BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

OCTOBER, 1982

POST CONVENTION ISSUE

BEACON LIGHTS

VOLUME XLI **OCTOBER, 1982** **NUMBER 8**

Published monthly (except June-July and August-September are combined) by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

David Rau - President; Gerry Van Baren - Vice-President; Norma Westra - Secretary; Laurie Kamps - Assistant Secretary; Mike Lotterman - Treasurer; Doug Wassink - Assistant Treasurer; Mary Van Baren - Librarian; Hank Vander Wal - Youth Coordinator; Prof. Decker - Spiritual Advisor

BEACON LIGHTS STAFF

Dave Moelker - Editor-in-Chief; John M. Faber, David Harbach, Ed Lotterman - Associate Editors; Mike Lotterman - Finance Manager; Jan Dempsey, Carla DeVries, Linda Feenstra, Mike Rau, Grace Faber, Thelma Westra

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Mrs. H. Brands, Rev. C. Hanko, Rev. R. Harbach, Rev. G. Lubbers, Ben Wigger

Collections should be sent to: Mike Lotterman
1382 Su-Lew Dr. S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504

BEACON LIGHTS
c/o O.P. Bookshop
P.O. Box 2289
Christchurch, New Zealand

If any material of **Beacon Lights** is reprinted by another periodical, we will appreciate your giving the source.

The articles of **Beacon Lights** do not necessarily indicate the viewpoint of the Editorial Staff. Every author is solely responsible for the contents of his own article.

Contributions of general interest are very welcome.

All material for publication should be addressed to:

Dave Moelker 4625 Juleon S.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

News Editor: Marcia Hanko
4665 Juleon, S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Michigan subscription dues to Grace Faber
4190 Burton S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506
Subscribers outside of Michigan please forward subscription dues to
Jan Dempsey
3519 Senora S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49508

Forms 3579 should be returned to:
BEACON LIGHTS
4625 Juleon S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Second Class Postage paid at
Jenison, Michigan (USPS 046-840)
Subscription Price $5.00

IN THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL - An Open Letter to all my Grandchildren - John M. Faber 1
CONVENTION SPEECHES:
Called to Obedience - Rev. D. Kuiper 3
Called to Moral Purity - Rev. W. Bruinsma 10
Called to Faithful Church Membership - Rev. J. Kortering 15
My Convention Impressions - Michael Lotterman 21
Minutes of Convention - Mary Van Baren 23

An Open Letter To All My Grandchildren

by John M. Faber

In the early part of September we made a trip by plane over several Western States, some seven miles above the ground under a cloudless sky. From that lofty place we plainly saw patterns of different colored fields, mostly corn, barley and wheat. Those rectangular fields were a beauty not seen from the roadside as we generally pass them while driving in our car. This was not a bird's eye view, birds do not fly so high, but it reminded us of a God's eye view. We thought of having zoom lens like movie cameras have, in order to see the individual stalks of corn, like the video cameras at the ball diamond which can zoom to the very outfield to better see the fielder catch the fly ball with his back to the fence.

But God does not need a zoom-lens, He sees each individual stalk all right He sees the lowly sparrow, He sees all. And we did not really need that zoom-lens either, because we remembered that just yesterday we drove a car down the highways between the tall corn rows crowding us on both sides. We knew the crazy-quilt pattern of fields were comprised of thousands and millions of individual corn and wheat stalks, each bearing fruit. We also knew, without seeing each one, that those plants were bearing the fruit which was inherent in the seed which produced it. Each little corn-kernel which had been planted by the farmer had split open in the warm moist soil, had sprouted and become a corn plant. Each wheat seed had become a wheat stalk and was proudly waving a head full of new wheat seeds. What a marvelous creation!

I have mentioned this before in one of my former letters, but it struck me anew as I beheld that beautiful harvest some thirty seven thousand feet below us that God reveals spiritual things in His natural creation. We are likened to seed and the plant that grows from it. In I Pet. 1 we are told that we are *not* born of corruptible seed but of *in*-corruptible seed. So we also come from seed as does the corn stalk. Each natural seed embodies in full the reproduction of life from which it came. That much is complete, and can never be added to. Do not make the mistake and think that we might possibly become weeds (tares in the parable) but the seed from which we come is un-spoilable, un-dyable, incorruptible. That un-spoilable seed was implanted when we were re-born. That most likely happened right after we were born, or it can also take place in a later time. But from that moment we were no longer sons of Adam, dead in

sins and misery, but were in the Second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him we are alive unto God, never to die. Now that that seed has been planted in us the entire question in the future is one of growth and maturity. This alone brings forth fruit that abides.

And now again the analogy (an-*al*-ogy): The development in the life of the Christian young person is like the natural life and growth in the vegetable world. As the corn reaches skyward towards the sun, so we reach upwards to our God Who is the source of all life. All we need is to be found in the good soil and environment in which God causes us to thrive. That's right; we do not *work* for our salvation, we are told to work *out* our salvation. Why? Because it is God Who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. That "doing his good pleasure" means to *work* for his good pleasure.

The analogy becomes plainer as we go along. The plant found in good soil, and with rain and sunshine grows up to bring forth fruit. So we, grounded in Christ, (Eph. 2:10) "created *in* Christ unto good works" and enjoying rain and sunshine (the teaching of God's Word by parents, teachers, and ministers) and in the right environment (Christian home, Christian school and church) are ready for, and prepared for works of righteousness. Proof? II Tim. 3:16, 17. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God (child of God) may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." Did you catch the "rain and sunshine" in that description of benefits? Is that proof enough? God said so!

Now by this time (are you still with me?) you may be saying to yourself, "That's o.k. for older people like our parents or even our grandparents, or our teachers or the minister, but I am yet a child, you surely cannot expect me to understand that heavy stuff." No, no, that is not too heavy for you. You people who amaze your parents that you understand those weird video games or that intricate Rubik cube can easily understand the simple truth of the doctrine of salvation. Jesus, when He sojourned on this earth, some two thousand years ago was especially interested in children, even the very small children, warned the parents not to prevent their children to come to Him. You remember the classic text, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and *forbid* them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Oh yes, children are also being addressed when He told the weak and heavy laden to come to Him for His blessed rest. Now do I hear you mutter under your breath that you still don't really know what it is "to believe"?

All right, let us talk about that for a bit. The Holy Spirit, speaking through the Apostle Paul as it is found in II Cor. 13:5 tells each one of us to, "examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith". First of all then we must remind ourselves that "without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6) and, *get this*: this all important truth must be based solely upon Scriptural *facts* for, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). So you see that unless our faith is established *upon facts* it is no more than conjecture, superstition, speculation or presumption. Further, Hebrews 11,

verse 1 leaves no question about this: "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen". Everyone knows that *evidence* must be founded on *facts*. So we see then that faith, standing on the facts of the Word of God, substantiates and gives evidence of things not seen.

I want to stress one thing, though. That is that you must not *try* too hard to believe. For faith is not a force that we exercise, or a striving to believe something shall be, thinking that if we believe hard enough it will come to pass. A well known minister teaches that, and he calls it "positive thinking". That may very well be positive thinking, but it is most certainly not Biblical faith.

Heeding all the facts of the doctrine: That we as sons of Adam are dead; That God has chosen us from before the creation of the world; That He sent His own Beloved Son to this earth to take upon Himself our humanity, and in the flesh died for us. *For Us.* That is the key-word! And, finally, He will, and does give us all spiritual blessings to make us grow and mature in faith. Remember the analogy: The stalk does not reach up to the sun; the sun reaches down to lift the stalk erect. So, we do not reach up to God by ourselves; He reaches down to us in our Lord Jesus Christ to draw us up to His fellowship. Now you are ready to say, "Lord I believe, help Thou my unbelief".

Now, that was not so hard to understand, was it?

CONVENTION SPEECHES: Called to Obedience

by Rev. D. H. Kuiper

I was very happy last January to have received an invitation to speak at the 1982 convention! For several reasons it did not take very long before a letter of acceptance was in the mail. First, this is the area that my wife and I consider as our home territory. Mrs. Kuiper was born near Edgerton, Minnesota, and I was born in Orange City, Iowa. So it is good to be in this area again, visiting relatives and friends. Secondly, as many of you already know, we have been asked to host the 1983 convention in Lynden, Washington. This means that our society members and myself will be observing things very closely, and taking notes, to help us in our planning for next year. The third reason for my eagerly accepting the invitation to speak is the most important of all. The letter of invitation included the splendid theme and text your host societies have chosen! What a powerful text: "Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and

godliness." (II Peter 3:11) And what a timely theme: "Our Changeless Calling in a Changing World."

Tonight, I have the pleasant task of introducing some of the basic ideas of that text and theme, laying the foundation somewhat for the speeches that follow by the Rev. Bruinsma and the Rev. Kortering. The topic that has been assigned to me is "Called to Obedience." And I want to bring together the main ideas of the theme and my topic. We will speak of such things as the changing world in which we live. What are some of these changes? What causes these changes? What are we to think of them? Then there's the matter of a changeless calling. What is your calling as believing young people of the Reformed faith? Why is that a changeless calling? Does a changeless calling in a changing world place us at a disadvantage or at an advantage? Does this mean we have to be joyless, old-fashioned, stuffy people?

One of the points the apostle Peter makes in the middle part of II Peter 3 is that the life of the child of God must be one of balance and stability. He must be in spiritual equilibrium. It's possible, you know, that we live our lives under one of two extremes or opposites. We might be filled with an improper impatience for the return of Jesus Christ, an ardour that allows us no rest until He comes for us. Or, we might demonstrate carelessness in indifference towards that great day. In verse 9, speaking of the wonderful longsuffering of God to His church, Peter corrects a reckless impatience. Don't fret, don't worry, don't believe the ignorant scoffers who say that Jesus is never going to come. . .and above all, don't charge God with unfaithfulness, tardiness, or slackness. Rather, remember that He is being longsuffering to usward. That's why He does not send Jesus yet. God does not will that any of His chosen ones should perish, which would surely be the case if Christ came now or at any premature time. The last child of God must be born and come to repentance. Thus we see that the longsuffering of God is salvation! (Verse 15.)

In verse 12, the apostle corrects indifference and slothfulness in respect to the day of Christ. And it seems to me, from my own life and experience, that young people fall into this category rather than into the first. You are more apt to be careless and indifferent in respect to the coming of Christ and the end of the world, than to be impatient for His blessed coming. So immediately after the convention text, we read that we are to "Look for, and haste unto, the coming of the day of God." And we are to be "diligent". With these things before our minds, let's consider together the topic:

Called to Obedience

I. A SERIOUS QUESTION!

"Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?" That's the question that is before us tonight, and that is a most serious question. Is there anyone that doubts the seriousness of the apostle in these words? Is there anyone here who is not impressed with the idea of the end of the world? Listen to God's Own Word! "The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night." No one knows the day or the hour; all we know is that that day comes quickly. "The heavens shall pass away with a great

noise." You have heard of the big bang theory of the origin of the universe. That's all false of course, the universe did not begin when a cloud of gas exploded. But things are going to end with a loud noise! The end will not come with a whimper, but with a bang, a great noise! "The elements shall melt with fervent heat." If you've studied a little chemistry, you know that the elements are the basic materials of creation, things such as oxygen, sulfur, iron, carbon, aluminum. They are all going to burn with intense heat, becoming molten and perhaps even gaseous. "The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The mountains and the seas. The forests and the fields. The wildlife and the cattle. And all the works of man as well. The pyramids in Egypt, the skyscrapers in New York and Chicago, the bridges in San Francisco, the Astrodome and the Kingdome and the Silverdome and all the other stadiums and ballparks. The universities and libraries, the research laboratories and hospitals, inventions in the field of communications, you name it, it will be burned up! Cars, airplanes, space vehicles, everything that man has ever made will burn, and nothing that he has made will pass through the fire safely.

Do you believe that? I ask you that as young people in the Church of Jesus Christ. Do you believe that everything God has created in the beginning, and everything that man has made since the beginning, will all go up in smoke and in flame? That these things shall be dissolved? There are many who do not believe that. Peter reminds us of that in our chapter, the early verses, where he speaks of the ignorant scoffers who say, "Where is the promise of Christ's coming? Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." That's not true, of course. All things do not continue as they were, for there was the universal flood, when the world overflowed with water. But they mean to say, these unbelievers, that the future won't be any different than the past. No end of the world, no coming of Christ, no judgment, no accounting of everything you and I have ever done. But I'm not talking to evolutionists and scoffers, and false teachers in the world of unbelief. I ask this question of the young people of the Protestant Reformed Churches, children of believers: Do YOU believe that this world and everything it contains shall be dissolved, burned, and destroyed?

Believing young people of God say, "Of course I believe that. I believe that with all my heart. And I believe that because God reveals that to me in His Word everywhere. Christ returns to destroy His and my enemies, to make all things new, and to usher in the state of everlasting rest and peace, which Peter calls the new heavens and new earth in which dwelleth righteousness. And I believe that in the second place because God has given me faith to receive that Word of God, that promise of God in Christ, to embrace it, to apply it personally to myself, to hope in it, and to give myself body and soul over to it! Oh yes, I believe THAT," says the child of God of every age.

"Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?" How shall we live? You see, the question that Peter puts to us is a question that calls for consistency between faith and life,

between confession and walk. You believe this, now how are you going to live, what kind of a person are you going to be? Let's not say that we believe something, and then live as if we never heard of that thing. Let's not contradict in daily life what we confess to be true in our spiritual moments. Not only does the apostle's question demand consistency, but it also calls for wisdom, doesn't it? All these things are going to burn, now how are you going to live? Are you going to live as if they are *not* going to burn? Are you going to pretend these things are not so by forcing them out of your minds? You can't even do that! God testifies in everyone of your consciences that the world comes to an end, and besides your parents and minister are going to remind you of this often. Or are you going to arrange and order your lives according to the truth that all these are going to dissolve? Are you going to reckon with that fact, living according to true wisdom?

You know, young ladies, young men, the world we live in is a changing world. The Bible points that out in many different ways and places. The fall of Adam and Eve led to great changes within man himself, as well as to his productions. With the fall creation underwent changes. Those changes multiplied and developed down to the time of Noah, and then came the catastrophic change in the flood. Since the flood, with the beginning of seasons and the division of the human race into nations and languages, these changes have continued and increased. In fact, as time goes on change is not a steady, plodding thing, but there is acceleration. Change takes place faster and faster so that a person is hard pressed to keep up! It will be sufficient tonight, it seems to me, to mention just a few areas of change that touch you and me in our lives, in our journey through this world as redeemed saints and pilgrims. Someone has calculated that the first doubling of knowledge took place around the year 1750. If there was so much knowledge in this world at the time of Christ, that knowledge was doubled in the year 1750. The next doubling of knowledge took place in the year 1900, only 150 years later. And then it doubled again by 1950, in only 50 years. It doubled again in 1960, and it has doubled several times since then! It is this explosion of knowledge that demanded the invention of the computer. Man could not keep up with himself. Necessity was the mother of invention, so that the computer had to be invented to store and keep track of the facts and the figures of human knowledge, all that data.

I've read that 75% of the jobs listed in the want ads of a large city newspaper are jobs that were unheard of ten years ago. What change! There has been a tremendous change in the role of women in society, and I'm afraid in many churches as well. Women have come a long way, or gone a long way, depending on one's viewpoint. Well over half the married women in this land work outside the home, something unheard of when our grandparents were teenagers. Of all the mothers in this country with children under five years of age, 51% of them work outside the home. And you know what is happening in many churches as far as women occupying the offices of minister, elder, and deacon.

There's the area of morality, the area which concerns itself with what is right and what is wrong. Tremendous changes have taken place in this area too. The commandments of God have been set aside by nearly every segment of society including the church. The Law of God is irrelevant, out of date, and anxiety-producing; get rid of it. Situation ethics has been adopted by practically the whole country. Situation ethics or the new morality (really the old immorality) holds that nothing is right or wrong absolutely or objectively, but you have to first judge the situation in which a certain act takes place. And what governs people more and more today is this: Everything goes, as long as you don't get caught! If you get caught, it must have been wrong! Let me prove what a terrible grip the new morality has upon this land of ours. A survey was recently taken among public school teachers and educators. Now maybe you have wondered why your minister always talks about the godless public schools. Here's why. Only one out of four public educators believes that abortion is wrong, one out of four believes that homosexuality is wrong, one out of four believes that sex between single people is wrong, and one out of three believe that living together before marriage is wrong. And these people are teaching the majority of the youth of this land!

And what shall we say about television, which came out when I was a boy, say about 1945. Many people are frightened half to death by what television is doing to America. They worry about the violence it inspires, about the misinformation that can be transmitted by it, about the complete lack of moral standards, even about what it is doing to the attention span of children. Then, in 1945, there was only a few hours of programming per day; today most channels blare around the clock, and there is cable vision besides. And the average American household watches almost seven hours of television a day. The contents of the programming I will not even try to describe. That's the world we live in. Everything is changing, and changing steadily for the worse! How can there be stability in our lives? How can we be sure that we are not being swept along with the tide of change and immorality and sin? Isn't there a ROCK somewhere unto which we can run and be safe? What manner of persons ought ye to be?

II. A JOYFUL ANSWER

You know, I'm very glad that I have an answer for you tonight! I have an answer that is true, that is satisfying, and that is lasting! And I didn't make the answer up. God Himself gives us this answer through the apostle Peter in the convention text. And that answer is one which will appeal to young people, because it's a joyful answer. The apostle really answers his own question. He asks, "What manner of persons ought ye to be?" And he immediately answers, "Ye should be holy and godly persons." That's how we are to understand the convention text. There is a question, very sober and serious since it speaks of the dissolution of all things. And there is a joyful answer!

Why joyful? Well, joyful simply because there is an answer at all! The fact that there is an answer to the question, "What shall we do? How shall we

live?", even as everything speeds to the end toward the great and final conflagration means that all is not lost, but there is hope! That in itself is joyful. In the second place this is a joyful answer because of its contents. The answer speaks of obedience. Really, those words *holy* and *godly* amount to obedience, and obedience for the child of God is always a joyful matter because God blesses obedience and causes a way of faithfulness to be exceeding sweet!

Let's look at those terms for a few moments. "Conversation" is a word that refers not only to our speech, but to the total walk of an individual. All that we do in the midst of the world, in all the relationships and departments of life equals our conversation. You ought to think here of your family, your relationship with your parents, and brothers and sisters. It takes in your schooling, the matter of teachers and classmates. Your jobs, your recreation and amusements, your dating, courting, and marriage. It includes also your church membership. . .your relation to your minister and elders as well as to your place in the communion of saints. Rev. Kortering will be touching on that on Thursday evening. Now that entire, broad conversation, that whole way of life in the midst of a world that teeters on the brink of ruin and dissolution, must be *holy*. That's the modifer that the Holy Spirit uses: holy conversation. The word holy, which is related to the word saint, has two aspects to it, as you have learned in your Reformed Doctrine classes. Holiness implies separation from all that is sinful and defiled, first of all. The life that is holy is a life which flees from sin and keeps itself unspotted from the world. And secondly, holiness implies dedication to that which is pure, and lovely, and of good report. Separation from sin and consecration to purity and truth. Separation from corruption and uncleanness, and dedication to GOD, in other words. He is the only Good. The second term is godliness which really means to walk in the fear of God. This involves a walk according to God's commandments. As the wise man of Israel said in Ecclesiastes 12, "Fear God and keep His commandments." There is no way to express godly fear apart from a careful walk, a thankful walk, in all of God's good cammandments.

As we said, this all amounts to obedience. And that's the duty of man, that's the duty of every young person in the church. And that's a wonderful, joyful matter, too. Now it's time to notice that our calling is an *unchanging calling!* I speak to you tonight on the basis of an unchanging Word of God. The message which we declare unto you, which is the Word of God, the Bible, is the same message that prophets, apostles and evangelists declared to young people in the church from the very beginning. The reason why you have an unchanging calling in this changing world is that God is unchanging; more than that, God is unchangeable. You know that. But the point I want to make about the unchangeableness of God is that His Word to us, His commandments and precepts, are always the same! God doesn't say one thing to us today, and another thing to us tomorrow. God doesn't bless this today, and then curse the very same thing the next day. God never confuses us that way. But from eternity to eternity He is the same. Always He blesses obedience and punishes disobedience. And always the way of obedience is the same, spelled out for us

in His Word, preached to you by the church and taught you by your parents. Thirdly, this means that you can pursue your life here below with a confident, good conscience that God will be faithful to His Word. You don't have to worry about that. God will not change; He will not fool you or bring you to grief. So that obedience is indeed a matter of joy! God always blessed obedience! That is a fundamental rule of His kingdom from which He never departs. Holiness and godliness forever remain pleasing in His sight. That holiness and godliness He works in you by His grace, and then He is pleased to add grace to grace. Then we experience that God is for us, that wonder of wonders God is not ashamed to be called our God, that nothing can separate us from the love of God as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. That's joy, the joy of the obedience of faith!

Let me draw out some implications of this for you. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved. . . .", let us not *seek* these things. Look around you. The things you see and touch and handle, the various institutions and relationships of life. They are going to burn with fervent heat. Shall I mention some of these things? There aren't going to be any cars in heaven. Kind of foolish, then, isn't it, to make your cars the most important thing in your life? To let your cars, the getting of them and the use of them control you, and even worse, often times ruin your relationship with the civil authorities and with your own parents. Your cars are going to burn. No basketball or baseball or tennis in heaven. Kind of foolish, then, isn't it, to make this or that sport the great aim and ambition in your life so that many important things suffer on account of it. You just have to get that jump shot down, or that curve ball perfected! Sports, sports figures, stadiums, sports records and halls of fame, they are all going to burn! There isn't going to be any marriage in heaven, according to the words of Jesus. There will be the great marriage between Jesus and His Bride, the church. But no marriage between a man and a woman. Kind of foolish, then, isn't it, to make dating and courting and marriage the one great thing in life, so that you are going to get married no matter what, even if you have to marry an unbeliever! People in the church do that sometime, and they suffer the rest of their lives. They have a hell on earth, because they were not holy and godly in the choosing of their friends and mates. We may not seek, pursue after, make the great object of our striving and ambition, *anything* that passes away. That's the great lesson we must learn tonight and practice all our lives.

But that doesn't mean that life is gloomy, or that our calling is old-fashioned and narrow. There *are* things which do not pass away! There are things which are eternal, things which involve us in a glory and a joy that cannot be described! Jesus says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *my words* shall not pass away." What kind of persons ought ye to be? Young people who live in the Word of God, the abiding Word of God which will pass through all the destruction of the day of the Lord. Man's words and works shall pass away. But God's Word, God's promise to us in Christ, that will not be touched by the fire, but the fire will serve the perfecting of His precious promises. Jesus says in the sermon on the mount, "Seek ye first the kingdom

of God and His righteousness. . . ." That's the kind of persons ye ought to be. Earthly kingdoms rise and fall, leaders and heroes come and go; you put your trust in them, or your hearts on them, and you shall be ashamed. But the kingdom of God which is based on the righteousness of Christ Jesus shall stand forever and ever! The fervent heat and the melting of the elements cannot bring His throne and kingdom down. They can only serve Him, and serve the perfection of that kingdom, and the bringing of us into our rightful place there!

May this convention center about the unchanging, abiding Word of God. May all that we do by way of recreation and games, serve us in our study and hearing of God's Word. May we seek the kingdom of heaven this week in all that we do. And may that be true of us also as we return to our homes and places in life. Using the things that God gives us, but not being used by them, let us press all things that pass away into the service of Christ's eternal kingdom. That's your calling and mine. The person who does that shall never be ashamed.

Called to Moral Purity

by Rev. W Bruinsma

Young people of the 1982 Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention, we live in a rapidly changing world. It is not difficult for you and me to see that this is especially true with respect to sin. Not that sin has become any worse today than it has in the past. Sin is sin. But it is true that as time progresses there have arisen many more ways that the wicked man is able to give vent to that sin. Jesus tells us this concerning the days prior to his second coming, "and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." As time marches on God removes more and more his providential restraint of sin until finally the cup of iniquity is filled and the world becomes ripe for judgment. And again, it is not difficult for us to see that this is already true of the days in which we live.

Especially is this true in one area of life in particular: the whole area of moral purity. God has given this idolatrous world up to uncleaness through the lusts of their own hearts. And the result is sexual perversion in the worst ways possible. Not only do we read of such heinous crimes as rape and sexual abuse of children, but we find that other acts of sexual perversion have become an

accepted thing. Homosexuals fight for equal rights. Divorce, remarriage, common-law marriages, or sex without marriage are but a few examples of the adulterous age in which we live! The world has gone crazy with sex! Surely, the world is madly rushing to its end!

And what manner of people ought we to be? That is what Peter asks us in II Peter 3:11: "what manner of persons ought ye to be?" And here is the answer:God's people! We must be a people consecrated and dedicated to the service of Him who has called us out of the darkness and perversion of sin and into His most marvelous light. And our calling is the same, always the same, as we live in a world growing worse and worse in its sin: "Be ye holy even as I am holy!" That is God's commandment to his people of all ages. We find that recorded for us in I Peter 1:16. As becomes clear from that passage this was God's command to his people in the Old Dispensation as well as to us who live in the New Dispensation. That command speaks to you and me of remaining morally pure in a world that is growing increasingly immoral, unchaste, and impure.

Now, it is not my intention to stand up here this evening and throw at you a bunch of "dos" and "don'ts" which you must follow to be morally pure. I'm not going to say for example, "OK, young people, if you want to be morally pure in your ways then take out a pad of paper and I'll list what you must do. Here are the rules. First, dress code: You may not wear this or that, but you must wear this and perhaps on occassion that. Secondly, dating procedures: on a date you may not go here or there. You may not do this or that with your girlfriend or boyfriend. Instead you must go here and you must do only this. Thirdly, your conversation with one another: you may not say this or that because that has certain undertones." I could give you this list of rules, you understand. But if I did I would run into two problems. First of all, you would be sitting here all night writing down this list because the list would never end. In the second place, I would not really be explaining to you what it is to be morally pure. Often times moral purity and holiness are confused with a mere outward conformity to the laws of God, a mere outward formalism.

I have taken with me here tonight a book written by a man named John C. Ryle. The book in entitled *Holiness*. In this book he makes a rather interesting observation about this outward conformity to God's law on the part of many people. On page 16 we read,

> True sanctification does not consist in outward formalism and eternal devoutness. This is an enormous delusion, but unhappily a very common one. Thousands appear to imagine that true holiness is to be seen in an excessive quantity of bodily religion - in constant attendance on Church services, reception of the Lord's Supper, and observance of fasts and saints' days - in multiplied bowing and turnings and gestures and postures during public worship - in self-imposed austerities and petty self-denials - in wearing peculiar dresses, and the use of pictures and crosses. I freely admit that some people take up these things from conscientious motives, and actually believe that they help their souls. But I am afraid that in many cases this external religiousness is made a substitute for inward holiness; and I am quite certain

> that it falls utterly short of sanctification of heart. Above all, when I see that many followers of this outward, sensuous, and formal style of Christianity are absorbed in worldliness, and plunge headlong into its pomps and vanities, without shame, I feel that there is need of very plain speaking on the subject. There may be an immense amount of "bodily service," while there is not a job of real sanctification.

Such outward formalism, such outward moral conduct is not the call we receive as God's children who are called to moral purity.

That is what is at root wrong with such movements today as the Moral Majority. This is a political movement, under the leadership of a man named Jerry Falwell, which seeks by the power of numbers to bring our nation back to those "good morals" it at one time supposedly maintained. The point is: Falwell and his Moral Majority seek only an outward change of moral conduct without an inner spiritual change of the heart. That is *not* the call to moral purity which you and I receive in our life. If it were, if that were our calling then we would end up as so many other today, "having a form of godliness (an outward show of a love for God's commandments) but denying the power of it (not having a love of God and his commandments in our hearts)." II Timothy 3:5.

The text which was chosen as the theme text for our convention this year shows to us what truly is the basis of moral purity when it says, "what manner of persons ought ye to be *in all holy conversation and godliness?*" In order for us to be morally pure in our ways we must be characterized by holiness and godliness. That is the apostle Paul's point when in I Timothy 4:8 he writes, "For bodily excercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things." In other words, he tells us that going through the motions has little profit but what really is profitable in our lives is true godliness. Godliness speaks of the attitude of your and my heart. To be godly means that we are characterized by a deep love for God and all of His precepts. It means that we fear God, not in the sense that we are afraid of Him and of His punishment of our sins, but in the sense that we fear Him as a child who wishes to live and move as if he was always before the face of His Father whom he loves. Godliness is a deep respect and reverence for God as the God of heaven and earth and who is our God for Jesus' sake. That is godliness, and that attitude of our heart is at the very center of our life of moral purity.

Of course, that implies that only we as children of God can ever be morally pure. My ungodly neighbor who seems to live a good moral life really has within him no purity, holiness, and godliness. Even though he leads a good family life and never cheats on his wife, even though his conversation seems for the most part chaste all this does not proceed out of a deep love and respect for God. It was not done out of godliness and was therefore only an outward form of moral purity. Paul tells us in Timothy that godliness and therefore also moral purity is a fruit of the Spirit; something that is found only in the lives of those in whom the Spirit has worked. It is vital that we understand what this means. The wicked, the ungodly are those who stand outside of the realm of

God's grace, outside of salvation in Christ, and outside of that saving work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. They are, therefore, wicked and perverse in all their ways. They are unchaste and immoral. The call to moral purity which God places before them falls only upon dead ears. When God says to the reprobate man, "be ye holy as I am holy" that ungodly man cannot be nor does he even will to be holy. God has not worked in him a love for Himself and His commandments.

But with you and me it's different. We are God's children! At least that is what we profess to be when we gather here this evening to hear this speech. We are God's children. And we *are* God's children because of that work of the cross, the work which Jesus has performed for us. By means of His suffering and death on the cross He justified us: He forgave the debt of our sins, removed our guilt, and made us righteous. We have become worthy, therefore, also in that blood of Christ, to be cleansed from all the filth and corruption of sin. We are sanctified. And here is what the Bible teaches us about this cleansing or sanctification. In Ephesians 5:25 we read, "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it." Or again in Titus 2:14, "Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous in good works." Because of that work of Christ on the cross we are made holy in His blood.

On the basis of that work you and I receive the call of I Peter 1:15, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." So you and I, young people, that church which Christ loved and cleansed, that peculiar people purified by Christ unto good works, receive the call to moral purity. We receive it, and we can through the Spirit of our risen Lord who dwells in our hearts, perform that calling. We are those whose hearts are so purified that in all our lives, in all our conduct, in all our conversation we are able to stand in conformity to the will of God as expressed in the Scriptures. You and I have received Christ. Now we are called to walk in Him. We must walk in Christ not because we have to and are forced to do so. We walk in Christ not because we believe that to do so makes us look better in God's sight. Our good works are not performed grudgingly. We walk in Christ out of a renewed and purified heart. We perform good works out of a heart which is filled with zeal and dedication to God. If that heart is not in us then there is no way we can fulfill that call to moral purity. But it is! You profess that to be true. If you did not then I would not be speaking to you tonight.

So we receive our calling, young people. Be ye holy! Be young people characterized by moral purity! And when we are holy we will respond to this command of God. Just as a good tree brings forth good fruit so also will we see fruits of good works in our lives too. If you fulfill your calling then the fruits of purity will be evident in your lives. And they will be evidence to us of the cleansing power of Christ in our lives.

Let us see if that is evident in our lives. A child of God cleansed in the blood of Christ will be, first of all, one who will seek after purity of heart. Moral purity is purity of heart. He will hate all filthiness and uncleanness of

spirit. He will endeavor to avoid all things that might draw him into filthiness of spirit. He will not follow in the adulterous ways of this world neither make idols of the whores and whoremongers of Hollywood. On the contrary in that purity of heart he will endeavor to shun every known sin and to keep every commandment of God. He will strive to be like Jesus. He will labor to have the mind, will, and desires that were in Christ.

Now, what does that imply for us? What does it mean that Christ has worked in us purity of heart? Remember, if no purity of heart then no moral purity either! What does this mean for us when we are with our boyfriends or girlfriends on a date? What does purity of heart imply? You tell me! I need not tell you what that means! You know! What does purity of heart mean with respect to the clothing you wear? Again, I do not need to tell you; at least not most of you. The way I have seen a few dressed maybe I do have to tell them. But that is not true of most of you. When you have the heart, mind, and desires of Christ in you, young women, will you wear that which will arouse lust in others? Is that what we look for too, young men? Of course not! If it were then what would happen to our purity of heart? Or again what about our conversation with others? I need not tell you that purity of heart demands of us chaste and pure conversation. You already know that.

To be morally pure, then, demands purity of heart, first of all. Secondly, one who is morally pure will also be characterized by temperance and self denial. He will labor to yield his members as instruments of righteousness to God. He will not let sin reign in his mortal body that he should obey it in the lusts thereof. On the contrary, all indulgence in the pleasures of this world he sets aside. The morally pure child of God practises to be chaste and modest in all his ways. He does not absorb as a sponge all the pleasures of this world that he can.

Now, once again what does that imply for us? What does it mean to deny yourself the lusts and pleasures of the ungodly? Can you do that in your entertainment? I need not tell you what you must do to practise temperance and self denial in your life, in the places you go and the things you do. I need not tell you that. You already know. If you do not know then perhaps there is no moral purity within you. Maybe God's call to holiness is falling upon dead ears. One who is morally pure is able to hold his passions in reign. He is chaste in all his ways.

What more can be said? I do not lay down one law for you. I do not need to. You are the sons and daughters of God! You know what moral purity is. You know that as God's children you are called to holiness in your life. Let all we do then be done to the honor and glory of that God who saved us through the precious blood of Jesus Christ! Be ye holy! That is the principle. Now you know what to do: put it into practise. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Let us go forth singing the words of the theme song of this convention,

"Sincerely I have sought thee, Lord,
O let me not from thee depart;
To know thy will and keep from sin
Thy word I cherish in my heart."

Called to Faithful Church Membership

by Rev. J. Kortering

What does the church mean to you? Are you enthused about your church? Are you turned off? Are you glad where you are or do you complain a lot? This is what we want to talk about.

The subject of the church tends to get a little complicated. This is true because we can look at the church from different points of view. The first thing that comes to mind is the local congregation of believers. I suppose that most of you are members of one of our churches, somewhere between Redlands and New Jersey, between Houston and Edmonton. The Bible speaks of the church this way as well. We recall the seven churches in Asia Minor referred to in Revelation 1-3. Each one was a separate congregation which had strengths and weaknesses described by our Lord. When we speak of membership in the church, this stands on the foreground. In the congregation one is joined together with other believers who profess like faith. In such a church Christ governs by the elders, ministers to the needy by the deacons, proclaims His Word through the minister. Such a church gathers in worship each Lord's Day, studies the Word together, expresses care for one another. To be a member in a local congregation means that one has the right to all the privileges of such a church and is expected to perform certain duties in return.

There is however, more to the church than that. All through history there have been numbers of such congregations joined together in some expression of unity. That was true of the seven churches in Asia Minor and in the early church. They gathered together for example in a general meeting at Jerusalem to settle the circumcision question, see Acts 14. Later in history denominations were formed. Today we have so many different churches and denominations that one can purchase a book which describes them. We too have a denomination, a church structure that brings together all the individual congregations in union in order that we can better express the faith we believe as Protestant Reformed. We cooperate in mission work, theological instruction, mutual care for each other both financial and spiritual. We have a church

structure in which one can appeal to a broader gathering for a hearing in case he believes he has been wronged. There are many blessings through such a church federation.

If we ask, is that all there is to the church, then we must proceed further. The church is much greater than our Protestant Reformed denomination. We must also speak of a universal church. As churches, we are close to some of them, e.g. the Jamaican churches, the Singapore church, congregations in Africa and Australia and New Zealand. Paul was conscious of this when he wrote Ephesians 2. There he was concerned about the inclusion of the Gentiles in the church, he pictured it as the temple of God with the middle wall broken out and now Jews and Gentiles are made one in Christ Jesus. He describes them as fellow citizens and saints of the household of God built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus the chief cornerstone. If we look at the church from a little different point of view we can even invision some of them in glory already, waiting for the perfect gathering that will come at the end of the world. Some members of the church have yet to be born, but when that is complete then the church will be made perfect through the final judgment in the coming of Jesus Christ.

The point that has to be stressed here is this, the church is not a human institution brought into existence to satisfy man's religious nature. True fallen man still has religious needs and interests, but he can only bring them to expression in idolatry and hostility against God, see Romans chapter 1. The church is *God's* church. Everyone of us who is a member of the church is a recipient of God's wonderful work. He conceived of it in His eternal counsel, the Bible speaks of divine election. Going back to Ephesians 2, Paul pictures the church as a temple. God determined exactly the number of bricks and the place of each one. Also by sovereign reprobation, he determined who would be the scaffolding, used in history to serve the building of the church, but discarded through unbelief. God sends forth the Word and by His Holy Spirit applies it unto the hearts of His own. God keeps His church safe and secure throughout all the attempts on the part of satan and his followers to tempt and destroy it. It is a solemn testimony to God's great faithfulness and power that the church has continued throughout all history and even as Christ promised, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against her". Ultimately, God has willed that the church acknowledge His glory and bring honor unto Him.

When we speak of membership in the church, we have this grand panaroma of the church in mind. It includes the local church, the denomination, the church of Christ that is in the world made up of believers from every nation, even the church that is already in glory. We belong together and are joined together in faith. What then are the advantages and blessings of belonging to this church? We mention four of them.

First, membership in the church gives us the opportunity to worship and praise God. Faith works that way, it seeks more and more to give God His glory! We still sing, "As pants the hart for water brook, so pants my heart O Living God for thee!". We rejoice in the privilege to gather together each

Lord's Day to sing, to pray, to give of our gifts, to attend to the gospel, in one word, to worship!

Secondly, the church is our spiritual mother. When our heavenly Father works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the Word, he continues to strengthen it by the Word and Sacraments. Once we are spiritually alive we desire to grow in our understanding of the Word, what is truth, how we are to serve God in our daily lives. The nourishment for this spiritual growth comes to us through the church. It is easy for us to see that our Reformed fathers were correct when they insisted (Belgic Confession Article 28) that apart from the church there is no salvation. The Holy Spirit works faith by the preaching of the gospel and there is no preaching apart from the church. The spiritual strength we need to deal with the complexities of life comes to us by the means of grace. Think of that a moment. As young people you have many needs. You are surrounded with many false religions and cults which come your way claiming to be true. You are tempted with worldly pleasures that assail you and want your time and energy, you know disease and sorrow, you also have the great challenge to grow up and to make decisions that will affect your entire life. The church is your spiritual mother. As the Apostle Peter expressed it, from the church we drink the milk of the Word that we may grow thereby, I Peter 2:1.

Thirdly, through membership in the church our lives are enriched by the communion of the saints. You see the picture, we have a Heavenly Father who has appointed an earthly mother to bring forth a family, spiritual brothers and sisters to enjoy home life together. What a blessing it is to know we are part of a family here on earth. We are not alone, we do not face the spiritual conflict alone. God has given us other saints to help us. We want to consider this from the point of view of the church. Did you ever stop to think what this means in worship? Some of you may know what it is like to worship with a few people, it is difficult to sing, the congregational prayer is different, the collection seems so limited. Yet, Christ has assured us that even two or three have His presence. What an added dimension when the mighty organ leads the singing, many voices blend together, people from all walks of life are gathered for the Word. There is a real communion! This carries over into the daily life of the congregation. What a blessing when the sick are cared for, the lonely are visited, the sorrowing comforted, and people join together to discuss God's Word. Even congregations are not alone when we consider our denomination. Small, isolated, even struggling congregations are helped by others. This is a real blessing.

Finally, the church witnesses to the world. She does this as a congregation, by her individual members, and by her ministry. When we are members of the church we are involved in this and support it. Many of you may have had opportunity to talk to others about your faith, what you believe and how you live. There are times when this is used by God to bring others into the church. This is true when we preach the gospel outside of the walls of the church, by radio, by the printed page, by going from house to house. By this ministry, the wicked are left without excuse and the people of God are edified.

As our convention theme indicates, we are living in a changing world. In the life time of your grandparents, the last 60-70 years or so, try to think of extreme changes: from horse and buggy to interplanetary space travel; from wood burning stoves to microwave; from counting on one's fingers to computers; from bayonets to nuclear missiles, 5 cent dogs and 10 cent corn to a poverty level of $9,287 for a family of four. That change is so staggering it is hard to comprehend. It has affected our lives and changed almost every human relationship.

This change has affected people's attitude toward the church as well. When we consider what is involved in faithful church membership, we must deal with this assault upon the church.

First of all we have to recognize the spirit of secularism that is running across our land. By this we mean that people are forsaking religion and being content with making money, having fun, and living life to the "full". Evidence of this is seen in modern day youth, how many of them come from homes in which there still was some exercise of religion, going to church, family devotions. They recall this, but do not do this themselves. They have forsaken this, some try to justify it by pointing to the hypocrites in the church, the power structure of the church, and find fault. Others just don't care, they don't need any religion.

Secondly, there is a large segment of people who want to be Christian and claim to be such but see no need for the church. These people also are highly critical of the institute of the church. Some had bad experiences with the church, others point the finger at certain members of the church. These too justify their behavior and claim that it is more important to live a Christian life than piously worship on a certain day of the week.

Thirdly, there are many para-church groups that have arisen in recent years. By this we refer to groups of people that get together for religious purposes apart from the institute church. Some examples of this kind of movement include the underground church, the electronic church, Bible fellowships in homes, bringing the church to street people and have services in the bars and discos.

Finally, there is the attempt to move the institute of the church away from her historical calling and bring changes within the structure of the church itself. This generally takes a two-fold direction. On the one hand they want to get rid of "stuffy" preaching. They suggest that in our video orientated society, people cannot relate to lecture style preaching. They need instead dialogues, drama, dance troupes, involvement of the congregation more and more. The singing must move from outdated psalms and hymns to "contemporary Christian music" including gospel rock. On the other hand they suggest that the most important involvement of the church is social action. The main thing is not worship, but rather helping the neighbor, getting out on the street, raising money for the poor of the world, settling prejudices on every level and such like.

A fatal reaction to these changes is simply to hang on to tradition for the

sake of tradition. The solution is not to be so preoccupied with criticism that we die spiritually within a "conservative" Reformed church. This was the death blow of Roman Catholicism at the time of the Reformation. All one had to do was be a member of the church and the church would see to it you got saved. We must not have this today as Protestant Reformed. Just being a member of a faithful church does not constitute faithful church membership.

What constitutes faithful church membership in our day? In answering this we must be sensitive to the attack that is going on around us today. We must realize that in these last days the devil is working hard trying to convince people that there is no need for the church or one can be all right without going to church. This is devilish. These changes we pointed out are not simply cultural changes that we must take as normal and just accept them. Surely there are cultural changes that affect the church in her worship. Some of these are changes in language from Dutch to English, time of service from afternoon to evening, common cup at communion or individual cup. But, it is not a matter of culture when people advocate not having the institute of the church at all anymore or that one can abandon preaching for other things. That is not culture! That is an attempt to get the church out of the picture entirely. Obviously, if Satan can get the church to forsake her calling, there are that many less Christians that will have to be persecuted and killed in the last days. It is much easier to corrupt the church than the messy business of persecution. We can be sure that this explains why the church is mocked as it is today. Books, magazines, television, movies all present the church as ridiculous. The clergy are presented as nit-wits, the people who attend as foolish hypocrites, and so it goes on and on. All this is an attempt to do away with the church. We better be on our guard.

Faithful church membership involves the following.

One, we must see in the light of Scripture that there is need for the church and must rededicate ourselves to maintain the existence of the church in our time. God has instituted the church. He works by His Spirit through the church. He does this by means of the preaching of the gospel and the sacraments. The church has the same calling she always did, to preach the Word within her walls and outside in the mission field. All the blessings of the church are intimately connected with the existence of the church.

Two, we must evaluate our church whether it conforms to the standard that God has set forth in His Word. The wonderful thing is that the Bible itself tells us what the church is and ought to be, what her calling is in this world. We must be faithful in searching the Bible to know this. As Reformed believers we have our confessions to assist us in this study. We will conclude with our fore-fathers that the three most important things about the church is that the preaching of the gospel is according to the Scripture, that the sacraments are administered according to the Bible, and that Christian discipline is also conducted according to the will of God set forth in Holy Writ. We will see that there are many churches in our land, but all do not deserve the name church. There are degrees of faithfulness to God's standard. We will see that we have

to evaluate our own church in the same light. In doing this we must be careful of two mistakes. The first is that we are rash in our judgment of other churches. Indeed, the false church is around us and we must not be afraid to label it as such. At the same time, wherever the Word of God is still preached, wherever the sacraments are administered, and discipline maintained in the degree that is right to that extent we are thankful to God and we will do whatever we can to help strengthen the church. This is true for churches up the block from our own as well as churches in foreign lands. The second is that we will judge our own church carefully, without youthful idealism that may lead us astray. There is no perfect church, not Protestant Reformed either. You can find fault with the church, we all can. The criteria to follow is, to what extent is the church *striving* to be faithful to fulfill Christ's will for the church. Are we content with our sins or do we diligently repent and seek new strength to serve God daily. This is important for if we are complacent in our fault or if we brag of our wrongdoing then things are a great deal worse.

Three, where do I belong as a member? That question must be answered carefully. In answering it we must follow these lines. Is my church the most faithful church that I can find that carries on the work that Christ has laid down in His Word. We must not be satisfied with anything less. The last days mentioned in II Peter 3 strike fear in our hearts. If we have to serve God in the days of scoffers and persecution, we need the best church that God may be pleased to use to bless us so that we can serve Him. Still more, we must consider where Christ has placed me when considering membership. If Christ has placed me in a church with a goodly heritage, I have to answer to God why I would ever forsake that. It is quite different for other people to serve God in other churches in ignorance (as many surely do, hence we recognize that there are people of God in other churches) than for one of us who know the glorious gospel of Christ in such beautiful detail to turn from this for something less. God has placed us in our church, if we change we have to explain this to God. Finally, there is the matter of spiritual growth. We need a church that will feed our souls, this is one benefit of church membership. God uses the ministry of the Word to help us grow spiritually so we can worship God and serve God all the days of our life. We need a church where this can be accomplished.

Finally, faithful church membership implies that we will take our responsibility in the church. God has provided for us so that the church gives us much, we receive so much in spiritual benefit. We also must give to the church, whatever talents we have, whatever knowledge or skills we must be willing to use it to the glory of God and the spiritual advantage of other members. This means that if we are still young, we will prepare ourselves to the best of our ability that we may make confession of our faith in the future. If we have already done this, we will then take our places of responsibility withing the church. We are the new generation that must carry on the blessings of the old. We will dedicate ourselves to do this before the face of God and our fellow members.

The day will come when there will be no institute of the church on earth,

see Revelation 11. That has happened on a limited scale in the past. What a day it will be when the church will be perfect in glory. May our God give us a place in that church in the day of His coming.

MY CONVENTION IMPRESSIONS

by Michael Lotterman
Retiring Federation Board Treasurer

The 1982 Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention is now history, and in the few weeks that have followed it I have spent much time recalling the good times and cultivating my impressions. Now I'm faced with writing those impressions for you.

This convention was the 42nd Annual PRYP Convention, which itself should impress us. With the exception of one year since 1939, God in His faithful grace has provided our young people with this tool. That is exactly what a convention is; a tool which provides for our spiritual growth, an opportunity for fellowship with other young people, a means to maintain the concerns of our federation, and a time for relaxation and recreation.

The Convention Theme, as you know, was "Our Changeless Calling in a Changing World." That we and the world about us are changing needs no further investigation than a look at our conventions themselves. We have seen many changes since 1939 - changes in attendance, location, types of lodging, cost, and length of duration. But none of these changes has been made at the expense of our calling. Our priorities and reasons to convene have remained the same.

The theme was developed in three inspirational lectures, which are recorded in this issue for the benefit of our readers. We also enjoyed discussions on such practical issues as "Personal Devotions", "Modern Forms of Idolatry", and "Confession of Faith". And how fitting a way to end each day's activities with evening group devotional periods. Through these means the ultimate purpose of the convention was achieved: we were all able to grow spiritually together.

The convention was also a time for fellowship. Every year we are excited about friendships we make, and heartbroken at the week's end when we part. These friendships, although temporal, are important to us because they are based on a common bond of faith. The Heidelburg Catechism tells us that the communion of saints consists of being common partakers of Christ, His riches and gifts. It also shows us our duty to employ our gifts to the advantage and

salvation of other members of Christ. I trust that you, young people, as I, experienced this true fellowship, although we did not always take full advantage of our opportunity. Were we always prepared? Did we always listen? Learn? Participate? We need not have conventions that cultivate any other fellowship than this.

I think the older young people (especially confessing members) recognize this aspect of the convention more than the younger element. The thing I remember most about my early conventions is how the older young people (most of them parents now) guided us younger kids. Their willingness to discuss and participate, and their comments and leadership at business meetings were good examples to me and others my age. They knew their duty as discussed in Lord's Day XXI. It is sad today that most of our 17-21 year old confessing members cannot be asked if they were good examples at the convention, without our first asking if they were even there!

I'm not going to miss the opportunity to discuss one other aspect of the convention with you. The 1939 Convention was not sponsored by a Federation Board, nor was it sponsored by a Federation of Societies. It couldn't be; neither of these existed. Rather, the 1939 Convention was called to *organize* the Federation and its Executive Board. And each subsequent convention has been called to *maintain* this organization, through business meetings. I found it amusing, but typical, when one first-time conventioneer told me that he didn't expect to have much free time at the convention because he was a delegate. Being a delegate seems to have lost any glamour it may have once had. Many delegates skip their meetings, but even more discouraging is the fact that some societies no longer even elect delegates. I admonish any society which feels that the changing world has affected this calling.

Getting back to our young delegate friend, I'm happy to note that he spent less than 90 minutes of his week in Delegate Board Meetings. Our relatively simple agenda was prepared well by the Federation Board, and the Chairman kept the meetings flowing smoothly. Does the fact that our agenda was simple make it unimportant? Only as unimportant as this very magazine controlled by our Federation. Only as unimportant as the help we give to future teachers and ministers through the efforts of the Scholarship Fund Committee, controlled by the Federation. Only as unimportant as the convention we attended, conducted under the authority of the Federation Board, controlled by the Federation. These Delegate Board Meetings were only that important.

I said earlier that conventions are a time for relaxation and recreation. My thanks to the activities committee, which succeeded in providing so much recreation, there was little, if any, time for relaxation. Besides our normal devotional periods, our time was filled with hayrides, contests, skating, beach activities, the list goes on. Everyone especially enjoyed the mud pig contest on Thursday and the "kangaroo kourt" on Friday morning. At the latter, Rev. Kamps' passion for bananas was revealed. Four of us also learned to appreciate Hershey's Chocolate Syrup, having had whole cans poured over our faces.

The 42nd Annual PRYP Convention was the 8th I've attended. I have left each convention more aware, encouraged, and spiritually satisfied than the last, and this convention was no exception. Having fulfilled my term on the Federation Board, and being one of the oldest conventioneers at the last three conventions, led me to think this would be my last. But I left very eager to attend, the Lord willing, the 43rd convention next year in Washington. I know I am not alone.

In closing, I would like to thank, personally and on behalf of the Federation Board, the host societies, the steering committee, its advisors, the host ministers, the speakers, and all those who contributed to the success of the convention. Above all we thank our Heavenly Father, Who has provided us with this valuable tool, to better know Him as our Savior.

MINUTES OF CONVENTION

Minutes of the 42nd annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Society Convention held at Dordt College, August 16-20, 1982.

Hosts: Hull, Doon and Edgerton

Theme: Our Changeless Calling in a Changing World, II Peter 3:11

Speech Topics:

I. Called to Obedience

II. Called to Moral Purity

III. Called to Faithful Church Membership

Monday, August 16

Registration began at 4 p.m. at the student union building (SUB) at Dordt College. Here those who had arrived early for the weekend and the latecomers picked up their convention packets and chose their rooms. After settling in the dorms and meeting old friends we all headed behind the commons for a BBQ pork supper. Following supper was a short meeting to review rules, activities and campus facilities.

Once everybody knew the rules we were ready for fun. At 8:30 a hayride began and we all got our exercise running to catch up with wagons and stuffing hay down shirts. Finally the wagons arrived at Sandy Hollow for watermelon, and then we headed back.

At 12 p.m. we met with our chaperones for devotions and 12:30 was "lights out".

Tuesday, August 17

Breakfast at 7:30 came all to quickly and before we knew it we were beginning our first discussion group. Rev. Cammenga introduced the topic "Private Devotions".

At 11:00 the first delegate business meeting was held. Gerry Van Baren read II Cor. 9 and opened with prayer. Roll call was taken and the names of the delegates missed were recorded. Mike Lotterman then read minutes of the 1981 Convention business meeting.

The financial reports of the Federation Board and the Beacon Lights were read and explained by Mike Lotterman. Balances on hand as of April 30, 1982 were: Fed. Brd. $18,603.48; Beacon Lights $10,211.46.

Gerry Van Baren read proposal 1 to keep dues at $12, but to break them down differently from previous years. The new breakdown was: $6 for convention cost; $4 for Scholarship Fund; $2 for Beacon Lights. The previous year's was $8, $3, $1, respectively.

Proposal 2 was then read and explained by Gerry Van Baren. This proposal simplified the Scholarship Committee membership and put it in an easier working form.

Both proposals were supported and passed.

The Scholarship Co. reported that Paula Faber, Dean Wassink and Fred Hanko received scholarships of $1,000, $1,200, and $800 respectively.

Mike Lotterman closed with prayer.

After lunch the convention picture was taken, followed by the "Almost Anything Goes" contest. The societies were divided into eight teams to compete against each other. We had to do everything from running with water in pails full of holes to chewing bubble gum on step ladders. The first place winner was Doon and Southeast with Rev. Kamps as their number one supporter. Second place ended in a three-way tie.

The first of the three lectures was held at 7:30 with Rev. Kuiper from Washington speaking on the topic "Called to Obedience".

Immediately following the speech we boarded buses and headed to a roller skating rink. In no time we had the rink filled to capacity. At 11:00 we all headed back for the 12:00 devotions.

Wednesday, August 18

Breakfast was at 7:00 and by 8:00 we were on the road heading to Yankton to a beach.

When we arrived we held discussion groups on the topic "Idol Worship - in Modern Day Forms", introduced by Rev. Kamps.

Lunch was then served on the beach and we had free time. There also was tug-of-war to break the three-way tie from the "Almost Anything Goes" contest.

At 2:30 we left the beach (and the mayflies) and went to the Gavin Point Dam. After a tour we headed back to Dordt for supper.

At 7:30 Rev. Bruinsma from Faith presented the second lecture on the

topic "Called to Moral Purity".

Following the lecture was an ice cream social for conventioneers and visitors. We also had free time with the gym and the SUB open until 12:00 devotions.

Thursday, August 19

The final discussion was held after breakfast. The introduction prepared by Candidate Jon Smith was read. Groups were formed and discussion began on the topic "Confession of Faith".

The second and final business meeting was then held in the chapel. Gerry Van Baren read Psalm 78:1-8 and opened with prayer. Roll call was taken.

Laurie Kamps' resignation was announced. Motion was made and passed to accept Cheryl King as secretary for a one-year term in place of Laurie.

Gerry Van Baren reviewed the nominees and added Bruce Klamer to the vice-president list. Nominations were closed and delegates voted.

Mark Woudenberg led the delegates in song while the votes were counted.

Rev. Kortering closed the meeting with prayer.

After lunch, everyone went to see the chicken chase and the "mud pig" contest. Joy Ophoff caught the first chicken for first place and Barb Smith received second place. The real excitement came with the "mud pig" contest. Teams of 2 people were timed as they tried to put a pig in a drum, hind-end first. All of the contestants and part of the crowd were mud covered by the end of the contest. First place went to Glenn Kooima and Phil Kooiker. First place of the girls went to Janet Mouw, Delores Kuiper and Mrs. Rhonda Cammenga.

The east-west co-ed softball games were held following the "mud-pig" contest.

As the climax of the week, came the banquet followed by the last lecture. Rev. Kortering of Loveland spoke on the topic "Called to Faithful Membership".

After the speech the new Federation Board members were announced as follows: Dan Schipper - vice-president; Denise Van Baren - vice-secretary; Todd Terpstra - vice-treasurer; Pam Kuiper - librarian.

Everyone had free time with the gym, SUB and pool open until the 1 a.m. curfew.

Friday, August 20

The final day was time to pack and say good-byes. But there was the one final activity - the Kangaroo Court. To explain it all would take too long. But if you see Paul Griess, ask him what he auctioned off. Or, if you see Rev. Kamps, ask if he still likes bananas. Else just ask Mike Lotterman why he has chocolate syrup in his hair. But if you can't find any of these three go to anyone who went to the convention and I'm sure they will tell you what happened and the excellent job our hosts did in planning the 42nd convention.

Final good-byes were said as each parted to their homes. Our prayer was that we as God's young people would be able to follow our changeless calling in

a changing world, and that this convention would spiritually strengthen us in this calling.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mary Van Baren
Federation Board Librarian

THE BETTER WAY

The eye's a better pupil and more willing than
the ear;
Fine counsel is confusing, but examples
always clear.
And the best of all the preachers are the men
who live their creeds,
For to see the good in action is what
everybody needs.
I can soon learn how to do it if you'll let me
see it done.
I can watch your hand in action, but your
tongue too fast may run.
And the lectures you deliver may be very wise
and true,
But I'd rather get my lessons by observing
what you do.
For I may misunderstand you and the high
advice you give,
But there's no misunderstanding how you
act and how you live.

—Anonymous