, Congressman Ryan, Rev. Jones, and the People's Temple have all but disappeared from the news. They have nearly been forgotten, which is really quite natural and not so surprising. However, before we completely forget about Guyana and the People's Temple, I think we should take another look at them. Why? Because we can benefit from the experience of the People's Temple. We can learn from Rev. Jones and the mass suicides—even though it's hard to believe that Protestant Reformed young people can learn anything from a far-out cult in South America. But we can, and I think that it points out at least three significant lessons for us.

First, the mass suicides illustrate in a disturbing but clear way the tremendous power and influence that faith can have in a person's life. The members of the People's Temple put their entire trust and confidence in Rev. Jones. They believed in him and put their faith in him. And, however misguided and foolish their faith was, it was so

great that it enabled them to drink the deadly mixture of Kool-Aid and cyanide. The faith of the People's Temple members in Rev. Jones was so powerful that they willingly committed suicide when he told them to do so.

Of course, the Jonestown suicides are not the only example we have of the influence faith can have in one's life. The Bible also gives us several examples of how men acted out of a strong faith. For instance, Abraham's faith in God was so gripping that he was willing to kill his only son Isaac as a sacrifice to God. And Noah, too, acted out of faith in God when he became the local laughing stock by building a ridiculous-looking ark.

We can learn from these Biblical examples and from the Guyana suicides by realizing that our faith, also, can have a dynamic role in our lives. True, our faith may never be able to move mountains, nor is it likely that our faith will ever require us to build an ark or kill ourselves or our sons. But our faith can sustain us in times of disappointment and despair, help us to resist the temptations which surround us, and provide us with strength and encouragement in our day-to-day living. Our Christian faith can, and should, show through in all our thoughts, words, and actions. For if our faith is really real, it will do more than simply rest on the bottom of our hearts, inactive—it will instead mold and shape our entire beings and lives.

Second, the experience of the People's Temple illustrates what happens when men place their faith in any person or thing other than God. The members of the People's Temple placed their trust in a man, Rev. Jones. The result was that their lives ended in death and Hell. We, too, sometimes tend to put our trust in things other than God. We may count on money to assure us of a happy life, or we may figure that we can have a satisfying life by having fun, fun, fun, through sports, parties, drinking, or anything that gives us pleasure. Or we may think that we can get by in this world by means of our own personal toughness and intelligence.

But, if we do put our trust in those things or in ourselves, we will come to the same end that the members of the People's Temple came to. Oh, we probably won't commit suicide, but our lives, too, will end in death and Hell. Why? Because in order to find true satisfaction, happiness, and eternal life, we need to ground our faith in the one true God. He must be our source of comfort and hope; He must be the One whom we believe in and depend upon. For if we put our faith in anything else, we will surely be let down in the end. Only our Father in Heaven will never fail us.

Third, Rev. Jones points out to us once again the very real danger

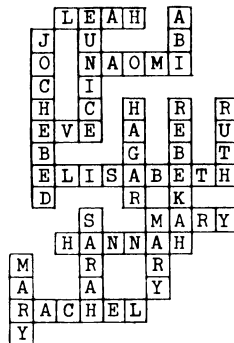
of the anti-Christ. I suppose that many of us consider the concept of the anti-Christ to be one of those true but rather remote and far-away theological theories. We fully believe in the coming of the anti-Christ, but we seldom give it very much thought, for it seems to be so far off.

However, Rev. Jones is proof positive that the coming of the anti-Christ is very real and may happen in the not-so-distant future. Think about it for a minute. An obscure California minister was able to convince 900 people to follow him and establish a town in a remote country in South America. Later, he was able to convince those followers that they should commit suicide. Furthermore, Rev. Jones had the full-fledged support of such notable people as Vice-President Mondale, Rosalynn Carter, Sen. Hubert Humphrey, and many others. (Sen. Humphrey, for example, once called the work of Rev. Jones "positive and truly Christian.")

My point is this: if a relatively unknown man such as Rev. Jones—honestly, now, how many of you knew of him before last November?—can deceive so many people, what kind of threat could a wiser, more popular, and more powerful man pose? In this age of TV, radio, and newspaper, a man can communicate with literally millions of people at a time. The opportunities for one influential, charismatic man to deceive a ready world audience are almost unlimited. The potential for gaining influence and mass support is staggering. Yes, the danger of an anti-Christ coming soon is real, very real, and that thought ought to have a sobering effect on us.

In conclusion, the Guyana tragedy, like all events in history, is God's revelation to us. For that reason, we must do more than simply read the Guyana headlines and then dismiss them without a second thought. We can learn from the story of the People's Temple, and as aware, discerning Christians, it is our duty to do so.

BIBLE MOTHERS



# NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

by Cindi Dykstra

## BIRTHS

Mr. & Mrs. Bob Dams of Hudsonville were blessed with the birth of Katrina Jean on January 30.

Mr. & Mrs. Marvin Lubbers of Hudsonville Church were blessed in the birth of Stephanie Ann on February 21.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Looyenga of First Church (G.R.) rejoice in the birth of Jennifer Sue on February 28.

Mr. & Mrs. Dave Poortinga of Loveland rejoice in the birth of a daughter.

Mr. & Mrs. Arthur W. Zandstra of South Holland were blessed with the birth of Jennifer Ann.

Mr. & Mrs. Darle Wassink of First Church in Holland were blessed with the birth of Ross David on March 15.

Mr. & Mrs. Glen Kotman of First Church in Holland were blessed with the birth of Jeffrey Alan on March 19.

Mr. & Mrs. Howard Hoekstra of South Holland rejoice at the birth of Heather Lynn.

Mr. & Mrs. Gary Lanning of Loveland rejoice in the birth of Andrew Wayne.

Mr. & Mrs. Neal Hanko of Hope rejoice in the birth of Johnathon on April 22.

## CHURCH MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Holland has received the membership of Randy Boeve.

First Church has received the membership of Mr. & Mrs. Steven Key and Stephanie Joy from Alger Park Christian Reformed Church.

Faith has sent the membership of Mr. & Mrs. G. Postmus and family to First in Holland.

Hope has sent the membership of Mr. & Mrs. Mark Scholten and four baptized children to Faith.

Holland has received the membership

of Miss Mary Vander Meulen from Fairview Reformed Church in Grand Rapids.

Hudsonville has received the membership of Mr. & Mrs. Len Van Overloop from Faith Christian Reformed Church.

Hope has sent the membership of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Zandstra and one baptized daughter to Hudsonville.

## CONFESSION OF FAITH

Sandy Kiel made public confession of her faith in Kalamazoo on March 11.

Randy Boeve publicly confessed his faith in Holland on March 25.

## MARRIAGES

Gary Bylsma and Marilyn Reitsma were united in marriage on March 30 at Faith Church.

Herman De Vries and Lorraine Reitsma were united in marriage in Hope Church on April 27.

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

The Young People's Easter Mass Meeting was held in Hudsonville Church on April 15. Rev. Bruinsma was the speaker.

An Easter Singspiration was held at Southwest Church on April 15. Its theme was "He's Alive."

First's Young People's Society presented a program on March 15 in Southeast Church. It featured pictures taken while Rev. Woudenberg and Mr. C. Prince were in Jamaica. This program has been travelling around to different churches—Faith on April 12, Hudsonville on April 18, and South Holland on April 20.

The Annual Young People's Spring Banquet was held on April 27 in Hudsonville Church.

Let's Meet!

at



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California

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Christian Fellowship  
at the 1979  
P.R.Y.P. Convention  
July 23~27