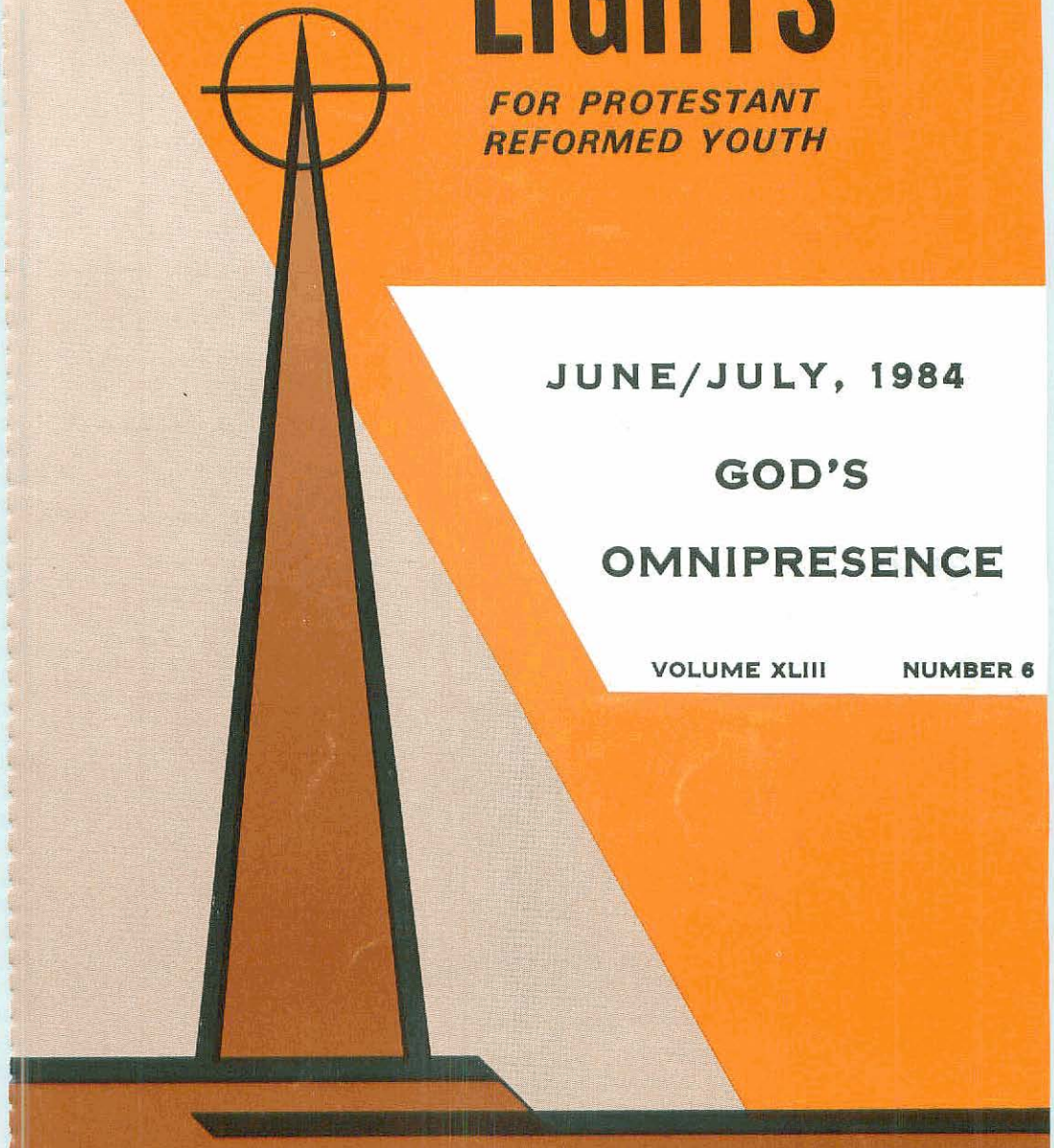
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



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GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE

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EDITOR'S NOTES

by David Harbach

I extend a hearty welcome to Mr. Gary Nienhuis as a new associate editor. Gary comes from our First Church of Holland, MI. He begins his writings with the article "Modern Times."

In this issue you will find the three discussion outlines for the Young People's Convention. Actually, two of the writings are outlines while the third is an article written for the purpose of raising questions. I thank Rev. Woudenberg and seminarians Steve Key and Chuck Terpstra for their contributions.

Carol Brands begins a second series of seven articles on the "Joys of Conception". Her first series of seven articles was on the "Sorrows of Conception". I appreciate Mrs. Brands' sincere efforts and look forward to reading her series. She is also planning a third series of seven articles on the "Responsibility of Conception".

I received a call from Mrs. George Hoekstra raising questions about the quote in the April issue from Rev. Engelsma's book **The Protestant Reformed Teacher.** Her questions and Rev. Engelsma's reply are found elsewhere in this issue.

Editorial
MODERN TIMES

by Gary Nienhuis

Everybody is in a hurry today and running out of time. Even the simple, slow-paced farm life is changing drastically. Some of the older farmers around can tell us how they started farming with a team of horses, milked cows by hand and farmed forty acres of land. Today, farming can be done with air conditi d, 4-wheel

drive tractors; cows can be milked with computerized milking machines and many farms are over one thousand acres of land.

Weed control in the past was a time consuming, manual job. Modern chemicals have almost eliminated this weed problem. One can easily see that farming has changed more in the last eighty years than it did in the previous 4,000 years.

The advances in modern agriculture continue to accelerate by leaps and bounds. Since the result of this is a surplus of goods, we see the working out of God's counsel in the fulfillment of Revelation 6:6, ". . . a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny . . .", especially when we see our government offer programs to discourage production of corn, wheat and milk.

All of these modern conveniences on the farm and in all our lives should give us more time for spiritual things, but do we use it for this? Now we have to stop and take a good look at ourselves. Are our minds full of facts and details that pertain to our friends, work, school, social life, cars, clothes, sports and what not, but very limited on the teachings of the scriptures? Are we out of balance? How many of us have reached the age of twenty and have never read **The Confession Of Faith** and the **Canons of Dordt** completely through? How many of us have diligently studied them on our own so that we can say "These are not only my church's confessions and beliefs, but also my personal convictions." Never before has so much good literature been so easily attainable. How often do we spend a whole night at home, studying our Bible or reading a religious book?

God has given us an abundance of spare time that our forefathers didn't have. For example, look at the time we save just from the development of electricity and all the electrical conveniences in our lives. Our high standard of living and our lack of spiritual mindedness makes one think of what Agur asked for in Proverbs 30:8, 9. He prayed that God would not give him riches less he be full and deny Him, and say "Who is the Lord." We mustn't fill our spare time with the seeking of earthly pleasures and treasures, but use it to God's glory.

We must also be selective about what we listen to. We are called to arm ourselves with the same mind as Christ (I Peter 4:1). The devil tries to keep us from doing this. He fills the air around us with music of the world, in the grocery store, the restaurant, the shop, the dentist office, etc. In some areas it is hard to even pick up one Christian station on our radios, but we can almost always get a dozen ungodly stations.

We must be distinctive and antithetical. We must make the atmosphere around us cause our minds to look beyond the earthly, sensual and devilish to the things of the kingdom of heaven. We don't want to listen to the trash of this world, our old man does, the world wants to, but as pilgrims we want to glorify God. What we listen to must testify that we are pilgrims and strangers here below. The fool of the world will continue to walk in the vanity of his mind. He loves the music of the world today. He listens to it as often as he can and as loud as he can. Never before in history has the child of God been confronted with so much wicked music all around him. The days are evil. We must listen keenly and attentively to sermons, family devotions and catechism instruction. The wise son and daughter can listen to tapes of Psalms and sermons. We can listen to them over and over during the week in our homes, at work and in our cars.

As a child of God, we want to be more spiritually minded. We realize that we must wait on God for His grace to have the mind of Christ, but He uses means. We must put forth an effort to read and study and listen to God's Word, which is the only way He speaks to us.

God works in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" in our pilgrimage here below (Philippians 2:13). In these modern times we consciously live the antithesis. (Romans 8:5, 6) "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSE

Questions from Mrs. George Hoekstra:

What does Rev. Engelsma mean by the words "snot-nosed children, of uneducated parents" as found in the April issue of the **Beacon Lights**, page 4? Are covenant children "snot-nosed" and are all covenant parents "uneducated"? Is this the proper way to speak about covenant children and parents?

Response:

In our schools, teachers undoubtedly do not have to teach snot-nosed children, nor the offspring of uneducated parents. If they had to, they would, humbly, as servants of Him Who washed the dirty feet of His disciples (John 13:5ff.); taught unlearned and ignorant men (Acts 4:13); received notoriously vile sinners who desired to hear Him (Luke 15:1, 2); and redeemed—and now saves—the foolish, weak, base, despised, and no-account among sinners (I Cor. 1:26ff.). Immediately following the quotation that appeared in **Beacon Lights** are these words: "He who would be great in the Kingdom, let him be the servant, not the lord, but the servant of all, according to the example of Him Who washes our feet and died for us. The Christian teacher must be humble. . . ." (**Reformed Education**, pp. 62, 63).

David Engelsma

His grace is sufficient, whatever the pathway,
His strength in thy weakness shall perfected be;
So great is His love it never can weary
Of meeting thy need and of caring for thee.

His grace is sufficient, thou ne'er canst exhaust it,
Be strong in that grace which floweth to thee,
Draw largely, continually, out from His fullness,
He still is sufficient, He careth for thee.

—Author Unknown

REV. R. C. HARBACH

GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?"
(Ps. 139:7)

The theme of this passage is God's omnipresence. Not that the psalmist would want to, but no one can escape to a place where God is not. The psalmist looks at the matter personally, Whither shall I go? It is wise to make personal application of this, to say, His banner over **me** is love; underneath me are the everlasting arms; behind me is a voice of a gentle stillness; before me is the Angel of His presence. God's omnipresence is a comfort to me. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, not merely from Thy Holy Spirit, the third person of the trinity, but from Thine essence. (God is, essentially, Spirit. Jn. 4:24). "Whither shall I go from Thy presence?" — not God's gracious presence, for he prays against such (Ps. 51:11), but His omnipresence which is everywhere. "From Thy presence" is literally, "from Thy persons." (The same word is in Lev. 19:15, "thou shalt not respect the **person** of the poor, nor honor the **person** of the Almighty.") There is no way to flee the all-surrounding three persons of the trinity. "If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there." The Lord is certainly "at home" in His heavenly palace, sitting on His throne. To fly there would be like flying into the body of the sun to escape the light. "If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there." God is in both regions, the heaven of glory and the hell of darkness. God is in hell, exacting the satisfaction of His justice and pouring out His wrath eternally on the wicked.

Will the dictionary help us to understand the word **omnipresence**? Some. Webster says, "**Omnipresence** is an attribute peculiar to God." In that attribute He is with His whole being "present everywhere at the same time."

Webster also says, "The **ubiquity** (existence everywhere at the same time) of God is not disputed by those who admit His existence." Funk and Wagnalls says, " . . . in theology, universal presence of the divine essence in His unitary wholeness, as opposed to the diffusive presence and identity of Pantheism . . ." Berkhof's **Systematic Theology** defines it as "that perfection of the divine being by which He transcends all special limitations, and yet is present in every point of space with His whole being." In Bavinck's **The Doctrine of God** we read that God is transcendent above all space, since space is a mode of creature existence, and is immanent in space, filling every unit of space with His whole being, not diffused through space like light.

God through Jeremiah's prophecy asks, "Am I a God at hand and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." (23:23-24). God, filling heaven and earth, is present in both. Far and near are both alike to Him. God's infinite being is not bounded or limited by space or time, but is transcendent above both. God already was, before there was any space (or time). His perfection of omnipresence then, in eternity, was the same as now. So that then He dwelt in Himself; He inhabited eternity. (Isa. 57:15). Do not I, with My whole being, fill every point in space at one and the same time? Some have said that God is not only near but afar because He is in everything. But we could also say everything is in Him, for "in Him we live, and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28). In regard to His essence, God is as much with the bad as the good, as much the scoffing Athenians as with those believing the apostle's preaching. "He is not far from every one of us." But He is not equally with all men as to His beneficent omnipresence. We live in God more than in the atmosphere in which we move. God is nearer to us than the air we breathe. Beyond our understanding is it to conceive of God filling heaven and earth and yet that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. (I Kings 8:27). God cannot be contained. Any number of angels are said to be able to stand upon the point of a needle; but they could not at the same time stand also on another needle-point. God alone bears the name Jehovah-shammah, "the Lord is there" (i.e., here, there and everywhere).

God is. God is always (eternally). So God in His essence is always everywhere. All time is but a moment to God's eternity; so all space is but a point to His essence, immensity and omnipresence.

The attribute of God is incommunicable. It cannot be conveyed to any creature. No creature can have communicated to him God's infinity, simplicity, eternity, immutability, immensity or omnipresence. Although the human and the divine natures of Christ are united in the divine Person forever, the attribute of ubiquity or omnipresence cannot be communicated to the human nature of Christ. The Lutheran theology reasons that Christ in His human nature is everywhere, because He sits at the right hand of God and the right hand of God is everywhere. The idea is not so much of attributing infinite omnipresence to Christ's humanity as that Christ in His humanity can be wherever He wants to be. On this line of reasoning one could just as well say that since the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord the heart of any and every king is everywhere. The Lutheran reasoning confuses Christ's humanity with His deity, making the humanity the same as the deity, not united to it. But we believe, "Christ . . . according to His human nature is not now on earth, but in heaven, at the right hand of God His Father and will there be worshiped by us." (Heidelberg Catechism XXX).

God is infinite in all His attributes. "His greatness is unsearchable." He does

great and unsearchable things. (Job 5:9). His understanding is infinite (Ps. 147:5). "The duration of His years cannot be searched out." (Job 36:26). With His attributes infinite, then His being must be also; for His attributes are His essence; they flow from His essence. There really is no distinction between His essence and His attributes. They are inseparable. God is not distinct from His attributes. Then His presence is infinite; it has to be everywhere; so does His essence. So it is correct to say, "God is everywhere," but "Everything is God," is not correct. Christian Science claims that truth is arrived at by the rule of inversion. For example, the true statement which can be inverted (turned into the converse) and still make grammatical sense, will also be true. So, God is all (true), and the converse is also true, All is God (not true!). Matter is nothing (not true). Nothing is matter (false). God is love (true). Love is God (false). There is no pain in truth (false: cp. Mt. 25:41). There is no truth in pain (false: cp. Ps. 119:71). God is all reality. All reality is God. Beware of such statements. God is essentially present everywhere in everything, yet it does follow from this that then everything would be God. For everything retains its nature, distinct from the nature of God. The creature remains creature and the Creator remains Creator.

This attribute, omnipresence, of infinite deity, belongs to Christ. The incommunicable perfections of the divine nature, those of eternity (Jn. 1:1), immutability, omniscience (1:48; 2:24, 25), omnipresence, are, by divine revelation, ascribed to Him in John 3:13, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that come down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven." He (the divine Person) **came** down from heaven, thirty years prior, to be incarnated in the womb of the virgin. Yet at the same time, He **is**, not was, in heaven, as of right then, at the moment the words were spoken — He **is**, always, eternally in heaven by His deity and deity's omnipresence. In His humanity, as man, He was locally on earth, but in His deity, as God, He was also in heaven.

This truth of God's presence is most comforting to believers. The Lord says of His church, "I, the Lord, **do** keep it . . . I **will** keep it night and day." (Isa. 27:3). God is present by covenant with His church. "I will be with thee; I will not leave thee!" He is always with us to strengthen in ordinary circumstances, or to come to our aid in emergencies. When in misery, He is there with mercy; in affliction, He is there with grace; in weakness, there is the presence of His power. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee." We do not worship a distant God. The fish is not distant from, but in its environment, the water. The bird is not distant from, but in its environment, the air. So we as Christians in this world are not distant from our spiritual environment, God. For we are in Him, live in Him, have our being in Him.

God's omnipresence will provide the answer to many of our questions. In God's house, at the hour of worship, how shall we compose our minds to be serious? Mind God's presence. How shall we worship Him without distraction? Think of His presence. How shall we drive out sinful thoughts and overcome temptation? Oppose them with God's holy presence, with the prayer, Hallowed by Thy **name** (Thy attributes)! Activated faith in this divine attribute will quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. How shall we then live from day to day? "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." —Prov. 3:6. Acknowledge Him before any work by prayer, and afterward by thanksgiving. Acknowledge His presence before, in and after worship. Study to know more of the Messiah's experience, "In Thy presence is the fulness of joy." —Ps. 16:11.

Convention Outlines
EDUCATION, A PREPARATION FOR LIFE

by Chuck Terpstra

Introduction

1. One of the many questions which you as Reformed Young People confront as you grow and develop into spiritual maturity is the question, "What will God have me do in life? or What place does God have for me in His Kingdom?" and then too, "How do I know and find out this calling and place God has for me?"
2. This is an important question which Young People too often push aside until they are well past high school age, or which they do not seriously consider at all so that they simply "fall into" a vocation to which they perhaps have not been called by God.
3. This question is closely related to your education, for it is your education which plays a large part in determining what your calling is and how to fulfill it before God.
4. Therefore, the purpose of this outline is to deal with this basic question by laying down some basic principles, and raising a few questions for your consideration and discussion.

I. The Life For Which You Ought To Be Prepared
   A. Negatively:
      1. It is not a mere earthly life and existence
         a. Should your education prepare you to be "successful" and "prosperous", to "get ahead" and have the "easy" life in the sense that the world speaks? (cf. Lu. 12:15-21, 22-30; 9:24, 25)
         b. Should your education prepare you to be "model" citizens, to leave your mark on society, to give your contribution to the next generation, and make the world a better place for your posterity?
      2. Nor is it a Christian life which seeks to reform the world and christianize society.
         a. Should your education prepare you to be an influential Christian, to have a high position so as to reform the various spheres of life?
         b. Should your education prepare you to be an instrument to claim

the world for Christ and bring about an earthly, carnal Kingdom of God? (Jn. 18:36; Matt. 5:3, 10)

B. Positively:
   1. As children of God you have been given the life of Christ in your heart by God's work of regeneration.
      a. That life is "other worldly", for it is spiritual, heavenly life (Jn. 3:3-8, 36; 11:25, 26; I Pe. 1:23)
      b. By virtue of that life you are a citizen of the kingdom of **heaven**. (Jn. 3:5; Phil. 3:20)
   2. Out of the principle of this spiritual life God calls you to live in the midst of this world in every sphere of life to His glory.
      a. God does not take you **out of** this world, but commands you to live **in** it. Yet in this world you are to live **in** it, though not **of** it (the life of the antithesis) Jn. 17: 14-18.
      b. And in this world God gives to each one of you a specific calling or vocation. Is it true that only teachers and ministers have callings, but everyone else has jobs? Are there vocations to which God does **not** call you, both as young men and as young women? Are there spheres of life in which the Christian may not labor? What bearing does the antithesis have on your calling?
      c. This calling of God you must find and fulfill as His servants. Thus your education must also prepare you for this calling in the midst of the world.

II. The Kind of Education Which Will Prepare You For This Life
   A. In General
      1. Negatively,
         a. Public school education with its godless principles of life cannot prepare you for your calling.
         b. Nor will a generally Christian education prepare you for your life's calling.
      2. Positively, your education must be specifically Reformed and biblical.
         a. It must be biblical because the Word of God alone must be our guide to lead us into a life of service to God in whatever calling that may be (cf. Ps. 119:105; II Tim. 3:16, 17).
         b. And that also means a soundly Reformed education. Thus as much as possible we must be prepared for life in our own Protestant Reformed schools where the principles of the Reformed faith are applied to each area of life in this world. How important is the education of the **home** when this kind of education is not possible?
   B. Specifically
      1. What kind of education will best prepare you at the high school level?
         a. Should our own high school (or any other for those who are not able to attend Covenant Chr. High School) limit itself to the

liberal arts, giving you a broad basis for your calling without specifically guiding you in a single direction?

b. Should our own high school include vocational/technical education which trains you in a specific field of labor such as shop, carpentry, home making, etc.? Or should it allow students to attend other vocational institutions (as e.g. Kent Skills)? Or would a co-op profitably prepare you for a certain skill?

2. What type of education will prepare you at the college level?
   a. Since we do not have our own college (should we?), should you seek an education from a Christian college in the area to which you feel called?
   b. Or would an education at a secular college be better? Since many of today's Christian colleges have wrong views on the life of the Christian in society, should you choose a public institution where at least the wrong is clearly wrong?
   c. Should you pursue a college education at all if you are unsure of your calling? Or will it help you to come to a decision?

III. **Your** Responsibility As Young People Toward Your Education

A. As Young People you need to take an active part in your education.
   1. Often as Young People we place all the responsibility for being prepared for our calling on our parents and teachers.
      a. Certainly this is the responsibility of the parents and teachers according to Scripture (cf. Deut. 6:6, 7; Ps. 78:1-8; Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6)
      b. This is their **covenant** responsibility according to their baptismal vows (cf. the Baptism Form, the third question and the prayer of thanksgiving)
   2. But your responsibility is also very important.
      a. Education and therefore your preparation for life cannot take place unless there is both teaching **and learning**. Education implies submission and obedience to the teacher as well as appropriating the knowledge which is taught.
      b. The book of Proverbs especially emphasizes the responsibility of the Young People in this respect (cf. Prov. 1:7-9; 2:1, 2, 5, 10ff.; 3:1-4, 21-24; 4, etc. -cf. also Eccles. 12:1).

B. How Can You Take A More Active Role?
   1. By more seriously considering your calling in life earlier, especially during the high school years. Ask yourselves some basic questions: What talents and interests do I have? How am I going to use my god given abilities to the best of my ability?
   2. Seek to determine your calling consciously before the face of God. Ask yourselves, "What does God tell me about my calling in His Word? Pray to Him about His will for you, asking for wisdom and guidance to know what He will have you do.
   3. Seek the help of others: your parents, teachers, even pastors. How

can they be of help to you in making this decision? Do they know your abilities better than you do, so that they can give more objective advice?

4. Finally, once you are convinced of your vocation, pursue it willingly, cheerfully, diligently, and faithfully! (take Prov. 3:5, 6 to **heart**!)

BROTHERLY LOVE

by Steve Key

"Let brotherly love continue." Heb. 13:1.

I. The Brother
   A. What is the meaning of "brother" in Hebrews 13:1?
      1. "Brother" is used in different ways in Scripture.
         a. children of the same mother, as Cain and Abel. Gen. 4:2.
         b. descendants from a common root, namely, Adam. Gen. 9:5; Acts 17:26.
         c. spiritual brothers. Ps. 22:22; Matt. 18:15.
      2. The term "brother" or "brethren" was instituted by Christ in reference to those elect in Him. Matt. 12:50; 25:40; Heb. 2:11-13.
         a. Their relationship is not antagonistic, nor do they have in common only superficial concerns.
         b. But they are united in an intimate bond of fellowship.
   B. What do spiritual brothers have in common?
      1. They are born from above by the Spirit of God.
         a. They all have the same Father. Rom. 8:15; Matt. 23:8, 9.
         b. They bear the same image, II Cor. 3:18, renewed in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Eph. 4:23, 24; Col. 3:9, 10.
         c. They are said to be of one heart and of one soul. Acts 4:32.
      2. Spiritual brothers are confessors of the same faith and share the same calling. Eph. 4:4, 5; I Thess. 4:9.

II. Brotherly Love
   A. What it is
      1. It is a virtue which lies outside of the realm of the natural man. Rom. 8:7; 14:23b.
         a. It is not lust, which is nothing more than perverse human desire. Titus 3:3, 4; James 1:14, 15; I John 2:16, 17.
         b. It is not mere human affection. You can see affection even in animals.

c. That means that what the world calls "love" is not love.

2. Brotherly love has its foundation only in Christ. I John 5:1; 4:10, 11.
   a. It is a divine virtue, a reflection of the intimate bond of perfect fellowship that exists between the 3 persons of the Holy Trinity. I John 4:8; John 3:35.
   b. Brotherly love exists only between two or more persons who are perfectly righteous according to God's standard of righteousness. Col. 3:14; I Cor. 13:6.
   c. Thus, brotherly love is possible only because Christ's self-sacrificing love was far more than an example for us to follow. Phil. 2:5-8.
      1) His love draws His brothers to Him and into Him.
      2) He is the only possibility and source of our love for one another. Rom. 5:5; I John 4:12, 13, 16.

3. It is not only a nice ideal, but a commandment. John 15:12; I John 4:21.
   a. It is a new commandment, new in the sense that it is seen in a new light. John 13:34; I John 2:7, 8.
   b. Christ has come to fulfill the law which we could not possibly perform, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. Rom. 8:3, 4.

B. Its Manifestation

1. Its manifestation is stifled by:
   a. an exclusive self-love and love for the things of this present world. I John 2:14, 15.
   b. ignorance of the true nature of brotherly love, and lack of concern about the exercise of it. I Cor. 13:1-3.
   c. spiritual pride, a know-it-all attitude. Prov. 13:10.

2. Brotherly love is manifested according to the standard of Christ. John 13:34.
   a. It consists in a complete giving of self, Rom. 8:6-8; Phil. 2:5-8; John 15:13; and a ministering to others, rather than being ministered to. John 13:14, 15.
   b. Its manifestation is in proportion to our love for the Lord Himself. I John 4:16.
      1) I Cor. 13:4-8.
      2) It is shown only after honest self-examination and repentance.

3. Its manifestation appears in:
   a. counting the brother better than self. Rom. 12:10; Phil. 2:2, 3; Col. 3:12.
   b. being kind to one another. II Peter 1:7.
   c. supplication for all saints. Eph. 6:18.
   d. serving one another. John 13:14, 15; James 1:27.
   e. abhoring evil and cleaving to that which is good. Rom. 12:9.
   f. forgiving one another. Col. 3:13.

g. edifying one another. Heb. 10:24, 25; Rom. 15:1-7.

C. Its Fruits
   1. Brotherly love will cover a multitude of sins. I Peter 4:8; Prov. 10:12.
   2. It will bear the fruit of unity among the brethren. Ps. 133:1-3; Col. 2:2.
   3. The brothers shall be established in holiness. I Thess. 3:12, 13.

III. Questions
   A. Are all those within the church our brothers? Confer such passages as Gal. 3:28; II Thess. 3:14, 15; Matt. 18:15-17.
   B. Is our love toward the brother to be expressed differently than our love toward our neighbor?
   C. Do we use the language of the world in calling "love" that which is not love?
   D. Is there a lack of brotherly love in our midst? Why? (Cf James 4:1-3, e.g.)
   E. When a brother is walking in sin, do I show my love for him by seeking to lead him to the cross, while at the same time esteeming him better than myself?
   F. Is our attitude that of Paul in II Cor. 12:15?
   G. Confer I Tim. 4:12. Do we pray for our pastors and elders that they may fulfill their calling to be examples in this regard?

CHRISTIAN INVOLVEMENT IN MORAL ACTION MOVEMENTS

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

We are living in a day in which there is a moral crisis developing in our land.

Just recently someone opened a pornography shop about five blocks down the street from our home; and there is a growing movement in which several local churches are cooperating to try to prevent this shop from expanding and, if possible, to drive it from our neighborhood. This raises for us as Christians a very real question, how far should we go in cooperating with a movement such as this?

There is no question, of course, that we would like to have that shop out of our neighborhood. There is nothing nice about having to look at their advertising every time one rides down the street; and the kind of people that such a place attracts into the neighborhood isn't very good either. Neither can any one be very sure that such a place does not promote and increase the incidence of rape and assault and all of the other immoral behavior

which has become epidemic and frightening in our day. Just from a practical point of view there are many reasons why we might want to join in a movement to outlaw such operations; and that says nothing as yet about the religious principles involved.

But that brings me to another problem. Just a few years ago when I was on the radio a man approached me with the request that I promote a proposed bill to ban pornography in the state of Michigan. He gave me a copy of the bill to read, and I soon discovered that in the whole bill, which was quite lengthy, there was no reference whatsoever to any Biblical or even generally religious principles. It sought to fight a deeply moral wickedness on a purely practical and secular level. But can and should a Christian participate in movements such as that? There was reason for this, of course. In our present political environment Christian principles will not be given serious consideration because of the demand for separation of church and state. And so those who would seek to promote effectively legislation to outlaw these moral abuses feel compelled to try to function on a purely practical and secular level; but can a Christian then be part of it? Can we agree to act or cooperate on a purely secular level, leaving our Christian principles behind or unspoken, just because we desire the practical result?

And pornography, of course, is only part of many such moral issues which are engulfing us in this day. There are matters such as abortion, homosexuality, divorce, Sunday business, drunkenness, drugs, etc. which are everywhere. What is our degree of Christian responsibility over against things such as this? And what should we do about them?

The answer to this whole problem is not easy. All through their history the Reformed churches have wrestled with this matter in many different ways. Originally Calvin in Geneva worked hard to have the city ruled on Christian principles and to exercise a moral discipline over the people; but it involved a constant struggle with the town counsel which very often he did not win. After that his followers succeeded in implanting the principles of moral governmental responsibility in some of the major creeds, i.e. the English in the Westminster Confessions, and the Dutch in the Netherlands Confession (Art. 36) but the actual practice of this succeeded only for brief periods of time in limited situations. In the last century once again a great effort was made, especially in the Netherlands, to adapt the problem of religious responsibility to modern social and political situations; and yet the very churches which for a generation worked hardest at this have now slipped the farthest from sound moral principles and practice.

The issue is not an easy one; and I do not at this point presume to spell out an answer; but there is a great deal of room for discussion and study:

1. What does the Bible say about the responsibility of a Christian in regard to moral problems?
2. Can examples be found in the Bible of legal action being taken, or legal channels being used, to deal with moral issues. (In this regard, consideration should be given to the difference between Old Testament examples and New Testament examples. What difference does it make?)
3. What are we to think about Art. 36 of the Netherlands Confession? And what about the footnote of 1910 which sought to limit it?
4. Does the Bible have anything to say as to whether we can and should cooperate with those who share a practical moral goal with us while we differ with them on moral principles?

Discussion Outlines for I Samuel
CHAPTERS 17, 18, and 19

by Rev. R. Hanko

A. David and Goliath (chapter 17).
   1. Goliath of Gath:
      a. Look up Joshua 11:22 and Numbers 13:28-33 in connection with Genesis 6:4 and explain who Goliath was.
      b. Was Goliath the last of the race of giants? Cf. I Chr. 20:4-8.
      c. How tall was Goliath?
      d. By consulting a Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia can you give some idea of the weight of Goliath's armor?
      e. Why are all these details recorded about Goliath (Ps. 38:19, 69:4)?
   2. Israel's fear:
      a. Why did Goliath propose to fight in single combat with a soldier of Israel (Ps. 52:1-3)?
      b. Why were Saul and the Israelites afraid (Deut. 28:66, 67)?
   3. David's arrival:
      a. Where was David at this time (Ps. 78:70-72)?
      b. Why was David so upset when he learned about the situation (Heid. Cat., Lord's Day XXXVI, Ps. 139:19-22)?
      c. Why according to verse 36, did David remind Saul that Goliath was an "uncircumcised" Philistine (Judges 5:31, Ps. 68:1)?
      d. Why was David's brother Eliab angry with Him? Was Eliab correct (Job 32:6-9)?
      e. Why did David tell Saul the story of the lion and the bear (Ps. 20:7, Rom. 8:37)?
   4. The victory over Goliath and the Philistines:
      a. Why did David go to battle unarmed except for a sling (II Cor. 10:4, Ps. 8:2, I Cor. 1:27-29)?
      b. Why did Goliath curse David when he saw him coming to fight?
      c. Did David kill Goliath with the sling or with Goliath's sword when he cut off his head?
      d. Why did the rest of the Philistine army flee when they saw their champion slain (Ex. 23:27, Deut. 11:25)?
      e. How do you reconcile Saul's questions (vss. 55-58) with the fact that David had been in Saul's court (16:19-23)? Why did Saul ask who David was and whose son he was (Gen. 49:10)?

5. The significance:
   a. In what ways is David's victory over Goliath a picture of the battle of faith which we must fight (Eph. 6:12, Heb. 11:32-34, II Cor. 10:4)?
   b. Of what is David's sling a picture (Ps. 44:5-7, 20:7, 8)?
   c. Of what is Saul's armor, which David could not and would not wear, a picture? What cannot we use in the battle of faith?

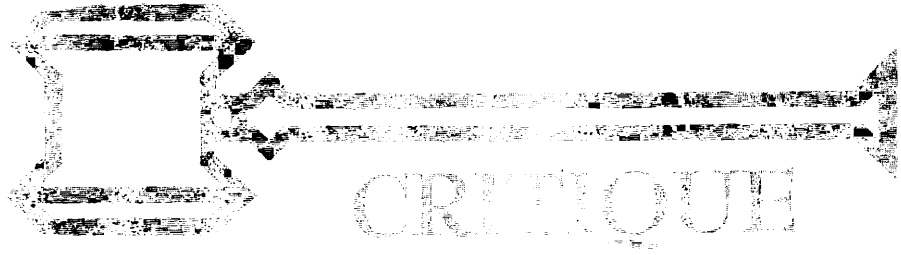
B. Saul's jealousy (chapter 18).
1. The friendship of David and Jonathan:
   a. Why did Jonathan love David so greatly? Is his love an evidence that he feared God (Ps. 119:63, I Jn. 2:10, 3:14)? What can we learn from this?
   b. Do you think that this friendship had anything to do with Saul's hatred and jealousy of David (cf. chap. 20:30, 31)?
2. The attitude of the people toward David:
   a. What did the song of the women who greeted Saul and David returning from battle mean (Ps. 2:4-6, 89:19-23, II Sam. 7:9)?
   b. Do you think Saul's reaction is evidence that he had begun to suspect that David would be his successor?
   c. How did David conduct himself in Saul's presence and what was the result of this (I Pet. 2:17-23)?
3. Saul's first attempt to take David's life:
   a. Was this the only time that Saul attempted to kill David in this way (19:10)?
   b. Did David escape only because he was so quick witted (vs. 12, Ps. 27:1-3)?
   c. Why did Saul make David a captain in his army when he failed to kill him (Ps. 37:12)?
4. David's marriage:
   a. Why did Saul promise his daughter Merab to David and what request did he make?
   b. When Saul broke his promise and tried to make it up by giving his daughter Michal to David he commanded his servants to speak to David secretly. Why?
   c. What strange dowry did Saul demand of David? Why did he ask this? Was he still plotting against David?
   d. What was the fruit of all Saul's plots (Ps. 7:15, Eccl. 10:8)?

C. David becomes a fugitive (chapter 19).
1. Saul declares his evil purpose:
   a. Why did Saul command his servants and Jonathan to kill David? How did Jonathan persuade him to give up this evil attempt?
   b. When and why did Saul break the oath he had made to Jonathan?
   c. What does all of this show about Saul (Ex. 8:15, Rom. 1:28, 9:18)?
2. David's escape:
   a. How did Saul seek to use Michal against David?
   b. Were the lies that were told in helping David to escape justified

(Heid. Cat. Lord's Day XLIII)?

c. Where did David go when he fled from Saul and why (Ps. 12:5-7)?

3. Psalm 39:
   a. Look up this Psalm, read it and study it in connection with the events we have been talking about.
   b. How does David characterize Saul and his servants in this Psalm?
   c. How can David pray against Saul as he does in the Psalm?
   d. How does David show his faith in this Psalm?
4. David's escape from Naioth:
   a. What happened to the messengers whom Saul sent to Naioth to take David and how many times did this happen?
   b. What did Saul attempt to do and what happened to him?
   c. What was the Lord trying to teach Saul by this (Num. 22:18, Prov. 21:1)?
   d. What comfort could David and we derive from this?



LOVING YOUR WIFE FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

by Bernie Kamps

In Colossians husbands are exhorted to love their wives and not to be bitter against them. My first reaction is, of course I'll love her. Doesn't it even strike you as an action that you can't help but do. Especially if you are engaged now or newly married. You may say I have spent my most enjoyable and memorable times with her. As you dated you discussed your lives, your beginnings, evaluated your families, your likes and dislikes. After many conversations concerning doctrine and spiritual issues the two of you decided which church to attend. And because of all the time together, you have grown deeply in love.

Enters the old man of sin. In any relationship no matter how strong or how spiritual, people have conflicts, some more - some less. So today as husbands and future husbands we are called to obey scripture's teachings.

I Peter 3:7 "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together

of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

What does it mean for a husband to dwell with his wife according to knowledge? A husband must know that he is the head of the home and with this God given position comes a tremendous amount of spiritual responsibility. He must lead his wife in God's word. He must be a proper example. We husbands must dwell with them, making sure we are home. Today it is very easy to become too busy with outside interests whether it be work, school or outside recreation. Dwelling with her properly means being home is the rule not the exception.

According to knowledge, again know what scripture states of her noble position in God's covenant. God is pleased to elevate her above the angels. Your wife is a help meet for you, created to be such even as Eve was for Adam. And if she becomes a mother, she has the unique calling of bearing covenant seed. God has been pleased to give the woman the blessing of bringing forth Christ in the past and today to bring forth the church militant until Christ returns.

Contrary to the opinion of the godless world she is not to be used as a sexual play thing or looked upon as a dumb nagging woman. She is not a partner, on the end of your arm, who makes you look good.

Honor her as a spiritual sister in Christ. Love her and cherish her with the knowledge of God in your heart. Hold her in high esteem. Discuss with her the difficulty of struggling with sin in her life.

Remember her in prayer. Encourage her in her calling and daily labors. Forgive her of her sins and ask forgiveness of yours. This may sound easy, but when there is sin between the two of you only the grace of God will allow you to forgive one another. Pray for it. Consider yourself, know your iniquities. We husbands must be longsuffering as Christ is of His Bride, the church. Even as Christ has forgiven us as husbands time and again, forgive her for Christ's sake.

She is the weaker vessel, not inferior, second rate or in any way a lesser person. She is more fragile, delicate like a flower. It pleased God to create her thus and man as the picture of strength. God has created her emotionally more tender. Husbands must know that their wives can't handle stress as they do, don't subject her to it. Take care to protect her from carrying too large a mental burden.

Being heirs together of the grace of life is a wonderful truth. You and she share the rewards of Christ's agony, death on the cross, and His life giving resurrection. Together Christ has redeemed you both from your debt of sin.

As husband and wife you walk arm and arm on the pathway of life to final victory over sin and death. Look upon her as such. God has graciously blessed you with your most treasured earthly possession. A blessed marriage is a truth most wonderful.

That your prayers be not hindered. Now the warning! Ill treat her? You will suffer. God's ears are tightly shut to your prayers. Try to live piously in every aspect of your life and not love your wife? God will plague you, your conscience and leave you spiritually empty.

It is impossible to ask for forgiveness of our sins, plead with God to fill us with grace and not love our wife as we ought. You can't justify yourself by saying she is wrong (even if she is) and not going to her and discussing the particular sin between you. No, go to her and reconcile differences for Christ's sake. If Christ waited for us to come to Him, heaven would be empty. His throne would never be approached. No sinner would come to Christ's door and knock asking for forgiveness unless Christ's loving arm draws him.

As husbands let's pray for grace to be loving husbands emulating our head, Jesus Christ.

Focus On Christian Women

THE JOYS OF CONCEPTION: INTRODUCTION

by Carol Brands

Young Christian Woman!

If there is anything the last series of seven articles on the sorrows of conception was **not** intended to do, it was to discourage any Christian woman from having children. I certainly hope that this was not the case. Children are intended by God for a **blessing** to the Christian husband and wife and must constantly be viewed from that perspective.

Rather, the intent of those articles was to begin the concrete fact that, due to sin, there are sorrows accompanying child-bearing and to prepare the Christian young woman to give a Biblical, Godly response to these sorrows whenever she meets them.

Compare the necessity of this once with the kind of instruction the home must give on the issue of marriage. Young Woman, do you want your parents to give you a false, unbiblical view of marriage by telling you only of the pleasures of marriage? Would it prepare you for dating and marriage if your parents told you only of the pleasures of marriage? Do you desire then totally to ignore the sin and problems which also mar marriage? Or is it not rather for your profit to be prepared to meet marriage's difficulties, to know honestly what to expect and how to respond to these difficulties? And again, Young Woman, will you shy away from marriage because you know both sides of it, its sorrows as well as its joys? Or will you not rather follow the leading of your Father in heaven, thanking Him for the joys of Godly marriage and trusting Him also to work out the difficulties?

I don't know any statistics. If someone tried to give me some, I am sure I wouldn't believe them, either. But if such statistics were possible, I would guess that the young woman who is taught a balanced view of marriage — both its pros and cons — would find herself far more capable of coping spiritually when the problems of marriage arise.

And in the same way, I believe that a discussion of both the sorrows and joys of conception should be present to prepare the young woman to face the responsibilities of motherhood. These articles aren't just for the married young woman, although we also benefit from such discussions; these are written in the **Beacon Lights** for the purpose of preparing those usually younger than those who are married. We have had seven articles on the sorrows of conception. We plan now, God permitting, to have seven articles on the **joys** of conception. And then we would like seven final articles on the **responsibilities** of conception. The overall purpose of these articles is to prepare you, the maturing young woman,

for childbearing and childrearing.

God calls you, young women, to be Christian mothers in Israel. This is the normal calling of the Christian woman. It is her responsibility, therefore. But God also wants you before marriage and conception to know "what you are getting into", what sorrows and problems may arise in this calling. Then you will also be able to see beyond the problems as they arise to the joys which God holds in store for you. You must know what goals to carry with you.

And so, we must not know only the sorrows that conception carries for us, as we have discussed in the last series, but also we must know what joys God has prepared for us by means of these sorrows. As in any area of life, we must try to have the balanced Biblical perspective or we won't be ready for the challenge. The hard part is to keep our perspective always "balanced."

As we begin this second series of the "Joys of Conception", may we work to keep such a Biblical balance. May we keep in mind always that God has prepared for His children eternal blessings and may we find delight in the fact of these joys. And may we not stumble over tha fact that there are also sorrows but may we realize that God gives to each person the exact amount of sorrows necessary to find the joys He has before prepared for us. As we accept the sorrows by faith with thanksgiving, so also by faith God leads us into paths of joy.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew and Mark and Luke and John, the Holy Gospels wrote,
Describing how the Saviour died, his life and all he taught;
Acts prove how God the Apostles owned, with signs in every place;
St. Paul, in Romans, teaches us how man is saved by grace;
The Apostle in Corinthians, instructs, exhorts, reproves;
Galatians shows that faith in Christ alone the Father loves;
Ephesians and Philippians tell what Christians ought to be;
Colossians bid us live for God and for Eternity;
In Thessalonians we are taught the Lord will come from heaven,
In Timothy, and Titus, too, a bishop's rule is given;
Philemon marks a Christian's love, which only Christians know;
Hebrews reveals the Gospel plan prefigured by the law;
James teaches, without holiness, faith is but vain and dead;
St. Peter points the narrow way in which the saints are led;
John, in his three Epistles, still, on love delights to dwell;
St. Jude gives awful warnings of just judgment, wrath and hell;
The Revelations prophecies of that tremendous day,
When Christ, and Christ alone, shall be the trembling sinner's stay.

— The Way

WHAT'S HAPPENING

by Paula Faber

NEWCOMERS:
God blessed:

Mr. and Mrs. B. Brands of Loveland Church, with a son, Michael John.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Veldman, of Hudsonville Church, with a son, Randall Wayne, on March 5.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Kamps of Hope Church, with a daughter, Paula Jean.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Huizinga, of Hope Church, with a daughter, Sara Anne.

Mr. and Mrs. B. Kamminga, of Hudsonville Church, with a daughter, Pamela Joy, on March 14.

Mr. and Mrs. B. Gritters, of Hope Church, with a son, Eric Ben, on March 23.

Mr. and Mrs. G. Dykstra, of Hope Church, with a son, Carl Robert.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Hendriks, of Redlands Church, with a son, Joel Henry, on October 11.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Meelker, of Redlands Church, with a son, Casey Bernard, on October 13.

Mr. and Mrs. L. Feenstra, of Redlands Church, with a daughter, Jacqueline Mickel, on November 15.

Mr. and Mrs. M. Gritters, of Redlands Church, with a daughter, Julianne, on March 18.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Schimmel, of Southeast Church, with a son, on April 6.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Petroelje, of Faith Church, with a daughter, Leah Dawn.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Kamps, of Hope Church, with a daughter, Betsy Ann.

Rev. and Mrs. R. Hanko, of Covenant N.J. Church, with a son.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Karsten, of Faith Church, with a son, Jonathan Dale.

Mr. and Mrs. T. Schipper, of Hudsonville Church, with a son, Andrew Gordon, on April 4.

Mr. and Mrs. M. Engelsma, of Hudsonville Church, with a daughter, Michelle Joy.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Wiersma, of South Holland Church, with a son, Luke Daniel.

MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS:

Hope Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Daling and four baptized children from the Walker Christian Reformed Church.

First Church of Grand Rapids received the papers of Rev. and Mrs. G. Lubbers from our Faith Church.

Faith Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. M. Richards and three baptized children from our Hope Church.

Doon Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. J. Van Oort from a Christian Reformed Church.

Doon Church received the papers of Mr. Joel Van Ginkel from our Loveland Church.

Hudsonville Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. R. Teitsma from our Southeast Church.

Southeast Church received the papers of Mr. Scott Kunst from Alpine Ave. Chr. Ref. Church.

South Holland Church received the papers of Mr. Mark Woudenberg from our Houston Church.

South Holland Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. J. Folkerts and

their baptized son from the First Chr. Ref. Church of Des Plaines.

MARRIAGES:

Carlyle Miersma and Marcia Hanko were joined in marriage April 15.

Rick Lubbers and Jill Dykstra were joined in marriage April 13.

Warren Busscher and Diane Brenner were joined in marriage May 18.

CONFESSION OF FAITH:

Brenda Bomers, Tim Bomers and Tom De Vries made public confession of faith on April 22 in Hope Church.

Amy Moelker made public confession of faith on April 29 in Southeast Church.

Chris Feenstra, Glenn Feenstra and Robert Van Uffelen made public confession of faith on December 4 in Redlands Church.

Rick Bos, Rick Corson, Chuck Doezema, Mark Looyenga, Dan Monsma, and Kevin Vink made public confession of faith on April 15 in First Church in Grand Rapids.

ACTIVITIES:

On March 25 Covenant Christian H.S. presented a concert at Hudsonville Church.

On April 6 the Young People's Society of Edmonton Church sponsored a Spaghetti Supper. Proceeds went for the coming convention.

On April 8 Hudsonville Choral Society gave an Easter Concert.

On April 15 Faith Choral Society presented its concert.

ACTIVITIES:

The Randolph Young People's Society sponsored a soup supper on March 20 to raise money for the coming convention.

The Redlands Young People's Society sponsored a pancake breakfast on March 24.

A Gym Night was sponsored by the young people of South Holland Church.

On April 22 the young people of Redlands Church sponsored a singspiration.

The Federation Board sponsored an Easter Singspiration on April 22 in Faith Church.

Hope Choir and the Radio Choir presented a program on April 29 in First Church of Grand Rapids.

The Jr. and Sr. Young People's Societies held a Second Best and Craft Sale on May 5. Proceeds were for the coming convention.

On May 14 Covenant Chr. H.S. Choir along with the choir of Dordt College presented a concert of Psalms.

1984 SINGSPIRATION SCHEDULE

September 16 — Southwest
November 18 — Faith
December 16 — Hudsonville

The 1984 Convention will be held
AUGUST 6 - 10
at
CALVIN COLLEGE

The Convention Theme is:
"WALKING IN NEWNESS OF LIFE"

Idea	**Romans 6:4-10**	**Rev. Slopsema**
Manifestation	**Romans 6:11-14**	**Rev. Joostens**
Fruit	**Romans 6:21-23**	**Prof. Decker**

Sponsored by
First Young People's Societies

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