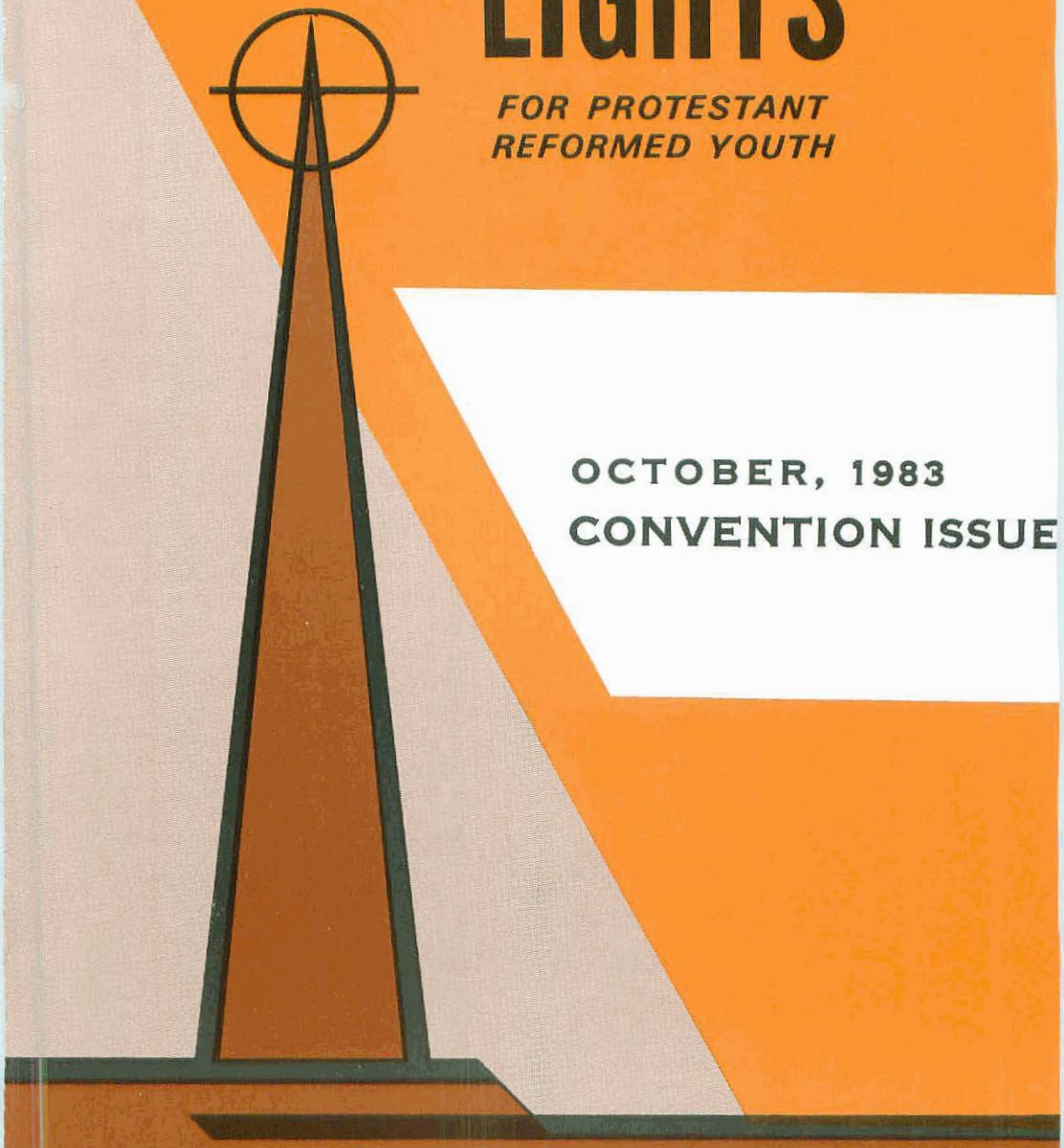
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



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Editor's Notes

This Convention Issue of the *Beacon Lights* is being sent to all the young people who attended the 1983 Convention, compliments of the Federation Board and the *Beacon Lights* Staff. As conventioneers we want you to keep this issue as a momento of that week. With its printed speeches, reflections, and comments, it should hold many memories of that week. This is also your opportunity to get permenantly on our mailing list. Just mail a post card to one of our subscription managers and you will receive the *Beacon Lights* the next month.

Minutes of the 43rd annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention

Minutes of the 43rd annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention held at Trinity Western College in Langley, British Columbia, August 15-19, 1983.

Host: Lynden, Washington

Theme: "The Youthful Sojourner Saved"
I Peter 3:14-17

Speech Topics:
"Saved to Speak"
"Saved in the Way of Suffering"
"Saved to Serve"

Monday, August 15

This year's convention began like the others in past years with registration. Here everyone found a room and picked up a packet with the schedules and rules for the week. After settling in quickly, we ate our first meal in the cafeteria. We still had a little time after supper to explore the beautiful college campus. Then we had to go to Freedom Hall for a short mass meeting. Rev. Kuiper welcomed the young people and chaperones and explained the rules.

We were told how to get to the gym where a "mixer" was going to be held. Everyone was divided into teams. We played several games like "pass the orange" and a kind of "hot potato". We all laughed a lot and met new friends even tho the travelers from the East, like myself, were hardly awake enough to move. Cookies and fruit were served in the lobby of the gym. Anyone who wanted could go to a hymnsing held by a bonfire. Most of the conventioneers were asleep long before "lights-out" at 12:30.

Tuesday, August 16

Breakfast was right away at 7:30 in the morning. At 9:00 the buses left for Golden Ears Park. Our discussion groups, about "Stewardship", introduced by Rev.

Haak, were held all around the park.

After discussion groups we all ate our sack lunches. The rest of the afternoon was our free time. Many young people rented canoes and explored Alouette Lake. Some people played volleyball. Late in the afternoon there was an East vs. West Tug-o-war. A little before 5 o'clock we boarded the buses and headed back to the college. Despite a slight delay at a ferry-crossing, we made it back to the campus in time for an outside barbeque.

Our evening began with the traditional convention picture. Everyone went directly from this to our first lecture. Rev. David Engelsma spoke on the topic "Saved to Speak".

The parents and friends were invited to a pie and ice cream social, held in Freedom Hall. We all enjoyed the really delicious pie made by the mothers of the Lynden Young People. It was the best food we had all week. Anyone who wanted to could stay at the hall to watch two films, the "Eruption of Saint Helens" and "Last of the Log Drives." When these were finished it was almost time for our nightly devotions. Most of us spent the last few minutes of the night visiting in the dorm lobby.

Wednesday, August 17

Breakfast, again, came all too soon. We talked to our old friends over our cold pancakes. We started up new friendships also. Our discussion groups were on the topic "Choosing Friends". Rev. Engelsma introduced it before we separated into groups.

Right after this we held our first delegate board meeting. This year everyone, even the non-delegates was required to attend. Because of this we had the best representation that we have had in years. The meeting was conducted as follows:

I. Gerry Van Baren read Psalm 24 and opened with prayer.

II. Roll was taken. The Randolph, South Holland and Southwest Jr. Societies were the only ones **not** properly represented.

III. Minutes of last year's business meeting were read. The following correction was made: Houston, Texas' young people society had been accepted into the Federation. The minutes were accepted as corrected.

IV. The Financial Report of the Federation Board was read by Todd Terpstra. The balance on hand as of April 30 was $23,097.36.

V. The Federation Board nominees were announced.

VI. A proposed amendment to the constitution, Article X - Finance, was read and explained. It proposed to refund the delegates one-half of their convention registration fee.

VII. A motion was made, supported and passed to adjourn. Dan Schipper closed the meeting with prayer.

Everyone went right from the meeting to lunch. At 1:30 we headed over to the softball field to watch and play in East-West softball games. By the time these games were over the activity committee had set up an obstacle course. We were divided into teams to run a relay race through the course. The best part was watching the people slide quickly down the water slide and tumble in the mud at the bottom. "Team 1" was the first one finished. They all received "Washington" T-shirts for their efforts.

After supper we went to the speech. Rev. Marvin Kamps spoke on the second point of our theme, "Saved in the Way of Suffering."

When the speech was finished we boarded buses and spent the rest of the evening rollerskating.

Thursday, August 18

Our day began with devotion and breakfast at 7:30. I was in a very good discussion group on "Family Fellowship." Rev. Kamps introduced this topic for us. Our second delegate board meeting was

held next. It proceeded as follows:
I. Gerry Van Baren read Psalm 96 and opened with prayer.
II. Roll was taken.
III. In a review of some old minutes, it was discovered that Randolph had resigned from the Federation. They hadn't ever been taken off the roll call, however. Because they expressed a desire to remain in the Federation, a motion was made, supported, and passed to re-accept Randolph into the Federation.
IV. The list of nominees was read again. Nominations were closed.
V. The delegates voted on the nominees and the proposed amendment. The amendment was turned down because of the lack of a ⅔ majority vote.
VI A motion was made, supported and passed to adjourn. Gerry closed with prayer.

We ran over to our eating hall for devotions and lunch. At 1:30 the volleyball competition began. The tournament lasted about 2 hours. Those who had energy left joined a water fight, trying to cool off. This ended when everyone left to get ready for the banquet.

After the punch bowl in our dorm lobby, we went to our banquet room. We all walked to the chapel together after eating. Our final speech was given by Rev. Carl Haak. He spoke on the topic "Saved to Serve". Immediately following the speech, the new Federation Board members were announced. They are:

Vice President: Bruce Klamer
Vice Treasurer: Jerry Kuiper
Vice Secretary: Jane Pastoor
Spiritual Advisor, East: Rev. Van Baren

The gym was open for free time for the rest of the night. Our 12 o'clock curfew came all too soon on the last night of a great convention.

Friday, August 19

For most of us Friday began at 5 a.m. There was a final rush to pack for those of us who came on the plane from the east. Our bus left for the airport at 6:00 a.m. Many of the people who stayed behind, got up early just to wish us farewell.

I would personally like to thank Rev. Kuiper and the entire Lynden congregation for all the effort they put forward to make the 1983 convention a beautiful week of Christian fellowship. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted
Denise Van Baren
Federation Board, Secretary

There is available a series of four tapes on the history of the Protestant Reformed Church as told by Rev. C. Hanko, Prof. Hoeksema, Prof. Hanko, and Prof. Decker. This informative collection can be purchased by sending fifteen dollars to:

Kalamazoo Young People's Society
427 Fletcher
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Bulletin clerks, take notice that the new News Editor is:

Paula Faber
4190 Burton S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Convention Impressions

by Dan Schipper

The 43rd Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention is now concluded and as I reflect on what has taken place, I would like to share a few impressions about the convention.

The theme for the 1983 convention was "The Youthful Sojourner", for which the main text was I Peter 3:14-17. The theme, I felt, could not have been expressed better for young Christians, as we face the world today. It is becoming more difficult for young Christians to be willing to speak, to suffer and to serve for Christ's sake as we travel through this life. These three actions were the subject matter of the lectures given by the chosen ministers.

In the mornings we were led in discussion groups on the subjects of Stewardship, Choosing friends, and Family Fellowship. The atmosphere of the discussion was positive, the young people were among friends of the same faith, willing to express themselves more openly. For example, in our young people's societies, some members are not willing to speak of spiritual things. This experience can be nothing less than a foundation on which our young people can build on.

Everyday, we kept busy with different activities. One day we took a bus trip to Golden Ears Park, where we spent the whole day at Alouette Lake. This was a beautiful sight to see, the lake was surrounded by mountains with huge timber trees and in the background were mountains with scattered patches of snow. Other activities we had were: volleyball tournament, roller skating, a rope pull between the East and West, softball games and running an obstacle course.

We had lots of fun together with being involved with activities during the week, but I also feel from our speeches, the discussions and seeing God's beautiful creation. For this we as young people can be thankful to Our Lord for what He has given us. I would encourage that more of our young people start planning to attend our next convention, the Lord willing, in Michigan. It will be hosted by our First Church of Grand Rapids.

Therefore in closing, I would like to thank, on behalf of the Federation Board, the host societies, the steering committee, its adivsors, the speakers and those who were involved in making this convention a success. Above all we must give praise and be thankful to our God, Who gave us this opportunity, so that as young people we can grow spiritually and closer to Him.

SAVED TO SPEAK

by Rev. David Engelsma

Protestant Reformed young people and friends:

To speak on behalf of the Lord God is a privilege.

It is a privilege for **you**. I am going to remind you, tonight, that this is your calling, your duty. You may not be quiet. You must speak out. But it is also a privilege—something that you are permitted to do, something that you are highly honored to do. Really, it is quite a rare thing, that people speak on behalf of the Lord God; for the most part, the world is noisy with all kinds of speaking that insults God; attacks God; and denies God. (And, remember, to ignore God in speech—to leave Him out—is to insult Him.) Only to a few, comparatively, does God give the honor, that you may glorify Him by speaking for Him. The honor is exactly this, that you speak on behalf of the great, glorious God—Creator and Upholder of this marvellous universe, and the Savior-God in Jesus Christ.

It is a privilege for **me** to speak. I feel this keenly, tonight. It is my privilege, not only to speak on behalf of the Lord God, but also to speak of Him **to you**—a sizeable group of Protestant Reformed young people. You are a select group of young people. You know the Reformed faith and life, as purely and soundly held in the Protestant Reformed Churches. You have the responsibility to maintain this faith and life in the future. **You** must continue and carry on our cause. our great cause, which is not ours, but the cause of God and truth. Now, I may urge you to exercise your privilege and duty; and this is a privilege.

This is what I intend to do; I have a practical purpose. I want to lay on your souls, that God has saved you, **so that you will speak**. I want to point out to you, what you must speak, and how. And I want to stir you up, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to do this—**to speak**! to speak more than many of you, I fear, are accustomed to speak.

Why You Speak

Speaking is the purpose of our salvation. This is why you must speak. God has saved you, in order that you speak. The Third Commandment of God's Law shows this clearly: "Thou shalt not tak ıe **Name** of the Lord Thy God in vain." **Our** Heidelberg Catechism explains the commandment this way: "that we use the Holy Name of God no otherwise than with fear and reverence, so that He may be rightly confessed and worshipped by us" (L.D. 36). We do this, of course, that is, use God's Name with fear and reverence, by speaking. The very first petition of the Lord's Prayer points out the same thing: "Hallowed be Thy Name." The first thing that a Christian is concerned about is the hallowing of God's Name; and we do this, in large part, by speaking.

One of the strongest passages in the Bible that teach that we are saved to

speak is Joel 2:28, the great prophecy in the Old Testament of the pouring out of the Spirit on Pentecost:

> And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. . .

When God pours out His Spirit, He saves us. The purpose of God must be done by the young people, as well as by the grown-up members of the church: "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." This brings out that it is God's purpose that you young people speak. It is not the Divine purpose only, that ministers speak. God does not will only, that your parents speak. But it is His purpose also, that you young people speak. Every one who receives the Spirit shall prophesy. This comes out in the Convention-text, as well. I Peter 3:15 requires every member of the church, not only ministers or adults, to be "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

Yes, you must speak!

But for this, you must be saved. You speak, because you are saved.

One who has not been saved does not speak on behalf of the Lord God; does not want to do so; and connot do so. He is tongue-tied; he has an impediment in his speech. The impediment is sin; his tongue is tied by his hatred of God. He speaks, all right, but never to praise God; rather, the sinner blasphemes God.

To speak in praise of God, you must be saved in the sense that you are regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God—born again, on the basis of the redemption of the cross and according to God's eternal election of you. This puts the life of heaven in your heart; you can't speak the language of heaven, you can't praise the God of heaven, unless heaven's life is in your heart. The ruling power of sin is broken in your life: thus is your tongue loosed and the impediment in your speech removed. The dumb now speaks. This gives you something to talk about: God's wonderful works of salvation from sin, death, and hell, which you have experienced.

To speak, you must be saved in the sense that you are continually being sanctified by the Holy Spirit—made holy. Unless there is a work of grace going on always in your heart that sanctifies you, you cannot be sanctifying the Lord God always in your heart; and, as the Convention-text makes perfectly plain, unless you are always sanctifying the Lord God in your heart, you are not ready to give an answer to people, you are not prepared to speak on behalf of God. God must be saving you daily! He must be working in your heart so that you think of Him with love and reverence, and are devoting your life to Him. And He does work so! He works in such a way that you yourself are active in this sanctification: "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts!" Is it not the reason why we speak of God so little and so feebly, that we are not ready, spiritually ready, to speak? Often, the reason for our silence is not that it is not the place and time for speaking, as we like to say in excuse of ourselves, but that we are not prepared to speak. And is it not the case, that we are unprepared, because we are not sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts, always? Our thoughts are not thoughts of the greatness of the Lord God; Our desires are not the desires of the glory of God; our affections are not affections upon the perfections and riches of God. Men cannot say of us, as they have said of Calvin: "that God-intoxicated man."

To speak, you must be saved in the sense that you are set apart from the unbelieving people of the world and from the wickedness of the world, as a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. This is a "sojourner." The theme of the Convention is "The Youthful Sojourner Saved." A sojourner is a person who is not a citizen of the land where he is presently

living, but of another land. Therefore, he does not belong to the land where he is living at present; he is passing through it, on his way to his homeland. He is a pilgrim. To the land where he is found at present, and to its citizens, he is a stranger. This is how I Peter identifies you. Chapter 1, verse 1 addresses "the strangers" scattered throughout various lands. Verse 17 of chapter 1 calls your life on earth, "the time of your sojourning." In 2:11, you are named, "strangers and pilgrims." Therefore, the ones who must give an answer, those called to speak, are "sojourners."

Now there is an important relationship between being a sojourner and speaking on behalf of the Lord God. The life of a sojourner gives you the opportunity to speak, to the wicked around you. A sojourner is different! He is odd and funny! A foreigner talks differently; dresses differently; eats differently; has different customs; lives differently. God's people on earth live differently, not physically, but spiritually. They have a different standard—God's Law; they have different values—God's favor upon them; they have different goals—God's glory and their own eternal life in heaven. When you live so, the world asks you, why you are different; and you have the opportunity to speak on behalf of the God Who really makes all the difference.

I trust that all of you have read John Bunyan's **The Pilgrim's Progess.** (If you have not, permit me to recommend it to you.) Those who have read it will recall that at one point in his pilgrimage, Christian, the pilgrim of the allegory, accompanied by his friend, Faithful, must pass through the town of Vanity and its never-ending fair, Vanity Fair. There were sold, and enjoyed, all the pleasures and treasures of the world. Naturally, the place was packed. The passing through of Christian and Faithful created an uproar among the people of the fair and of the town, writes Bunyan:

> ...and that for several reasons: for, first, the Pilgrims were clothed with such kind of raiment as was diverse from the raiment of any that traded in that fair. The people therefore of the fair made a great gazing upon them: some said they were fools, some, they were bedlams (insane—D.E.), and some they are outlandish men (foreigners—D.E.). Secondly, and as they wondered at their apparel, so they did likewise at their speech; for few could understand what they said; they naturally spoke the language of Canaan, but they that kept the fair were the men of this world; so that from one end of the fair to the other they seemed barbarians each to the other.
>
> Thirdly, but that which did not a little amuse the merchandisers was that these pilgrims set very light by all their wares; they cared not so much as to look upon them; and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears and cry, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vainity," and look upwards, signifying that their trade and traffic was in heaven.

The outcome was that both were persecuted and Faithful was martyred. But both Christian and Faithful had the opportunity to speak in confession of Christ, and seized the opportunity, with the result that some of Vanity Fair were converted.

The different life of a sojourner gives us the opportunity to speak. On the other hand, if we live just like the world, the world is neither going to ridicule, nor ask us the reason for, our peculiar behavior. In fact, if we do not live as sojourners, we cannot speak. If our god is pleasure, money, or fame; if we swear and talk filthy; if we get drunk (whether on beer or drugs makes no difference); if we amuse ourselves with the ungodliness on televi-

sion, at the movies, or on records and tapes; if we fornicate, just like the world—how can we speak of the true and living God? how can we speak of the pleasures of eternal life? how can we say anything of our hope of a future life? And if we do still try to speak, the world, of course, will either pay us no heed, or, as is more likely, will mock our God, our church, our religion, and our confession—and understandably so. Only a **sojourner** can speak, one living the Christian life of separation from the world and of seeking the coming kingdom of God.

So, talk here is not cheap. For us to speak cost God His Son and costs us the effort, discipline, and sacrifice of the Christian life.

My first question to you, therefore, is not, "Are you speaking?." but rather, "Are you living the life of a sojourner?"

I may have confidence that you are living this life, because you are children of the covenant. Why should I regard you as pilgrims and strangers, young as you are? Why should the Convention-theme dare to call you "youthful sojourners"? Well, for a good reason: God's covenant with believers and their children, the sign of which is Baptism. You have been baptized. In grace, God has included you in His church and covenant; has redeemed you by His Son's death; and has promised you the Holy Spirit of regeneration and sanctification and separation from the world. Therefore, you have the privilege, the duty, and the ability to speak.

But **what** will you speak?

What You Speak

First, I remind you what you will **not** speak.

You will not speak lies about God—that He did not create the world; that He did not become incarnate in Jesus the Christ, the eternal Son; that He can be frustrated by men in His effort to save them; that He is a God Who approves and tolerates wickedness, for example, rebellion against authority; drunkenness; and adultery. This is important as regards church membership, for you speak personally whatever the church that you belong to says about God. If the preacher whom you support lies about God, **you** are responsible. If the church adopts a lying confession, **you** are responsible.

You will not speak swearing. This includes the swearing of your companions, for by silence or connivance you become partakers of this horrible sin in others (Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. 36).

You will not speak disrespectfully to or about your parents and superiors.

You will not speak abusively to your neighbor. In Matthew 5:22, Jesus warns against calling your brother, "Raca," that is, insulting him, or putting him down—calling him, "Stupid," or "Airhead." Even more sharply, He warns against calling him, "fool," that is, questioning his spirituality and salvation. Abusive speech is the breaking of the Sixth Commandment.

You will not speak filthy talk—talk that is sexually suggestive and unclean. Filthy talk and the four-letter words are forbidden by the Seventh Commandment, as the Heidelberg Catechism explains: "...he (God) forbids all unchaste... words..." (L.D. 41). The apostle of Christ admonishes you, in Ephesians 5:3, 4: "But fornication, and all uncleanness...let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient..."

You will not speak back-biting, slander, and gossip—various forms of the all-too-common-sin of speaking evilly about each other. Such speech disobeys the Ninth Commandment; and the Heidelberg Catechism calls this "the proper work of the Devil" (L.D. 43).

But what **will** you speak?

You will speak the Truth, which is God, as He is revealed in His Son, Jesus,

in the Holy Scriptures. Jesus said, "I am...the truth" (John 14:6). You must speak of **God**; you must speak of **Jesus Christ**; you must speak **the Word of God**—the Bible and all its teachings. You do this as Protestants, not Roman Catholics, and, so, you speak of a God of grace Who justifies the ungodly through faith alone; of a Christ Who is the only Savior and Mediator; and of a Bible that is the only rule of faith and life for church and Christian. You do this as Reformed Protestants, and, so, you speak of a covenant God; of a God of sovereign grace, in double predestination, limited atonement, irresistible grace towards totally depraved sinners, and perseverance of saints; and of a Christ Who does not merely try to save men, but Who saves His people from their sins. You do this as Protestant Reformed young people, and, so, you speak of a God of particular grace and of an unconditional covenant and of a Christ and salvation that are not offered, well-meaningly, to all men, but that are sovereignly given to the elect, in free grace.

You speak this Truth in such a way that you **defend** it, against attacks made upon it. This is the "answer" of the Convention-text: "be ready always to give an **answer.**" Literally, it is **'apology'**: "be ready always to give an apology." But "apology," here, is not an embarrassed excuse for some error. Rather, it is a well-reasoned, well-argued, powerful, convincing defense of the Truth. When a fool says that there is no God, you defend the living God. When the friend of free will challenges the doctrine of free grace, you defend gracious salvation. When those who carry the name, "Reformed," but who fall away from the Reformed faith, teach that God loves all, desires to save all, sent Christ to die for all, and offers salvation to all in the gospel, you defend the "five points of Calvinism," that is, the doctrine set forth in the Reformed creed, the Canons of Dordt. Give your apology!

As you do, be careful to do it with meekness and fear. Do not spoil your defense of the Truth—**what** you say, by a bad manner—**how** you say it, as, alas, is often done: pride! haughtiness! bitterness! mere intellectual jousting! self-vindication! interest in winning the argument! The winning defense of the Truth is that which employs the proper manner: reverence towards God and meekness towards men.

You must, and may, speak the Truth, but, always, the Truth **as your hope.** The Truth is hope for otherwise hopeless sinners—the only hope. The Truth is **your** hope. Because God is God for you, you have hope. Because Jesus Christ is crucified and risen for you, you have hope. Because you are saved by grace, you have hope. And what hope! To be with Christ at death! The resurrection of your body unto everlasting life and glory at Christ's coming! God's perfect care over you, and protection of you, body and soul, in all your earthly life!

Now when you speak to others, you must speak of the Truth as your own personal hope. In fact, this is what others will notice in your life and will ask you about: the hope that is in you. They have no hope. How horrible! Think of it: no hope! No hope for life; no hope for death; no hope for eternity! This is not only true of unbelievers, but also of those who do not know the truth of salvation by free, sovereign grace, as embraced by the Reformed faith. However much they speak of Jesus and salvation, these, too, are very much uncertain about their own future salvation; and uncertainty of salvation is not hope. Men are afraid, worried, hopeless! Young people, too, are hopeless. The drug culture is not so much a testimony to pleasure-seeking, as it is a monument to despair. It is a drawn-out form of suicide, which is rampant among the youth.

In the Truth, you have hope; speak of

it.

Then, you certainly will speak the Truth as the reality of your homeland, heaven, as the reality of the other life than this earthly life. This is what sojourners love to do. They are forever talking about their country, about its King, about life there, about its glories and delights and riches. There is something wrong with us if we never talk about the Kingdom of Heaven, but are always talking about the Kingdom of Earth.

In order to speak the Truth, you must know the Truth; and in order to know the Truth, you must have learned it.

There are young people going out on mission-work today who are themselves ignorant of the Truth that they are supposed to be preaching. The blind are leading the blind; and everybody is falling into the ditch.

You must have learned the Truth and still be learning It. This is what catechism is for. Catechizing the children and young people is simply a vital work of our churches, as it has always been in Reformed and Presbyterian churches. Do you appreciate catechism? It will soon start up again. Will you avail yourself of it? Will you attend every class? Will you give yourself, whole-heartedly, in the Holy Spirit, to learn the Truth?

Learning the Word of God is the reason why all of you must be readers and students of the Word—of the Bible itself, first of all, but also of good books, for example, Calvin's **Institutes** (which is not for theologians, but for believers) and Hoeksema's commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, and magazines, for example, **Beacon Lights** and **The Standard Bearer**. Young People's Society is a good opportunity to learn the teachings of the Bible.

You cannot speak the Truth, if you do not know It. Be ready, prepare yourself, by learning the Truth.

But then speak It. Speak It whenever and wherever you should.

When and Where You Speak

You ought not always be speaking. People who are always speaking, even though they are speaking about Christ or are saying, "Praise the Lord," are a pain in the neck, not effective witnesses. Peter does not say in the Convention-text, "be always giving an answer," but, "be **ready** always to give an answer." Nevertheless, young people should speak; and it is a real danger that you **never** find the time or place to speak out in behalf of God.

You are to speak to God, for praise and worship. You do this in prayer and singing, both in the services of public worship at church and in your private devotions. To your speaking to God belongs public confession of faith. When you make confession of your faith, you do not only speak to the church and to the world and to the Devil, but you also speak to God. You confess Him, in His Son, His grace and glory, to Him. This is why God gave you a mouth; and this is why He loosed your tongue from sin by the blood and Spirit of Christ. It is urgent, therefore, that you do this, so soon as you are ready. You have been created and saved, in order to make confession of the Truth with the mouth.

You are to speak to each other, in the church, for building each other up. At catechism and Young People's Society, there should be discussion, questions from the young people, and answers to the questions raised by the minister. Too many of you are silent. The cause is not that all of you are so shy. During recess or immediately after catechism, many of you can talk freely about boys, girls, cars, jobs, ball-games, and what not. I do not criticize your talking about boys, girls, cars, jobs, ball-games, and what not. But why are you dumb when it comes to speaking about God and your hope? Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready to talk in catechism and Young People's Society.

You should speak to each other in personal conversations to help each other with particular problems. Warn the disobedient and straying. Encourage the weak, the discouraged, the lonely. Talk to each other about our hope. There is not enough of this, not among the adults either.

What about your speaking in witness to those outside of the church—the unbelieving, the wicked, the lost? Is this your calling? Is this your calling as young people?

It certainly is. In fact, these are the people whom the Convention-text has in mind, when it tells you to be ready to give your apology to men who ask the reason of the hope that is in you. The next verse describes these people as those who speak evil of you and falsely accuse your good conversation (behavior) in Christ. You are not missionaries; God does not send you out on mission-work; you are not called to go from door to door. But you are saved sojourners in the world; and you must be ready to speak of your hope to anyone and everyone who gives you the opportunity to do so. This may happen at work; this may happen at college; this may happen in the neighborhood. We are seeing this done by young people of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore, young people not very much older than yourselves and often without your advantages of a Christian home and Christian schools. There is much fruit in the growth of the congregation. This is not always the result of speaking to the unbelieving. He **may** come with you to church and be gained to Christ. But he may as well ridicule you, and your hope, and persecute you. Then you suffer for Christ's sake; and this is also necessary.

Whatever the result, never may you be silent, because of embarrassment, or fear. This is being ashamed of Christ; ashamed of the Truth; ashamed of God. Never mind what others will say, or think; let them laugh. What matters is what God says, and thinks. This is what God says, and thinks: Whoever is ashamed of My Christ now, Christ will be ashamed of in the Judgment; and whoever confesses My Christ now—speaks out for My Christ, Christ will confess before Me in the Judgment.

BEACON LIGHTS STAFF

Left to right; Mike Lotterman, Deane Wassink, Ed Lotterman, Vonda Klamer, Bernie Kamps, Marcia Lotterman, David Harbach, Grace Faber, Dave Moelker, Dan Schipper.

Discussion Group Reflection: Choosing Friends

by Dirk Westra

Rev. Engelsma addressed himself to the topic of choosing friends by examining with us the grounds or foundation of friendship. For a Christian, there is but one foundation on which all friendships must be built - the foundation of Jesus Christ. On this basis we must seek all our friends: those "special friends", i.e. those we court and perhaps intend some day to marry, but also those with whom we "hang around", our every-day friends.

This foundation is one of love; we can love our friends because Christ first loved us - and so strong is that love that He made the sacrifice of His Son. This love, which is a bond of holiness, must be reflected in our personal friendships; these friendships must be holy, sanctified and pure. This love is the glue that must hold us to our personal friends as it holds us to Christ.

Any other ground on which a friendship might be based, is really no ground at all - there is no true friendship but a godly one.

Discussion in our group began with an exchange of ideas on the initial establishment of friendships - how to get started. First we listed those things that attract us to a person: looks, personality, intelligence, talent, and a sense of humor. However, we decided that first impressions, though often lasting, don't always paint the true picture of a person. A good way to become well acquainted with a person is by way of conversation; not small talk, but a discussion of morals, principals, and of those things that we hold dear, a baring of the inner person, a heart-to-heart chat of what makes us tick. Our close friends, therefore will naturally be those who have the qualities we admire, and hold to the same values we do.

For most of us, marriage will be the closest friendship we have here on earth. It was brought to our attention the reality of how long the development of this true friendship takes. At marriage, young couples often hardly know each other, and after even fifty years of marriage, are still discovering new things about their spouses. Of course, when they marry, they may think they know each other, but they may spend the rest of their married lives marvelling at how incompletely they actually were acquainted.

As in almost any discussion of friendship, the subject of peer pressure was examined. Though peer pressure isn't always bad, it can lead us into things which we ought not to do, and probably wouldn't do individually; blending into a group, we can also find ourselves losing our sense of identity, and excluding those who are misfits according to group standards. If we sense peer pressure in a friendship, we had better examine that

friendship - is it founded on the right ground?

One of the questions found in the outline prompted a discussion about the desirability of a friend who agrees with everything we say and do. Aside from the obvious fact that such a relationship could become dull and tiring rather quickly, it was also noted that we need companions that will be quick to show us where we are going wrong, and to point us to the straight and narrow.

The final point of discussion was the establishment of "special" friendships. We concluded that building such relationships takes much time, and should be built up gradually. Only after such a stage of just getting to know each other can a romantic relationship start.

This was, I feel, a very suitable topic of discussion for us as a group of young people. Especially at a young people's convention, much of our spare time is devoted to making new friends. More generally though, as young people, we face new and different environments as we go on to high school or college, or take up a new job or career. These new environments bring with them new acquaintances, some of whom are not the kind of friends we should have. And with marriage in the future for most of us, we should be prayerfully considering what godly qualities we must seek in a mate.

Following scriptural principles and founding all our friendships upon Christ, our confession will be:

> "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts."

Convention Reflections

by Vonda Klamer

"What a beautiful part of the country to have a convention!" - - - "It sure was a lot of fun!" Those were just two of the comments I heard from conventioneers attending the 1983 Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention. And they were right!! I, personally, had never seen a real mountain, but the ones I saw were much more pretty that I had imagined they would be! The convention also provided a perfect opportunity for several of us to take our first airplane ride. The week itself was so filled that I will just reflect on them in broad categories.

The host society did an excellent job keeping us busy, so that we were all pretty tired by the time "12:30 Lights out" came around. The activities that were planned by the host society were such that none was left out of the fun and excitement. This is important if everyone is to enjoy the convention and I think it was done well!!

But the convention was not all games and activities. Daily discussion groups and speeches are an important part of every convention. I thought that the topic this year — "The Youthful Sojourner Saved" — was very appropriate for us as Young People. The outlines for the discussion

groups themselves were open enough to allow discussion of many aspects of the life of a young sojourner here on this earth. I felt that the discussion group leaders did a good job in explaining these outlines and in getting the conventioneers to react honestly and openly about them. This is a good chance to understand more of the opinions and feelings of the other young people. The speech topics were also well-chosen and presented to give spiritual enrichment to each and every listener.

If asked to compare this convention to last year's convention. I would say that they were both equally enjoyable because I met many new people each year and they were both packed with memories. I hope I can attend the convention next year in Grand Rapids and I hope to see many of the people, who I met at this convention, next year! See you there!!!

SAVED IN THE WAY OF SUFFERING

by Rev. M. Kamps

Suffering is an aspect of human life. Suffering is common to all men. Most people do not want to talk about this aspect of their life. They would rather ignore this harsh reality. It is therefore, strange that young people would desire to discuss this subject. Young people are foreigners to physical pain and suffering. They enjoy, generally speaking, health and strength of mind and body. Besides they are protected from abuse by their parents.

However, this theme is appropriate for you, the young people, if we are mindful who we are as the young people of the Protestant Reformed Churches. We are believers in the name of Christ Jesus. We bear the mark of God's covenant friendship! In the old dispensation the men of Israel bore the physical sign of circumcision and this mark declared to them each day that they were God's chosen and beloved people. We too bear the mark of God's covenant. This mark is not now physical and visible, but it is the mark of the sacrament of baptism. And not merely the fact that we received the outward sign, but, rather, that we have the spiritual realities signified in baptism. We have been washed in the blood of Christ. We have received the Spirit of Christ with the result that we confess His name and live according to the commandments of God. We have been made to be, by God's grace, His people and we possess the spiritual realities signified in baptism as the mark of God's covenant of grace in Christ Jesus.

We are, with all of God's people, the living among the dead, the Church in the midst of the world, the friends of the living God among those who hate Him and His Word.

Therefore we expect suffering and know it to be an inevitable part of the life of faith. In that light, to talk about it is most appropriate for us.

It may be helpful to point out the relationship of this second speech to the first and the third speeches for this

convention. Suffering for Christ's sake is the result of both confession of Christ's name and our service to God. The first speech is, **Saved to Speak**; and the third speech is **Saved to Serve**. Our subject naturally follows upon these truths for the Christian suffers because the world hates his speech and despises his service of God.

With the above as introduction, I ask you to consider with me our theme. **Saved In the Way of Suffering**, by first considering Suffering for Righteousness Sake; secondly, Suffering in Hope; and thirdly, Suffering with the Saints.

Suffering For Righteousness Sake.

We must ask what is the nature of this suffering? Let us distinguish the suffering for righteousness sake from other kinds of suffering. In general, we may observe that suffering can differ as to form and have many different causes. Suffering as to form can be psychological suffering of the mind and will. For example the suffering of fear or guilt. Suffering can also be physical, of course. In addition suffering can have different causes. First of all, all men, believers and unbelievers, suffer because of God's curse upon creation. Illness and disease are the experience of all. Hurricanes and tornadoes spare none in their path. Everyone suffers. Secondly, there is that suffering that has its cause in sin. Loneliness is often caused by pride and arrogancy. Diseases due to the sins of immorality befall many. The suffering that children must endure because of a parent that lives in adultery. Broken marriages, broken homes and hurting souls because of the sins of selfishness and lust. Thirdly, there is a suffering due to one's religion, which is **not** a suffering for righteousness sake. Iran is a land of suffering and pain and agony in no small part because of its unbiblical Moslem ideals. Finally, there is the suffering that is for righteousness sake. All suffering is not of the same kind or nature.

This evening we will discuss only the one kind of suffering, Suffering for righteousness sake. For it alone is the way of salvation.

What is specifically this suffering for righteousness sake? Please, note in I Peter 3:14 we read, "if ye suffer for righteousness' sake," and in I Peter 4:16 we read, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian. . ." Acts 5:41 declares of the disciples that they rejoiced "to suffer shame for His name." Suffering for righteousness sake is to suffer for Jesus' name. It is to be hated for our confession of the Reformed faith. We suffer for Jesus sake when we confess and preach that Jesus died for some, the elect, and not for all men. People hate you for your confession that man by nature has no free will unto good but is totally depraved. We suffer for righteousness sake when we live out of the principles of God's Word as these apply to all our life. There are principles of marriage. For example that marriage is for life; and that in marriage we are to reflect the relationship of Christ and His Church. There are principles that apply to the rearing of our children. There are principles that apply to our relationship to our employer. Every sphere of life is governed by the principles of God's Word. Out of these we live and for them we suffer.

We should note then that suffering for righteousness sake is, first of all, inevitable. The Christian cannot escape it. We read in Philippians 1:29, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Therefore, Peter wrote to the saints concerning suffering for Jesus name, "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." We are to consider suffering as inevitable. Secondly, let us note the source of this suffering, or by the hand of whom do we suffer. We suffer at the hand

of those who are devoid of grace and who out of the depravity of their hearts hate God as He has revealed Himself in Christ according to the Scriptures. All men have not faith. This hatred of the child of God burns fiercely among apostates. Those who once knew the Word of God and have rejected it are those who bring the Church great suffering. It was the unbelieving Jews that hated the Christ; it was the unbelieving Jews that persecuted Paul from city to city on his missionary journeys.

As young people you must clearly understand that when you suffer at the hands of unbelievers it is because of their hatred of God and His Word. You must not imagine that it is due to your personality or social position in life. No, it is because of your love of God. The Church of Christ suffers because of its confession of the truth and because of its service to Jehovah God.

Thirdly, what is the character of this suffering? Suffering for righteousness sake is always **without a cause**. The occasion for this suffering is our confession and our service to God in Christ Jesus. But our suffering is without a cause **in us.** Do not overlook this truth. Consider what we read in Ps. 35:19, "Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause." Jesus applied these words to himself in John 15:25, "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause." What was true of Christ is true too of the Christian, who is a partaker of Christ's suffering. The Christian when suffering for righteousness sake suffers not having done evil to his neighbor. He is hated without a cause. The cause of this suffering for the Christian is found in the depraved heart of the ungodly. The unbeliever hates God and all who defend the honor and glory of His name.

Scripture forewarns us that we will suffer for the sake of the gospel. Allow me to quote two passages. In John 15:18-19 we read, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." And in John 16:1-3 it is stated, "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me."

We suffer for Christ's sake now and will suffer in the future. You suffer now as young people, when you refuse to attend the theater and are ridiculed for your refusal. You suffer for righteousness sake when others scorn and hate you for not participating in their beer parties. You suffer for Christ's sake when men ask scornfully, "how many children are there in your school?" Young people must bear the reproach of Christ when our churches are held in contempt because they are of "little strength." You suffer for Christ's name sake when you for the purpose of the establishment of a Christian marriage refuse to date unbelievers and persons of non-reformed churches. Hated because you want to date and marry one who is one in the Lord with you. God requires young people to suffer for Christ through the proper confession your father boldly makes in the community. Your father, whom you love is considered odd and peculiar.

In the future too you will suffer for righteousness sake. You will be the Church of tomorrow that witnesses to the Reformed faith as we as Protestant Reformed Churches have been graced to know and confess it. The false church and all antichristian persons will heap upon you their disdain. You will be mothers and

fathers who may have to bear the rejection of a child because of your confession. The hatred and rejection of a son or daughter is one of the most painful experiences that God's people are called upon at times to endure. Besides the Bible tells us that in the last days, which may not be far off, we will not be able to buy or sell. You will suffer the loss of jobs. It is possible that you will starve. Further, it is not beyond the realm of possibility, that an humanistic and carnal society will characterize true believers in Christ Jesus as mentally ill and incorrigible and thus institutionalize or imprison them.

Suffer for Christ's name sake we will surely be called upon to do.

Suffering in Hope

Suffering is the way of salvation. We are saved in the way of suffering. This is our theme. The salvation spoken of is salvation from the viewpoint of our complete victory in the glory of heaven. The way to heaven is through suffering for righteousness sake.

We must answer the question: why is suffering the way unto complete salvation and glory in heaven? The answer is, because we suffer for the principles of the gospel of christ. The truths of the Word in regard to God, Christ, the sinner, the church, and every other aspect of our life are the principles of the Word of God. These principles govern our life by God's grace. We are committed to them. God has made us to be disciples of the Lord. We live our lives by them and out of them. These principles are the stepping stones upon which we walk to glory. He who refuses to live out of these principles, forsakes them, walks upon the pathway to hell. Therefore, we insist on these principles of the Word for your and our safety and for God's honor.

The pathway of principles of God's Word which leads to heaven is inseparably joined to suffering. Christ Jesus preached and lived out of the principle of election and consequently died the death of the cross, because he assumed the responsibility for the sins of those whom God gave him. He was exalted in the way of suffering. The way to glory for Christ was the principles of God's Word, which occasioned and required much suffering. So also for the apostle Paul. He lived out of the principles of the gospel and suffered for them. Suffering for righteousness sake is inseparably joined to the principles of God's Word believed and confessed.

Therefore, we suffer in hope. We are confident that suffering is the way unto complete salvation.

Many in apostatizing churches fail or refuse to see this truth. They imagine that they can avoid suffering for righteousness sake and yet walk the pathway to glory. Remarriage of divorced persons is sanctioned, contrary to the principles of God's Word, in order that man or woman and children involved need not suffer. To avoid suffering the loss of jobs Sabbath labor is condoned; unionism is approved; and members of the church are assured that much in the world of unbelief is commendable and consequently we need not walk strictly as pilgrims and strangers in the world. The principles of God's Word are set aside. And they are set aside for the purpose to escape suffering, which they occasion. This is not the way to heaven. The Judaizers of Paul's day did the same, "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ." They twisted the Scriptures to avoid suffering.

But we suffer in the hope of glory. We understand that the principles of the Word of God are inseparably joined to suffering. We know that in this suffering we are partakers of Christ's suffering, I Peter 4:13. We know too that we shall be partakers of His glory, who was raised far above all principalities and powers and set

at God's right hand.

We suffer in hope because we know that this suffering is according to God's counsel and purpose in Christ Jesus and is given unto us in His grace. Philippians 1:29. Thus we are called upon to rejoice when we suffer for righteousness sake. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

We suffer with the Saints

We must not view ourselves individualistically. We are not the only ones who have been and are called upon to suffer for righteousness sake. We must not develop a martyr's complex. We must not adopt a morbid resignation to the inevitable. This is not faith.

We suffer in the knowledge of the suffering of the saints of the past. In Hebrews 11 we have recorded how the saints of the old dispensation suffered for God's name sake. We must be mindful that today saints in other lands suffer for Christ's sake. Remember too that the young saints upon the mission field in Singapore suffer persecution in their homes.

We suffer for our faith as witnesses unto the saints of tomorrow. Our parents have done that for us. We must be willing to bear every reproach of Christ and all hatred in order that we may give a clear and definite witness to our children.

May the Lord of glory uphold and strengthen you in this spiritual warfare for the honor of His name and the salvation of His people.

I thank you.

Discussion Group Reflections: Stewardship

In this article, I would like to share with you the highlights of the discussion on stewardship, of which I took part.

In introducing stewardship, Rev. Haak first brought to our attention the command of God in the eighth commandment that we must not steal. Here we are commanded to use those things given us by God to His glory lest we steal from Him and become slothful servants.

Rev. Haak also mentioned the steward's motive as one of gratitude and a sense of duty to use God's gifts in His service.

In closing, Rev. Haak suggested that we discuss the time, possessions, and talents God has given us as His stewards.

In our discussion, one question that was raised was, "How do we prove to someone that everything is the Lord's?" First, we decided that we would only find proof in the Scriptures and, if this is true,

we must be proving it to one who believes that all of Scripture is the true and infallible Word of God. Else it is totally useless to argue.

Two verses given to us in the outline on stewardship in the June-July issue of the **Beacon Lights**, were quoted as sound proof: Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" Deut. 32:6, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" These two verses clearly show that everything is the Lord's even our very lives! That fact alone is reason enough for us to live our lives as good stewards of the time, talents, and possessions God has given us.

In this connection, we must remember that, as young people, this time of living a good and pleasing life before God has already begun. We cannot say that we will start "after we have made public confession of our faith" or "after we get settled down and find a steady job." We should be living one now, for no one knows when the Lord will require our souls of us.

This brings us to the next question: "What is the use of trying when our future has already been determined by God?" We immediately realized that we could not rationalize in this manner, but, because of our free will, we must work for God and strive to do as He commands. However, we also realized that we must not take our free will to the other extreme, as some do. For, in giving ourselves complete freedom of will, we are putting ourselves in the place of God so that we control our own future. This is in direct contradiction to the Scriptures when it says that everything, including our lives, is under God's control and belongs to Him.

In this regard, it was also brought up that every man, both elect and reprobate, is responsible to God for all his sins. This is shown in Romans 14:12, "So then every one of us shall give account of Himself to God."

"As we discussed the use of talents to the best of our ability, the question was raised about those among us whose shyness hinders them in their attempt to use their talents as they are called. For an answer we concluded that those who are shy must depend on the Lord for strength to properly use the talents given them. For the Lord would never ask us to do something we were not able to do. A good example of this is that of Moses, when God commanded him to go to Pharoah and demanded the release of Israel. In response, Moses said he was not eloquent enough and was too slow of speech to do as God commanded him. But, the Lord said that He would be with Moses and would put words into his mouth.

As stewards, we are also called to witness. To do this we must show that we are Christians by our walk in life. But, as was soon brought up, it is often very difficult to walk as we should. Too often we are quiet when someone around us swears. Instead, we should show that we are Christians by voicing our displeasure. Another example is when we don't pray before we eat in a restaurant or during noon-break at work. All too often this is due to the presence of worldly friends who we are afraid to offend. But, in doing this we offend God! We cannot serve God and mammon! Although it is much easier and very tempting just to float along and not do anything extra to grow spiritually and do as we ought, we must work in the service of God. We must take advantage of the many things made available to us. We must not neglect things like society, catechism classes, and church. But, on the contrary, we should prepare diligently for them. If we do not do that, we are being like the unprofitable servant and will be cast out and will not receive the reward of eternal life.

Convention Impressions

by Chuck Terpstra

It was the privilege of my wife and me to chaperone the 1983 Young People's Convention sponsored by our Lynden congregation. It was held on the beautiful campus of Trinity Western College in Langley, British Columbia. Providentially the Lord brought us in safety to this magnificent part of our continent. After viewing the majestic mountains, the sparkling lakes, and the splendid woodlands one could only say, "Surely the LORD is in this place." As a whole the convention went very well and was a very rewarding experience. As a chaperone there were a couple of things that impressed me especially.

Firstly, there was evident a true spirit of unity, of oneness, among the young people. Though having a diversity of backgrounds, ages, and personalities, they were of one mind and one purpose. Here Easterners, Texans, Grand Rapidians, Californians, and Canadians freely mingled, making new friendships, renewing others, and strengthening still others. All of the activities - from volleyball and rollerskating to singing and prayer - were done in the spirit of love and fellowship. This was the communion of saints!

Secondly, the spirituality and sensitivity of the young people were manifest. There was an openness and unashamedness on their part to discuss problems and struggles. This made the devotional periods (especially the evening ones) and the discussion groups very edifying and uplifting. In that period of a few short days I witnessed young pilgrims applying the principles of Scripture which we had discussed to their lives and to their friendships. The more mature pilgrims helped their less mature fellow sojourners.

Having witnessed the above however, I do not want to deny that there were problems. There were. Some were serious; some not so serious. But then we must understand that while this was a gathering of "saved sojourners", they are nevertheless **sinful** sojourners. And all of us - yes, also our young people - must learn that the gospel includes repentance and conversion and a fleeing for refuge under the shadow of the cross. And this we did learn by the power of God's grace.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Lynden society for a wonderful time, the Lynden congregation for their zealous support, the speakers for their "wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ", and the young people for their fellowship, their openness, and their obedience to Christ and to us their chaperones. Above all, thanks be to God for this blessed privilege. Thank Him, young people, and may He preserve you by His grace.

SAVED TO SERVE

by Rev. Carl Haak

Servants are the only kind of persons in the Church of Jesus Christ. Whether it be an old saint with white hair, a mother with three children, a little child, a teenage girl; it makes no difference; they are all servants. Your name is Servant, Slave of Jesus Christ. When Christ saved you, you became His servant. Not only is it true that others in the Church are to serve you, but **you** are the servant to all the Church. Your master is Jesus, the living God. Your only purpose for life and breath is to serve.

Our duty to serve one another in love must dominate our life. One of the evidences of our salvation is the desire to serve God and the brother or sister in the Church. We have been saved for the purpose of serving. What is more, serving in the Church of Jesus Christ is a great blessing. Christ said "It is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts 20:35. It is in giving that we receive; it is in serving that we are blessed; it is in being last that we are first. In the service of Christ we receive Christ unto ourselves.

A CALLING

We have a calling to serve! It is not merely something which is nice, but a calling from Jesus Christ. As youthful sojourners we have been put on a path which we must walk to glory. As we walk we are to **speak**! As we travel we will **suffer**. And as we journey on the appointed way of salvation we are called to **serve**. That is what you must do in your life as you confess yourself to be a pilgrim and a stranger. . .serve!

To serve is to have an unselfish regard for others, to be devoted to the welfare of others. Christ commands us, "Serve me! Have no regard for anything but me; be entirely devoted to me; seek the glory of my name! I have loved you out of your death, delivered you from the horror of hell and sin; now serve me by serving the brother and my cause in this world!"

It is not hard to find this written upon the pages of the Bible. There were especially two instances in the ministry of Christ which we do well to note. The first is found in Matt. 20:25-28, where we read of the request of the mother of James and John that her sons be at the right and left hand of Jesus in Christ's kingdom. When the other disciples heard it they were jealous, for they conceived of heaven in earthly, carnal terms in which the place of honor was one where you are served by others. It was Jesus who rebuked them with the words, "But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (servant); and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The second example is found in John 13 when Jesus washed His disciples feet. How can

we ever forget that? Jesus, as a picture of his humiliation on the cross for us, washed His disciples smelly feet and wiped them with a towel. "Know ye what I have done to you?" asked the Lord. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

There are many more passages which expound the same thing. Rom. 15:1-3, Phil. 2:1-8. Remember the words of Gal. 5:13 "For brethren ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, **but by love serve one another**" The Master calls us to serve.

PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE

Two principles of service can be drawn from God's Word. First, we have been saved **to** serve, that is, in order to serve. The purpose of our salvation and the purpose of the cross was that we would serve one another. That appears ironical! To be saved is to be freed, to be released, to be delivered. At the cross we were set loose from our dungeon of sin, let go from our pit of condemnation. But we were freed not to live unto ourselves, but freed to serve! We were released to become slaves of Christ and one another. Ultimately God's purpose in our salvation is that His Church in heaven serve Him in eternal praise.

Pause a moment to let that sink into your heart. It is not that perhaps a redeemed child of God serves; he **does**, he **must**. If you do not have the desire to serve God, obey Christ, and serve in love to one another, then you may question your own salvation. If there is only self-centeredness in you with no concern for your brothers and sisters in the Lord, then you are not walking in salvation itself.

Let us also understand that we as Protestant Reformed believers who strongly believe that God sovereignly saves, ought also to believe and teach strongly service to Christ in all our lives. We can say all we want about God's sovereignty in salvation, but our witness means nothing apart from a life of devotion to Christ. God sovereignly saves. God's sovereign purpose in salvation is that we be devoted to Him and to the body of Christ. We are known for our belief in the Truth of God's sovereignty in salvation. Are we known equally by our service, our obedience to Jesus and service to one another in love?

The second principle is this: there is only one we are to serve, Christ. We have not many masters, only one, the Lord Jesus Who has redeemed us. Serve Christ only; He is your Master! He lays sole claim to you and He possesses you. You are responsible to Him. Whom do **you** serve? Sports? Cars? Pleasure? Lusts of sin? Yourself? What is first for you? Whom is your master? In the name of Jesus Christ serve not yourself or any idol of T.V., sports, pleasure, liquor, but Christ only!

What is more, the seriousness of this is that in all our serving of one another we deal with Christ. Christ dwells in each of us. Christ is in the members of the Church, in the little child, in your girl friend or boy friend, in your parent. In all that you do to one another, you do it to Christ. "In as much as ye have done it unto one of these the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matt. 25:40. If we are unwilling to serve one another in love, we are unwilling to serve Christ Himself. If we have difficulty putting ourselves last and the other person first, the reason is that we are not very good at serving Christ in the brother. We are not spiritually sensitive. If it is hard to serve parents with obedience, if it is hard to serve boy friend or girl friend with chastity, if it is hard to serve each other in humility and in charitable thoughts; then the problem is that we cannot see Christ in the brother. In all that we have done to one another, we have done it to Christ! Christ has freed you! As a youthful sojourner He has placed fellow pilgrims to

travel beside you. In them Christ walks with you. What have you done to them? What have you done to Christ?

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SERVANT

Self-Denial. That is simply a servant. He minds not his own things, but the things of the master. He puts the master first and himself last. You cannot serve unless you deny yourself; in fact you have never served another brother or sister in Christ unless you have given up yourself. Service comes with a cost. To serve God will cost you, perhaps a job or a former friend, but it will cost you. To serve in the kingdom of God is to give up your own desires and make the wants of the brother yours. Service is **self**-sacrifice. This is the love of God; He gave His Son", His beloved dear Son. This is the love of Christ, He gave Himself, He pleased not Himself. It is no different for us; service is self-denial.

How hard that can be. Our first consideration is always ourselves, what is in this for me! We are afraid of getting involved, of getting our hands dirty, of feeling the pain of the brother. "It will take up my time, I will have to give something up" we say to ourselves. This is pride, vicious pride which keeps us from denying ourselves and humbly serving the brother. Pride which exalts ourselves above another. To be a servant of Christ let a man deny himself and become the servant to all his brethren. This is possible when by grace we walk humbly with our God.

Love. "In love serve one another". Self-denial is not enough. The Pharisee attempted to serve God out of rigid self-denial but a self-denial that did not flow from the love of God in the heart. Service of Christ is not done begrudgingly out of outward compulsion. It is to proceed out of devotion to the Master who purchased us with His blood. The motive we must have is not, "I have to" but, "it is my privilege to serve." In love be sensitive, gentle and kind to one another. The feelings and the thoughts of your brethren are not made for you to trample on. Nor must you cut the brother down so that you feel bigger. Love the brother as you love yourself. Treat him or her, speak to them, as you want to be treated and spoken to.

Concern for the glory of Christ and the eternal salvation of the brother. This too is a fundamental characteristic of a servant. A servant seeks to benefit the Master, to advance the Master. Our service must have as its motive the desire for the glory of Christ and the brother's salvation. Christ is glorified in the **Truth.** The Truth is more important than ourselves, than fame or money. To be the servant of Christ is to know, love and defend the truth of the gospel intrusted to us. And not only that, but it is to be concerned that my brothers and sisters walk in the Truth and rejoice in it. This is the love of God; concern for the glory of Christ in the Truth and concern for the brother to be in the Truth.

Without Remuneration. The service of God seeks no remuneration. If you serve God because you secretly feel He will be indebted to you, if you think that He owes you, or that your service makes Him obligated to you; then you are an unprofitable servant. How shall we make the Almighty to be indebted to us? Freely you have received, freely you are to serve. Seek no return, no pay, no remuneration. Your motive must be one of blessed duty and profound gratitude.

WHOM DO WE SERVE?

God.

Serve God by your own life of holiness. Don't serve sex so that the only thing you can think and laugh about is uncleanness. The Master Fornication drags millions to hell today. Are you enslaved? Pray! Seek the cross in repentence of your sin. Your body and your soul are not yours, but they belong to Christ. Serve him with your body and your

thoughts. Don't serve liquor so that your life revolves around the bottle, so that the only way you can have fun is with a can of beer in your hand. There is a devil in the bottle who can enslave you in bondage. Serve Christ! Don't serve money, the almighty dollar so that you are driven to have more and more and you find one day that your soul is empty and your heart dead when God comes to require them of you. Don't serve the God of the world, pleasure. Don't say, "I live for the weekend when I can give myself to pleasure." Serve Christ! Have the power of Godliness in your life.

Serve God in what you do with your life. Our life, our talents, our aspirations are all given to us of God. Wherever God leads us, whether it be a teacher, mother, computer programmer, farmer, or janitor; serve Christ. As men in your work let it be said of you that it is not the bonus which drives you, it is not the clock that you watch, but it is Christ who you serve in your work. As women serve God by marrying in the Lord and training your children in the name of Christ. Some desire to be teachers. May there be young men among us who desire the ministry of the gospel. But whatever your station in life, serve the Lord Christ.

SERVE THE CHURCH

Today the church is taken for granted and criticized for the least little reason. Let it not be so among us! As pilgrims in this desert called the world we need the oasis of the church. Serve the church with youthful enthusiasm, in a living Bible society, by concern for the aged. The apostle Paul in II Cor. 13 says that he was willing to be spent for the church. Are you?

SERVE THE BROTHER AND SISTER

That always begins with the person closest to you. And that is always the hardest. It begins with my flesh and blood brother and sister, my parents. Begin right in your own home. If you cannot serve there, you cannot serve at all. Begin with the girl you date; with your boyfriend. Begin with the least of the brethren. You that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. The shy, the one who stands on the outside, these are the ones who you are to serve. No cliques, no party spirit, but let there be service to all the brethren. "Let nothing be done out of strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" Phil 2;3. "If I your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet". John 13:14

Servant of Jesus Christ, in self denial, in humility, in profound thanks to Christ, serve one another in love.

THE POSSIBILITY

The possibility of serving one another is of grace. We have been saved by grace. Shall the gracious God be frustrated in His purpose that we serve Him? By grace we are empowered to serve. Mark well, those whom God saves He gives grace to serve Him. I do not say that we do this perfectly as we ought, we never do it without struggling against our flesh, but it does mean that by grace we are given this desire as youthful sojourners to serve one another in love.

Christ, our master, is the fountain-head of all grace. In Christ is comfort, conviction of love, compassion and mercy. (See Phil 2:1-4) Do you know these things? Do you know the comfort, the love, the mercy of the master? Then as he has had mercy upon you, in gratitude live in service of the Master.

Brethren, we have been saved by grace. When Christ saved us he made us sojourners, pilgrims who are to travel through this life unto glory. That is your confession, is it not? As you travel, speak! Speak of what God has done for your soul. As you travel be prepared to suffer for it is the only way to glory. And as you walk as sojourners, serve! Serve the Master and in love serve one another. "Go and do thou likewise!"

Discussion Group Reflections: Serving God in the Family

by Todd Terpstra

The discussion on which I am writing this reflection is on the third, and final discussion we had at the Lynden Convention. What was discussed was centered on the convention outline by Rev. Moore, namely; Youth Serving God in the Family. Rev. Kamps introduced this outline by making a few remarks dealing with the young person's relationship to his parents. First, that young people generally do not talk to their parents about any problems or concerns they might have. Second, that young people think that their parents are "hopelessly old-fashioned." And finally, that there is often too much strife between family members.

Let us briefly look at these problems and invite some possible solutions.

I. That young people rarely talk to their parents about problems or concerns they might have.

Why is this so true? We as young people cannot blame our parents for this. Actually it is our own foolish pride that hinders us from communicating with our parents. We figure, maybe, that how we live and what we do along with what problems we have are our own business, and not our parents'. Not true. Let us ask ourselves this. If we cannot bring our troubles (whether they be sinful or not) to our parents as Christ's representatives in the family, how can we be sensitive enough to bring these things to God in prayer? We as young people must realize that God has given us our parents, and that our parents really do care.

II. Young people think that their parents are "hopelessly old-fashioned".

We as young people fail to realize that our parents were also tempted by the same sins we are, and that discipline is very necessary to curb our youthful appetite for sin. In fact, the temptations we must withstand are twice as bad as they were in our parent's days - even more reason for our parents to be "hopelessly old-fashioned". Parents are called to discipline their children; therefore we may not buck that discipline, but rather, we must learn so that we can by the grace of God, withstand the temptations we are faced with. We must pray fervently for understanding and love for our parents. "Honor thy father and thy mother. . . ."

III. There is strife between family members.

Read I Corinthians 13. Does this mean something to us? What is love? Do we love the Lord? If not, we cannot love our brother. God must first establish His love for us before we can show forth our love to others. For without the love of God we are nothing. Do we pray for God's love so that we can show it to others? Strife in the family is a sorrow to parents, but the Lord God is deeply offended by it, for we dash our shining light against the rocks if we have no love for our family. What an awful thing!

Ask yourselves some very personal questions about these problems. Let us make our homes homes of love, patience, meekness, and service to the Lord. Think on these things.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

NEWCOMERS:

God blessed:

-Mr. & Mrs. Dave Abma, of Doon, with a son, David Jay, on May 27.

-Mr. & Mrs. John Wynia, of Doon, with a son, Bradley John, on June 11.

-Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Schipper, of Faith, with a daughter, Emily Fay.

-Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Booth, of First, with a son, William Arthur.

-Mr. & Mrs. Ron Kooienga, of First, with a daughter, Kathryn Ann.

-Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Kotman, of Holland, with a son, Brian Lee, on April 21.

-Mr. & Mrs. Jim Vander Kolk, of Holland, with a son, Travis Ross, on May 3

-Mr. & Mrs. John Bodbyl, of Holland, with a daughter, Julia Abigail, on June 7.

-Mr. & Mrs. Bob Dams, of Hudsonville, with a daughter, Lexine Joy, on May 9.

-Mr. & Mrs. Bernie Kamps, of Hudsonville, with a daughter, Lydia Marie, on July 8.

-Mr. & Mrs. Henry Westhuis, of Southeast, with a son, Henry James III, on June 9.

-Mr. & Mrs. Ray Van Til, of Southwest, with a son, Michael Scott, on March 11.

-Mr. & Mrs. Ed Lotterman, of Southwest, with a daughter, Katie Sue, on April 27.

-Mr. & Mrs. Rich Van Til, of Southwest, with a son, Timothy Richard, on May 6.

-Mr. & Mrs. Dan Butler, of Southwest, with a son, Bradley James, on May 8.

-Mr. & Mrs. M. Richards, of Hope, with a son, Ryan Allen, on June 24.

-Mr. & Mrs. J. Schipper, of Hope, with a son, Jordan Jay, on July 13.

-Mr. & Mrs. L. Bertsch, of Hope, with a son, Jason Gene, on July 14.

-Mr. & Mrs. E. De Boer, of Hope, with a daughter, Marie Joy, on July 14.

-Mr. & Mrs. D. Wassink, of First in Holland, with a son, Thomas Deane, on July 3.

-Mr. & Mrs. T. Mowery, of First in Holland, with a son, Alex John, on July 14.

-Mr. & Mrs. W. Koops, of First in Holland, with a son, Luke Wesley, on June 21.

-Mr. & Mrs. K. Kerkstra, of Hudsonville, with a son, Dustin Jay, on July 27.

-Rev. & Mrs. Houck, of Hope, with a son, Daniel John.

-Mrs. Sue Campbell, of Loveland, with a daughter, Adrianna Nicole, on August 10.

-Mr. & Mrs. R. Buys, of Hull, with a son, Nathan Paul, on August 24.

-Mr. & Mrs. J. Van Overloop, of Faith, with a son, Joseph Lee, on August 13.

-Mr. & Mrs. E. Stouwie, of South Holland, with a son, Kevin Jon.

-Mr. & Mrs. K. De Jong, of South Holland, with a daughter, Diana Jean.

MARRIAGES:

-Jerry Koop & Patti Carson were joined in marriage April 23.

Henry Kamps & Linda Hoekstra were joined in marriage June 17.

Lee Vink & Florence Driesen were joined

in marriage on July 1.
Steve Holthouser and Terri Bertsch were joined in marriage July 17.
-John Streyle and LeAnn Thomas were joined in marriage July 1.
-Robert Zwak & Judy Koster were joined in marriage July 12.
Scott Anderson & Joan Schut were joined in marriage August 5.
Brian Dykstra & Carolyn Hanko were joined in marriage August 3.
-Don De Vries & Shelly Van Meeteren were joined in marriage August 5.
Paul De Young & Debra Bruinsma were joined in marriage August 6.
-Nick Kooiker and Janet Mouw were joined in marriage August 26.
-Todd Boer & Eileen Vos were joined in marriage August 26.

CONFESSION OF FAITH:
-Steve Nelson made public confession of faith on June 19 in Loveland Church.
-Denise Kraker & Jackie Van Overloop made public confession of faith on May 29 in Hudsonville Church.
-Jill Jabaay made public confession of faith on February 7 in Redlands Church.
-Rebecca Engelsma, Steve Lanting, Mary Van Baren, David Vander Noord, and Bart Zandstra made public confession of faith on July 31 in South Holland Church.
-Susan Kuiper, Monica Lubbers and Susan Van Baren made public confession of faith on August 21 in South Holland Church.
-Mr. Kenneth Reitema Jr. made public confession of faith on September 11 in Southeast Church.

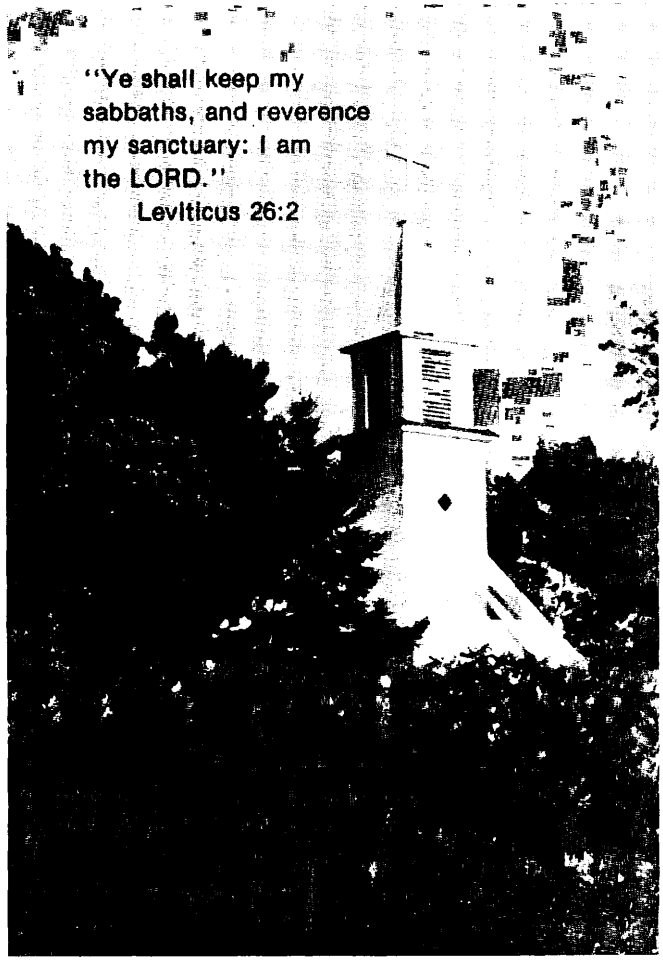
MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS:
-Loveland Church received the papers of Jim Vander Woude from our Southwest Church.
-Southeast Church received the papers of Larry Vander Vegte from our Southwest Church.
-Hope received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kamphuis and son, Daniel from our First Church in Grand Rapids.
-Kalamazoo Church received the papers of Mr. Robert Ensink from our First Church in Holland.
-Loveland Church received the papers of Mr. Brian Dykstra from our Hope Church in Grand Rapids.
-Hope Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. E. De Boer and their four children from our Hull Church.
-Redlands Church received the papers of Rev. and Mrs. Houck and their children from our Hope Church.
-South Holland Church received the papers of Miss Anita De Jong from our Houston, Texas Church.
-Southwest Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. Doug Boone from our Hull Church.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES:
-On July 16 the Federation Board sponsored a canoe trip for the young people. We began our trip at Baldwin and canoed part way down the Pere Marquette River.
-The Southeast young people met after church on August 7 for a Psalm sing and Christian fellowship.
-The Hope Heralds sang at Holland Church on Friday, August 5.
-The Young People's Convention was held August 15-19 at Trinity Western College in Langley, B.C. It was hosted by the Lynden, Washington Church.
-A post convention singspiration was held August 21 in the Fine Arts Center of Calvin College. Mr. E. Ophoff lead our singing.
-Covenant Christian High will celebrate its 15th anniversary on Saturday, October 8.

Our young people are encouraged to remember our missionaries in their letters and prayers.
Rev. Van Overloop
6875 Sunny Dell Drive
Hueytown, Alabama 35023

Rev. den Hartog
22 N. Block D
Pacific Mansion
River Valley Close
Singapore 0923
Republic of Singapore

Rev. S. Houck
1109 W. Rumble
Modesto, California 95350

Eternal King, enthron'd above
Look down in faithfulness and love;
Prepare our hearts to seek Thy face,
And grant us thy reviving grace.

Unworthy to approach Thy throne
Our trust is fix'd on Christ alone;
In Him thy covenant stands secure,
And will from age to age endure.
Standard Bearer Oct. '52.