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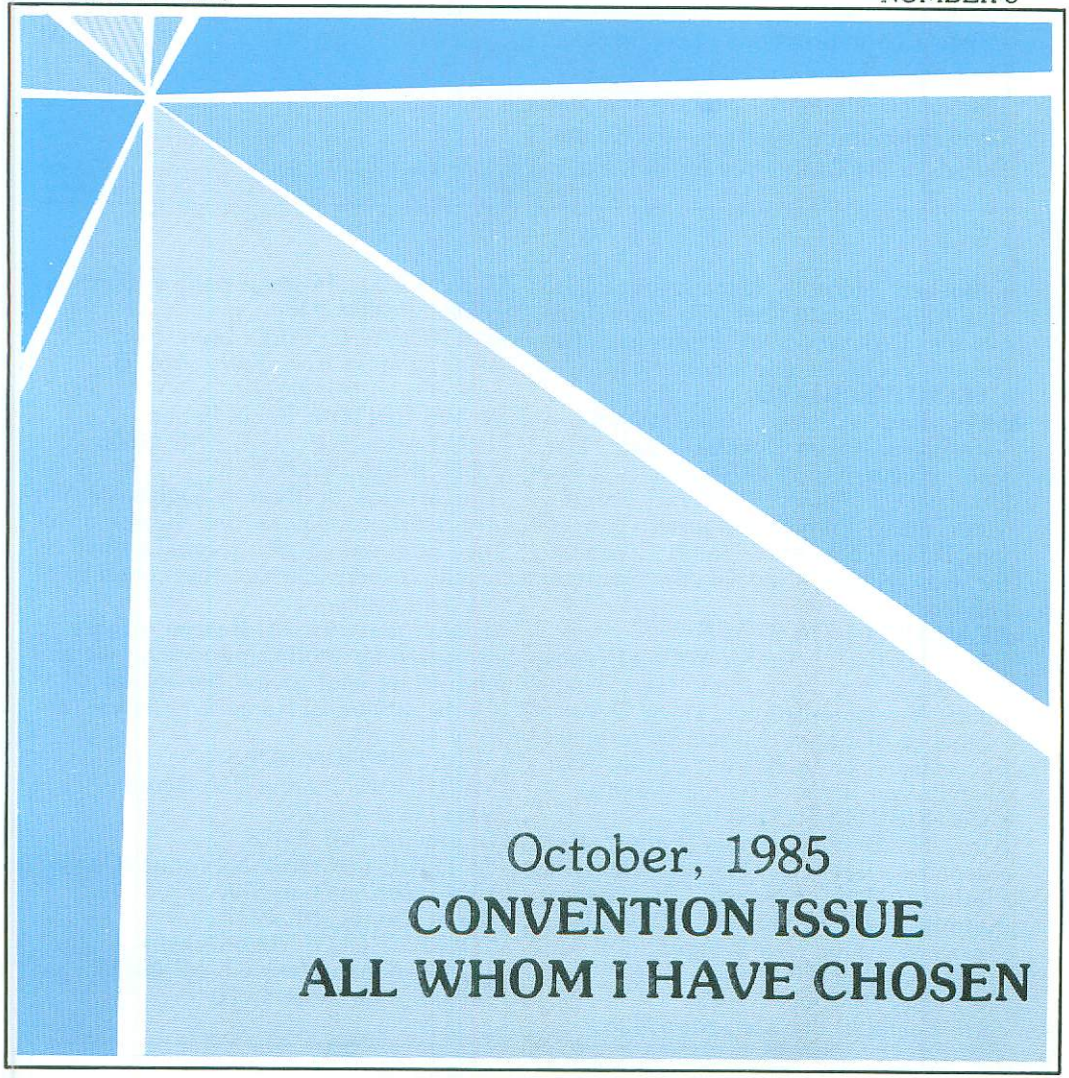

October, 1985

CONVENTION ISSUE

ALL WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN

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Convention Speech
MISSIONS ABROAD

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

Some years ago in Vancouver, B.C. I conducted a Bible class in a bookstore owned by a Mr. Don Robertson, an elder in the Free Presbyterian church there. One day as we were talking he told me how as a little boy in Scotland his father had taken him to the seashore when the tide was out. There before them stretched the great tide flats with little pools of water scattered here and there; and his father said, "Donald, my lad, do you see those pools of water. That is what the church of God is like today, like so many pools of water scattered about over the earth. But some day the tide will come in and then 'the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.' "

What this story reflects is the Post-Millennial view of the old Scotch Presbyterians; but it also serves to point out this text, Isaiah 11:9 with its great importance in the mission of the church, which again relates rather closely to our subject for tonight:

MISSIONS ABROAD

WHAT MISSION WORK IS

To begin with we are going to have to settle in some way on what we mean by **mission work**. I do this somewhat hesitantly because I realize that others will follow me, and they may have their own ideas as to just exactly what **mission work** is. Each of us, however, is going to have to have some idea as to what precisely we have in mind; and in fact, I would urge that you listen carefully to each of the speeches with this question in mind, what does this speaker consider mission work to be?

In my own personal life few questions have concerned me more than this. When I first received the inner call to enter the ministry, it was as a missionary that I sought to serve. After I entered college the first term paper I wrote was on the subject of missions; and about all I remember of it is that when all my study and writing was through I was still uncertain what set mission work apart from the other ministries of the church. And then I entered seminary; but at that time the DeWolf controversy was preoccupying the churches, and all of our efforts were put into maintaining and reestablishing the churches. There was little opportunity for mission outreach of any kind.

But still the concern remains and always with it that elusive question; what is mission work, and how is it distinct from the work of an ordinary minister?

I have suggested this question hundreds of times to others, I think, usually to fellow ministers, but few if any have tried to answer it. For the most part, I suppose, they have not taken it seriously, assuming me to be facetious; after all, we all know what mission work is, and no seminary graduate should be unable to give the

definition. And it is true, I can too; but just because one can give a formal definition doesn't mean that he understands the essence of a thing or can delineate its proper extent. And so the question continues to endure: Do we really know what mission work is?

We are all agreed, of course, that mission work is the gathering of the elect church of God through the means of the official preaching of the Word from all the nations of the world; but how does the practice of it differ from the work of the ministry within the church and within the bounds of the already established covenant, how is the work of missions distinct from the ordinary function of the ordinary pastoral ministry of the Word?

I can remember at the time Rev. DenHartog had received the call to Singapore, we had a farewell for him with the ministers in GR. That night I didn't have a lot of time to talk to him personally, but I did find the opportunity to ask him this one question, Now that you are a missionary, how will this differ from being a pastor? He looked at me somewhat surprised, it seemed, and answered to the effect that he would give it some thought and write me about it later.

I suppose that in the flurry of following activities the question was forgotten. In any case, I never heard from him again on that; but a few weeks ago, when he was here on furlough, he did speak briefly for the ministers, and he gave one of the finest speeches on missions I have yet heard within our churches.

As I recall it from memory, he made three basic points:

1. Mission work must arise out of the spiritual life of the church.
2. Mission work must involve all the offices of the church, not just ministers, but also elders and deacons.
3. Mission work must include preparing all the members of the church for Christian witness.

Which finally brings us back to that question of what mission work is: I'm still not ready to give a comprehensive definition of mission work, but there are several things which can be pointed out:

1. Mission work must arise out of the working of the Holy Spirit in the organic life of the church, and that is more particularly, out of the spiritual desire of the church to be participant in the conversion of sinners. You know of how Jesus said that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety and nine who need no repentance; that same joy and longing should lie in the heart of the church, and out of it mission work must proceed. A missionary is not something unto himself; He must be sent out of the commitment and prayers of the church.

2. Mission work is the unconditional proclamation of the unconditional gospel. We all know, being Reformed in our conviction, that the Gospel is the proclamation of the unconditional promise of salvation to God's elect people in Jesus Christ; but do we understand this to mean also that this Gospel must then be unconditional in its proclamation, that is, when we go forth to preach the gospel, we are not to be asking beforehand whether those to whom we preach are the kind we think will make good Christians or good church members before we are willing to bring the gospel to them? This judgment is God's and not ours to make. Whenever a person enters our

life, and that is not just into our church services of worship, but also into the life of any one of us who are members of the church, he is put there by the providence of God; and it thereby becomes our duty to witness to that person of God, and of the responsibility of sin and repentance, both in word and in the example of our deeds, always with the hope and prayer that that person may be brought to repentance and into living fellowship with the body of Christ.

3. The chief and only means of mission work is the preaching of the Word, only we must realize that when it comes to mission work this preaching is not always, and maybe not usually, the formal preaching of sermons in services of worship. Back in seminary days, Rev. Ophoff often would make the point that preaching is much broader than delivering sermons in Sunday worship, it is also to be found in the ministry of teaching catechism classes, sick visits and family-visitation, in pastoral counseling, discipline calls, etc. And if we examine the life of Jesus and the apostles, it would seem that the greater part of their ministry was conducted on that level, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, Lydia, the Philippian jailer, etc., these people had to be dealt with individually in light of their individual needs in life. In fact, when it comes down to it, there are very few formal sermons recorded in the NT Scriptures, exactly because the church of that day was very much involved with missions. And I think it was the point of Rev. DenHartog that all of our church office bearers should be ready and available to do this work when contact is made by members in the church. In turn, this should be the chief area of activity for every missionary, he should be busy providing individual and often informal instruction in the teachings of Scripture, recognizing that it is the Word purely taught which is the power of God unto salvation.

4. The organizing of churches is the result and not the means of mission work. It is in this area particularly, I think, that we need to do some hard thinking. We tend to think, it seems, that mission work is the gathering of a group of people into little worship services with the hope and prayer that they will grow into a church. Now there is nothing wrong with those on the mission field doing this, it would seem that Paul did so too, but that is not mission work; the mission work is the going out and contacting new people, calling them to repentance and life. It is from this that the organizing of a church will be the result.

THE SCOPE OF MISSIONS

But what has this to do with missions **abroad**? What do we mean with that? And with this we may well go back to the text in Isaiah 11, to that beautiful promise that 'the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea', for in this we have the heart of NT missions.

The old Scottish gentleman of whom we spoke was reflecting the classical Presbyterian concept of Post-millennialism. These people were firm believers in the sovereignty of God and the principles of the Reformation. They believed in the power of the word of God as the means by which God gathers his elect people as firmly as we do. They also believed, however, on the basis of this text and others, that as time went on more and more people would be saved until this world would be dominated by a majority of Christ-

ians and thus for an extended length of time would live on earth in that beautiful state described in :6-9. What they failed to note was the parallel teaching of Scripture that, as the church develops through history, the powers of sin are to develop also until the final conflict in the days of the Antichrist.

Nevertheless, what we must not fail to note and appreciate is the great wonder which is pointed out by this text and by other prophecies of like kind - this was the wonder that came about by the coming of the rod out of the stem of Jesse.

In OT times there was no such thing as mission work, that is, the sending of the church to gather people of God out of the realms of darkness. In those days God kept his covenant only in the narrow line of Abraham's descendants, all of the rest of the world was held in darkness by the deceit of Satan. But now this power is broken and the knowledge of God goes forth into all the nations of the world.

This is the great wonder that always rejoices the people of God. There is something about the subject of missions that ever captivates Christians; and it should, for it is this, the turning of sinners to repentance, the gathering of men out of darkness into light, in which the hosts of heaven ever rejoice. It is the pleasure of God and certainly must be also of his people with Him.

And we in the Protestant Reformed churches during recent years have had some great and wonderful opportunities to be participant in this:

For several decades now we have had opportunity to work in missions in Jamaica. Although there has been much discouragement in this work, and we have often failed to pursue it with the dedication we should, nevertheless, it holds, I am convinced, a great deal of interest and support from the people in our churches. In turn, in recent years we have had the wonderful opportunity to work with the saints of Singapore; here is a new and different thing for us, a group of over 100 young people pursuing the spread of the Gospel with a joy and dedication which we can only covet and admire. And now, in more recent time yet, there has come the work in New Zealand, North Ireland, England, and also the possibility of work in Ghana.

Take just the last few months. In April we had with us Rev. Rawson of Bransley, England telling us of his battle to defend and maintain the truth in one of the great historical bastions of the Reformation - where today less than 10% of the people can be called Christians in any sense of the word. In June Rev. Hutton was here from North Ireland, a land which fights very much the same battle, to meet with us and to establish sister-church relations between his church and ours; and we have Deane Wassink back from Ireland where he has worked now for a year in Christian education. And then we had Rev. DenHartog in our midst giving his report on the work in Singapore and helping in establishing a sister-church relation with the young congregation there.

In turn, all of this seems to make peculiar demands upon us as Protestant Reformed churches. Although small and in many ways insignificant in the place we fill, there is one particular heritage God has given us, an unusual grasp of the scope of Christian doctrine based directly upon the Word of God. And it is this particularly which all of

these call upon us to share with them, certainly a unique opportunity for service in gathering the church of God.

THE RESPONSIBILITY

All of which leaves us with a peculiar responsibility before God. Stop to look once at the striking contrast between those contacts which are laid before us - between the working of the Gospel in Europe and in Singapore. In England the battle is with a smug spiritual deadness that has settled over the land. There in that land of rich Christian history the churches are small and struggling, everything is cold and indifferent. One can hardly get people to listen or to bother. One can walk through streets where great saints of history walked and were used in great ways for the Gospel, but few care any more. One can visit libraries where great volumes of some of the richest writings of spiritual truths are stored; but few care to read them now.

And over against this there is the work in Singapore with those young people going out in zealous pursuit of spreading the gospel amidst heathen people who meet them with concern sometimes of open opposition, often, as Jesus promised, from their own families.

And in the middle of this we stand, a small unrecognized group of churches with an unusual responsibility. God has given to us this heritage with its riches of a sound Biblical truth, and with it comes the responsibility to use it to build his church.

But what can we expect from this?

We have noted the old Presbyterian view that the day would come when the whole of the world would be Christian. The problem, as we have noted, is that it is a view which did not allow for the development of sin in the world as Scripture indicates also. In turn, as we look about us we do not see sin giving way to righteousness; but rather the world is becoming ever more exceedingly sinful.

But there is also another phenomenon taking place around us, before our eyes. On the one hand there are those like Rev. Hutton and Rev. Rawson which tell how Christianity is waning in those very lands where once it showed its strength and promise. But at the same time there is what may well be the opening up of a whole new area of possible growth and development in Singapore with the possibility of a whole new era of development in China, Asia generally, and maybe even Africa.

And how are we to understand it? Maybe Rev. Hoeksema brings it out as well as any in his **Reformed Dogmatics**, p. 784, concerning the white horse of Revelation, "He did not travel at random, but had his course mapped out, from Jerusalem to Antioch, from Antioch to Macedonia and Greece and Asia Minor, from there into the very heart of the Roman world, where he hastened on over the mountains and plains of Europe, and when the time was ripe, crossing over into the Western Hemisphere. In general, therefore, the white horse ran in a westernly direction."

It may well be that we stand at a point of juncture today at which the Gospel is about to make a great leap across the Pacific to a great last stand in the heart of Asia. And in it we are called to serve, to take the heritage we have and to use it both in strengthening that which remains in the land of our fathers and in promoting as we can the future hopes and promises which we see unfolding before us.

How we may best do so individually I leave to your further speakers; only remember this, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

Convention Speech
MISSION OF THE CHURCH BODY

by Rev. R. Van Overloop

Whether the Holy Spirit will bless the mission work of our churches depends on you! This is the theme of tonight's speech.

I, as a missionary, am often asked by the people of our churches, "How is the work on the mission field going?" From the perspective of the theme of tonight's speech, I could legitimatly answer, "You can answer your own question. How are things in your church?"

The reason for this close relationship between the condition of a church and the Holy Spirit's blessing upon that church's evangelism is something we will explain a little later. For now we simply say that the Lord works with a corporate responsibility. If the church body does not live as it ought, then God will not bless its evangelism. If we pursue evangelistic outreach at the expense of corporate holiness and unity, we forfeit the gracious results of both.

Admittedly, I desire that your zeal for evangelism and mission work might increase. I have prayed that this convention, with its theme on missions, might obtain some of that increased zeal. But I am very conscious that it must be a zeal according to knowledge, else we make disciples twice-fold fit for hell. It must be a zealous evangelistic concern which expresses itself in Biblical paths.

Tonight's speech has three divisions. First, let us consider the presuppositions, upon which our speech for tonight is based. The second matter we must consider is the nature of the responsibility of the church body in evangelism. We touched on this a bit in the introduction, but we must go into further detail. The third point is entitled "The Calling," in which we want to make some practical suggestions.

First, then, are the four presuppositions which form the foundation of our thoughts in this speech. These are really the foundation for a proper consideration of missions, in general.

A. The first presupposition is that the true church has a concern for evangelism. It is Biblically inaccurate to say that evangelism is the chief purpose or the exclusive purpose of the Church. It is also wrong to say that it is not one of the chief concerns of the

Church. Overagainst those who make evangelism the chief purpose of the church, we must not react and create an equal heresy that evangelism is only for the Arminians and church activists to take care of. If we claim to be a part of the true church, then among our chief concerns will be a genuine, Scripturally directed concern to proclaim the evangel, to preach God's saving grace in Jesus Christ.

B. The second presupposition is what I call the proper, spiritual context of Biblical evangelism. This is given by Jesus when He gives what is called the Great Commission. Look up Matthew 28:18-20 and notice the parentheses Jesus places on each side of the commission. To this spiritual context there are two parts.

The first part of the proper context of all evangelism, whether missions or witnessing, is the enthroned and exalted Christ (vs. 18). The Head of the Church, Who sends us out, has all power in heaven and on earth given to Him. From a practical perspective this has strong implications for us. 1. It means that we must be very careful to adhere to His Word as we establish our goals and as we determine our methods. We will let King Jesus set the task before us and He will tell us what are proper methods (preaching, not dialogue, art, music, drama, etc.). 2. It means that we will be confident as to the ultimate triumph of Christ in the work of evangelism. Although we cannot open hearts for the Gospel, He can. 3. It means that the Jesus we must present in our evangelism will not be the man of Galilee (as modern evangelism so often portrays Him), but the King of kings. We will not present Him as a waiting, pleading Savior, but as an enthroned King, at whose feet men must plead for mercy.

The second part of the proper context of the mission work of the church and the witnessing of the saint is the ever-present Christ (vs. 20b). A consideration of this too will have very practical implications on our work. 1. If we carry on the work of missions in this context, then we will have great consolation in the face of discouragements and we will keep on evangelizing in the most difficult situations. 2. We will be humbled, when success comes our way, because we will know it was only because Jesus, the enthroned and exalted King, blessed our efforts. 3. We have the greatest encouragement to perform the work. When I first became a missionary, I can remember thinking how nice it would be to have Rev. Lubbers (a former, zealous missionary) go with me. You, young people, might wish that you could have myself or one of the other missionaries be with you when you witness. But both of us are wrong to think this. We already have the best companion possible. Jesus Christ, enthroned on high with all power, goes with us! 4. Knowing that He is ever present with us is a stimulus not to forget our calling. The church which is most careful to carry out this calling, will generally have the most consciousness of the presence of Christ in their midst.

C. The third presupposition is that the task of missions is three-fold. We introduce it with the question, "What do we pray for, when we pray for our neighbor or for positive fruit on the mission field?" Jesus gives the answer in Matthew 28:19, 20a.

First, teach all nations. This is literally "make disciples of all nations." This consists of bringing men into trustful submission to the Son of

God. Making disciples is not done in three or four quick steps. Nor is it just having someone make a decision. Bringing men into a position of total commitment to Jesus as Savior and Lord is a long range task. It is a task that requires of us a self-denying love which makes us identify with people in their needs and thinking.

Secondly, baptize the disciples. Among other things, baptism marks the church on earth. Therefore, the idea behind this part of the task of missions is bringing the disciples into a vital relationship with the Church of God. The task of evangelism is not simply the salvation of souls, but also the building of the church. This too requires a great deal of time.

Thirdly, the task of missions is teaching the disciples (now in a local church) to observe all things Christ commands. This is bringing them into practical conformity to the Word of God. Concern for evangelism is concern for catechism, preaching, and a seminary.

This three-fold task of missions is very comprehensive; not something quick and easy. This is what you should be praying for when you pray for the salvation of your neighbor. This is what you should be praying for when you pray for your missionaries.

D. Our fourth presupposition is that the work of the church body (the subject given to me) has two aspects. First, there is the work of church extension, often performed by local congregations through evangelism committees. This is the giving of a witness in the area in which the church is located. Second, there is the work of "home" missionaries, called and sent by local congregations to perform the work of preaching the Word, hopefully for the purpose of gathering believers unto the formation of a congregation.

Really the work done by these two is much the same. This work consists primarily of the preaching of the Gospel. This preaching is given wider distribution in the following ways: lectures and conferences, tape distribution, paper and radio advertising, print and send out literature, door to door canvassing, courtesy to visitors, hospitality, telephoning one's concern, friendly visits, neighborhood Bible studies, mailings, institutional visits, etc. It is my contention that much of what is done in the mission field should be done for the very same reason in the local congregation.

• • • •

How is it that we all are responsible for the "success" of mission work?

What is the nature of our responsibility as a church body?

First, we will detail what this responsibility is. Secondly, we will give some Biblical support, which will further explain the concept.

A. First, we must remember that evangelism and missions is the work of the instituted Church. It please God to call His people to salvation by the preaching of His Word. Who preaches? Not an individual! Not even if he has the title of "minister." Preaching is done by the Church. The Great Commission comes, not to missionaries, but to the Church (a congregation) as a unit. It is the Church, believers and their seed, instituted, which does the work through the missionary. Just as I say that I, not my tongue, am speaking, so missions is not the work of the missionary, but of the Church.

Next, we must remember that

evangelism depends wholly upon the Spirit. God blesses the Church which is itself faithful in keeping this command to preach to all nations. It is not merely what the missionary does, but, in a sense, what the church or denomination does, that counts. For the Holy Spirit will not be mocked.

B. Let us prove this point.

First, take the example of our bodies. Picture the evangelism of the Church as the work of the hand. The ability of the hand to do its job depends on the quality of the life of the body.

Look up Acts 2 and find the description of the character of the Church which grew, to which the Lord added daily. You will find it in verses 42-47. It was the Church that was faithful to the apostles' doctrine, that was zealous in worship, and that was at peace among themselves.

The Church loses its right and privilege to evangelize when things are not right within her. The prophet Haggai shows (in chapter one) that the people's inability to experience the blessing of God was because they did not concern themselves with spiritual things - the building of the temple.

God's blessing on the missionary is not without regard to the unity and holiness of the sending Church. Look up John 17:21 and notice the relationship Jesus establishes between the unity of the Church and the fact that the world believes that Jesus is the Son of God. Where there is heresy, disinterest in spiritual things, carnality, worldiness, immorality, hatred, strife and division, there evangelism cannot be expected to prosper. God will not be mocked! We cannot expect the blessing of the Lord, if we ourselves are not good and faithful witnesses.

• • • •

Finally, we face the question as to what is your and my calling?

In general, the kind of interest for missions which is needed shows itself in the activity of everyone in the Church body. Each member labors to do the best they can in their position, for the sake of the body. The toe, eye, hand, voice box, any muscle or tendon does its best for the sake of the whole.

Specifically, you, young people, have a unique place in the body of the Church. As the Church of tomorrow, you must develop and grow. A young person's place in the Church body is to learn, to study, to grow spiritually to the best of your ability, for the sake of the whole. I want to suggest three specific (of many) ways in which you can concentrate your development.

First, develop a genuine interest in doctrine.

This means that you open yourselves to the preaching and to catechism instruction, just as the Bereans did in Acts 17. Be ready for catechism. Do not go over the lesson for the first time as you walk into church. Be anxious to learn the wonderful truths about your God.

Closely related is the very important question: what difference does the truth held by the Church make in your life? Not that having our doctrine straight and knowing it is not important. Nor is it unimportant to what church you are joined. Nor is the only important thing how you live. But if we have little concern for the Scriptures and confessions and for doctrine, then we should not expect the Holy Spirit to bless us and our work. If your knowledge of doctrine is not put into action, then all your knowledge means little to God. Is your Christian life genuine?: Some of the characteristics

of a genuine Christian life are: humility, assurance, gratitude, zeal for God's glory, obedience to His commands. Where the Lord sees this, He promises to bless our witness.

Secondly, develop a healthy concern for your neighbor.

Gain the perspective of Paul for the Jews. Read Romans 9:2, 3; 10:1. Have interest not only in the souls with whom Rev. Bruinsma labors in Jamaica, but also those in Grand Rapids. This interest must not be just to heap coals of fire on their heads, or to add to the rolls of the Protestant Reformed Churches. But it must be an interest in seeking to glorify God by loving your neighbor as yourself (admonishing them and caring for them.).

Thirdly, develop a prayer life.

It is easier to preach than it is to pray, for in prayer you are placing a knife into yourself, destroying all that is self-pleasing, all self-confidence, and all self-interest. It is wrestling alone with God for His glory, as Jacob did.

It is easy to bemoan problems in the Church and in your local congregation. But it is difficult to be humbled to pray about it.

Maybe we have not because we ask not! Include in your prayers petitions for the Holy Spirit's blessing upon our evangelism and missions. He is the power of evangelism; we must depend upon Him. We must always be beseeching Him to make our work fruitful. We must consciously be laboring in His might.

PSALM 84

O Jehovah Sabaoth, hear my cry,
And hearken to my fainting prayer, O Shield.
Ah, look on Thy anointed one; for I
A porter's staff in love had rather wield,
Today, than in the courts of wickedness
To dwell a thousand years. The Lord our Sun
Gives grace and help to us today. No less
Will He withhold eternal rest from one
Who walks in uprightness; whose hope shall gain
Thee as a home; whose dwelling-place Thou art.
My pilgrim's tent. My shelter from the rain
Of tears. The way of Zion in my heart.
O Jehovah, God of Hosts, blessed in Thee
The man who trusts in thee. When shall I see?

Convention Speech
PERSONAL MISSIONS

by Rev. Carl Haak

It is a privilege for me to speak to you in behalf of my Master. I feel that very keenly as I see you as precious to God in the blood of His Son and as I have grown in the love of God for you in these past days.

BUT, it is a privilege for you to speak in the behalf of the Master, to glorify Him by testifying of His matchless grace to you! "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen" Is. 43:10. I hope to impress you with the awesome calling and responsibility which you have to speak. I pray the Holy Spirit will place this as a burden upon your heart. But you must also know that it is your **privilege** to speak for the Lord Jesus, an honor given solely of His grace. Few people speak in the behalf of God. Many are afraid. Most people insult God, attack God, deny God in their speech, music and life. God has raised you up to be His witnesses.

Personal Missions refers to the witness of the Truth we are to give in our words and conduct. As saved in Christ, we exist for one purpose; to be living testimonies of the Truth which saves. What this means is that you are to be **walking Bibles**. The word of eternal life in Christ is to be plainly stamped on our lives, just as letters on a book. In II Cor. 3:1 & 2, Paul says to the Corinthian Church, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men. For as much as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." Please read those verses again! God by the Holy Spirit has written the gospel of Christ upon our hearts, so that every moment, (laughing, crying,) and every place, Christ is to be seen in us!

How do our lives measure up to this profound Truth???

THE DIFFICULTY

Personal witnessing is hard. It demands strong faith, courageous zeal, and a heart filled with love for God and His Word.

It is difficult because we are sinners. We possess "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ in earthen vessels". (II Cor. 5) We contend with our flesh which is ashamed of Christ, easily scared into silence even among (especially among?) friends, and often shows our lives to be contrary to the Truth.

Personal Witnessing is difficult because we are facing strangers. We worry about how they will respond to us, whether they will accept what we say or become angry.

This is difficult because we are to witness of the **Truth**. It is easy to talk about the weather, baseball, or current events - but our calling is not simply to talk. We are to leave a witness for the Truth which sets us free! And the nature of the Truth is that it binds

those who possess it and it divides those who do not. Our Master, of whom we are to testify, is not neutral. One is either for Him or he is against Him.

THE NEW TESTAMENT IDEA OF WITNESSING

The name "Witness" is a name Jesus Himself gives to us, a name denoting great distinction and responsibility. In Luke 24:48 the Lord, after preaching the gospel and opening the Scriptures to His disciples, said "Ye are **witnesses** to these things". Again in Acts 1:8 Christ promised us "ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be **witnesses of me** both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Jesus calls all who belong to Him "His Witnesses".

A witness is one who testifies of the truth he knows at the expense of his life. Three implications are found in our name "witness".

One. A witness is one who speaks of facts he has personally seen and experienced, a first hand account. (Look up I Peter 1:8) You cannot testify of that which you do not know. A powerful witness is one which is able to say, "I have seen Him! and know of what I speak!"

Two. A witness has an obligation to speak, a duty before God. Listen to two witnesses of Jesus unburden themselves before the world: "We **cannot but speak** of the things we have seen and heard." The Word of God is unlike all other words. When it lives within you you must speak!

Three. A witness testifies of the **Truth** he has seen and known. Not of ourselves, but the Truth. Witnessing is NOT a long accounting of our conversion and deeds of faith so that the impression left is of ourselves. But we witness of Christ and His matchless works and wondrous deeds so that the sole emphasis is upon Him.

The New Testament gives us a beautiful picture of the witnessing God requires of us. It is summed in three words; daily, everyone, everywhere.

DAILY. Acts 2:42-47 speaks of the N.T. Church as "continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, **daily** in the Temple. . .and that the Lord added to the Church **daily** such as should be saved." Our life in Christ is not compartmentalized so that our witness to Christ effects only certain days of the week, specific moments of the day, sometimes; but touches and affects the whole of our lives, day and night, seven days a week. "For to me to live is Christ." Every moment of our lives must bear testimony to Christ.

EVERYONE. Acts 8:1-4 "Therefore **they that were scattered abroad** went everywhere preaching the word." "They" are the Church which was at Jerusalem, which according to verse one was under severe persecution to the extent that Saul entered every house hauling men and women and committing them to prison. They were all scattered, with the exception of the Apostles. (vs. 1) Men and women of every believing household proclaimed the good news, that is they witnessed of their faith. Not simply preachers, not only Bible Scholars, not necessarily all of great talents, not just the intelligent and the eloquent; but plain men and women, believers sharing the anointing of Christ as prophets, priests and kings testified of the Lord Jesus. Men and women of faith and prayer and thus men and women of power in the Holy Spirit. Everyone left witness of the Word!

EVERYWHERE. "They that were scattered abroad went **everywhere** preaching the word." It was not that certain places were off limits, but wherever they went the gospel of Christ was written upon them as an epistle to be read. Persecution or social pressure did not stop them. Everywhere they witnessed by speech and conduct. So much so that we read that the world commented of the Church, "They could see that they had been with Jesus."

THE SOURCE FOR A POWERFUL WITNESS

How do we have a powerful witness? That is, not a witness which seems to bounce off like a rubber ball having no weight behind it, but one used powerfully of God unto the purpose He has willed for it. There are two sources from which an effective powerful witness flows.

An effective witness flows from the preaching of the Word which we hear and receive to our hearts. God builds us up spiritually by the preaching! Witnessing and preaching are tied together this way: a true witness finds its source, strength, and zeal from the preaching. You do not learn how to be effective in personal witnessing by attending some special class to learn methods. But a powerful witness for Christ flows out of the experience of the salvation of our own soul which is tasted and maintained under the preaching of the Word. By sitting under the preaching of Christ and Him crucified as it expounds the riches of the gospel of grace, we are brought to a consciousness of our salvation. (True for you? What happens to you in the pew?) And out of that comes a witness for Christ.

The Samaritan Woman is such a beautiful example of this. She heard Christ! "I am the water of life. I that speak unto thee AM HE!" And having heard Christ she returned to the village as witness, "Come, see a man which told me all that ever I did! Is not this the Christ?" The early church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. Out of that lively preaching flowed their witness. Under the preaching which is faithful to the Truth, I hear Christ speak to me of MY salvation! Then I cannot but speak of the things I have seen and heard! Preaching which is faithful to the Scriptures and the product of much diligent study and fervent prayer **is** the source for powerful witnessing. Are your lips tied when it comes to speaking unto others of your Lord? What is your attitude toward and conduct under the preaching of the gospel?

The second source of a powerful witness, and closely related, is our own spiritual life. As you are, so will be your witness. Only as you walk with Christ and grow in knowledge and grace, will your testimony of the Lord be used of God powerfully. If others see that your confession of Christ, your church membership, are mere outward show, then from a human point of view, why should they be interested in what you have to say? Who is interested in a Lord whose subjects do not serve or love Him? If your life contradicts the Word and possesses no power of godliness, then there is no appeal to your witness, much worse you and I cause the worthy name of Christ to be blasphemed!

What you do speaks so loudly that they cannot hear what you say.

I Peter 3:15 says, "Be ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope

that is in you with meekness and fear". But that implies that they first ask you because they see the hope in you! They see that you are different! Different in the way you speak, handle tragedies, conduct your life. They are curious and want to know what makes you tick. And so they ask you.

Before you speak to the girl you work with at the nursing home, be sure your conduct is an example of the truth you are about to tell her. Before you testify against the Labor Union, be sure you are in subjection to the powers that be. Attend to your own spiritual life by prayer and Bible study, before you arise to speak to another.

EXACTLY HOW DO WE WITNESS???

Often our failure to testify of the gospel of the grace of God is due to a fear of our inability. We fear that we cannot do it in an acceptable manner. We are shy and say we **can't**. This is wrong, for it contradicts Jesus Who said: "Ye ARE my witnesses. . . ." When such fears overwhelm us we are standing in pride supposing that the power of the witness is dependent upon our mental or personal abilities. At other times we are unprepared to leave a testimony. Out thoughts are not on His greatness, our desires are not aimed at His glory, our affections are not glued to His virtues or perfections. The word of I Peter 3:15 quoted above follow these words, "But **sanctify the Lord God** in thy heart. . . ." Still at other times we are silent because we are ashamed of the gospel, perhaps embarassed of it. To all of these things the Lord says: "Repent!"

There are certain things we ought to keep in mind about proper witnessing. First, seek to initiate and develop a relationship of trust with the person with whom we come into contact. Get to know that person and let him know you. Yes, this must be followed with wisdom and discretion, but seek to develop such a relationship in which the other person can trust you. Witnessing is not just an argument for thirty minutes and that's it. It is not like a circus which comes into town and makes a big display and then moves on. But it is something which takes time if the Spirit is pleased to use us to bring another to the truth. Slowly, carefully continue to speak with the interested person who questions your faith. As God blesses the Word and as long as the other person wishes to talk with us, we should continue. Seldom are there immediate results, so don't conclude you are finished after one or two talks with them.

Secondly, be genuine. It is not hard to know whether someone is really interested in you or not. We must give evidence that we are true and that we have cleansed our hearts before God in this matter. We are to be sincerely and genuinely concerned about their spiritual welfare and condition.

Third, learn to listen. Don't rush in and solve every problem immediately, but ask some questions and let the other person talk. In this way you can determine their spiritual condition and ability to grasp what you say. We should not work in the same way regardless of the person. It makes a difference if the person is churched or unchurched, ready for the meat of the Word of God or the milk of the Word.

Finally, and most importantly, use the Word of God! Our witness must be of the Truth. We must make plain in all our demeanor that we are under the authority of the Bible and we speak only what Our Master has given us to say. We have no authority in ourselves

to expect the person to believe what we say. We are not speaking for ourselves, but are handling the Word of Life! We need to KNOW OUR BIBLES. That is not something which is just nice, something we ought to do someday, but we are called by the Lord to witness of His Truth. And how can we do that if we are foreigners to the pages of the Bible? More, we will begin then with the very heartbeat of the Bible, The Sovereignty of God. The God of the Bible is God and must be worshipped. The Word of God with all of its soul satisfying emphasis upon the God of our salvation who is to be lovingly adored; that must be the content of our witness.

THE GOAL

Direct the person to whom you are witnessing to the preaching of the gospel in the Church. That is what the incident of Jesus and the Samaritan Woman shows us. Many of the Samaritans heard the witness of the woman and went out to see and hear Jesus themselves. And then they said to the woman; "Now we believe, **not because of thy sayings:** for **we have heard Him ourselves**, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." Bring acquaintances with you to church, explain to them what they hear, encourage them to grow in the Word! God take away all our complacency! We have the preaching of the gospel in all its riches. Compel others to come with you to hear the Truth of Christ crucified and risen!

AN ATTITUDE OF DEPENDENCE ON GOD

The underlying key to all personal missions is an attitude of loving dependence on God. We can do nothing. God must plant, cause the seed to sprout and give the increase. It is not just as easy as A, B, C; accept, believe and confess. Faith is the result of regeneration. God must implant the new heart. That is why you believe. "In meekness instructing those who oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentence unto the acknowledging of the Truth." II Tim. 2:24-26 This spurs us on, for if God will do it, who can hinder it?

May God give us grace to meditate on the blessed gospel of our salvation, to learn it, to live it, and to witness to others of it.

John (I John 1:9) again promises to the faithful that God will be propitious to them, so long as they acknowlege that they are sinners. It is very important to be quite sure that when we have sinned there is a reconciliation with God ready and prepared for us. Otherwise we shall always carry hell about within us. Few consider how miserable and unhappy is a wavering conscience. But in fact, hell reigns where there is no peace with God. So much the more, then, should we embrace with our whole mind this promise, which offers certain pardon to all who confess their sins. . . .Because this confession is made to God, it demands sincerity of heart. But the heart cannot speak to God without newness of life. Therefore confession includes true repentance. God certainly forgives freely, but in such a way that the easiness of mercy does not become an enticement to sin.

John Calvin

CONVENTION MINUTES

by Jane Pastoor

Minutes of the 45th Annual Protestant Reformed Young Peoples' Convention held at Grand Valley State College July 29 - August 2, 1985.

Host: Hudsonville Young Peoples' Societies

Theme: All Whom I Have Chosen
II Cor. 5:20

Speech Topics:
I Missions Abroad
II Church Missions
III Personal Missions

Monday, July 29

Registration began at 10:00 at Hudsonville Church. At this time everyone had an opportunity to find a dorm room, and sign up to play volleyball and Chinese Soccer. At 2:00 busses left for Grand Valley.

At 5:00 everyone met for devotions in the dorm lobby, and had their first taste of college cooking. After this the Convention Picture was taken.

The first lecture was given by Rev. B. Woudenberg on the topic of "Missions Abroad" in the Kirkhof Center. Family and friends also attended the lecture.

Afterward, the group boarded busses to go on a hayride. Everyone got their exercise running to keep up with the wagons. Before "lights out" our chaperones led us in devotions. Only a few were ready to sleep, though.

Tuesday, July 30

At 7:30 all met again with their chaperones for morning devotions. After breakfast in the Commons, Jaiki Mahtani gave a slide presentation of the work being done by the church in Singapore. We were also given an opportunity to ask questions to Mr. Mahtani about life in Singapore.

The first Delegate Board Meeting began at 11:00. The meeting went as follows:

Art. 1 Roll was taken.

Art. 2 The minutes of the last Delegate meeting were read and approved.

Art. 3 The Financial Report of the Federation Board was read by Jerry Kuiper. The balance on hand as of April 30, 1985 is $13,677.12.

A motion was made and supported to accept the Financial report as information. The floor was opened for discussion.

Art. 4 A motion was made, supported and passed to accept the Financial report.

Art. 5 Bruce Klamer announced the Scholarship recipients for 1985.

Art. 6 A motion was made, supported and passed to admit Grandville Young People's Society into the Federation of Young People.

Art. 7 Bruce Klamer read and explained the proposal concerning the assesment of dues, which is as follows:

$6.00 to Convention
14.00 to Scholarship Committee

$2.00 to the Beacon Lights
Art. 8 Bruce introduced the nominees for Federation Board offices.
Art. 9 A motion was made, supported and passed to adjourn.
Art. 10 Rev. Van Overloop closed the meeting with prayer.

Immediately after lunch many of the young people headed outside to join in a game of Chinese soccer or volleyball. Others caught up on some sleep, or just visited with friends.

Supper Tuesday evening was followed by a lecture, this time given by Rev. R. Van Overloop on the topic of "Church Missions." Again the lecture was well attended.

Afterward we boarded busses, this time to go rollerskating for a few hours.

We were back to the dorms by 12:00 for devotions with our chaperones, but that marked the end of the day only for some.

Wednesday, July 31

At 8:00 all began the day meeting for devotions with their chaperones.

After breakfast Rev. Van Baren introduced the topic "Family Relationships." We then dispersed into smaller discussion groups.

Due to the bad weather it was necessary to make a change of plans. Instead of going to the beach as we had planned, we went bowling. Everyone had a wonderful time competing for the highest (and lowest) score.

At 5:00 we returned to Grand Valley for supper in the Commons.

The rest of the evening was given to free time. The Field House was open for our use. Many went swimming. Others played volleyball and basketball. Still others just relaxed and played "Trivial Pursuit" or cards. We also kept the nearby Pizza place busy.

Thursday, August 1

At 7:00 we met for devotions and ate breakfast. Immediately after breakfast the final Delegate Board meeting was held. It was conducted as follows:
Art. 1 Bruce Klamer read from I Cor 15 and opened the meeting with prayer.
Art. 2 The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.
Art. 3 Roll was taken.
Art. 4 The proposal concerning the assessment of dues was open to discussion.
Art. 5 The proposal was voted on and passed by a majority vote.
Art. 6 Nominations were read. Nominations were closed.
Art. 7 Delegates voted on the nominees.

The meeting was immediately followed by Rev. Bekkering's introduction of the topic "Dating". Afterward we again broke up into groups to discuss the topic.

We were all pleased to see that the weather would allow us to go to the beach on Thursday. When we arrived there was a hamburg fry - especially delicious after a few days of Commons' food. Events also included volleyball, football and East vs. West tug of war.

At 4:00 we returned to prepare for the banquet. The punchbowl began at 5:15, and the Banquet itself at 5:30. Kevin Bylsma graced us with dinner music on the piano.

The evening's lecture was given by Rev. C. Haak on the topic of "Personal Missions."

The new Federation Board officers were announced as follows:
Vice Pres.: Dirk Westra
Vice Sec.: Lisa Van Koevering
Vice Treas.: Phil Van Baren
Spiritual Advisor East: Rev. Haak

Afterward the group boarded

busses to Arne's Funland. Although it was pretty chilly, most tried the water slides at least once.

We returned to Grand Valley at 1:00 and ended the day with devotions along with our chaperones.

Friday, August 2

After meeting for devotions we had breakfast in the Commons.

The rest of the morning was given to packing, cleaning up, and spending a few last quiet moments together.

At 10:30 we met outside the dorm lobby and Rev. Van Overloop led us in final devotions.

Then it was time to board the busses for Hudsonville Church. Final goodbyes were said. We all hoped to see each other at the next convention.

I would personally like to thank the young people of Hudsonville Church for all their labor. Most of all we thank our Heavenly Father for giving us Your fellowship and friendship in His love.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jane Pastoor

1985 CONVENTION IMPRESSIONS

by Lynn Bekkering

Thinking back at the week of Convention, I recall all the good times I had. Every day was full of plans.

Monday night's hayride was very exciting, also rowdy. Tuesday night we went to the Grand Roller Rink for skating. Although Wednesday we were supposed to go to the beach, and it rained, we still had fun bowling. We went to the beach the following day. After the banquet and speech Thursday, we went to Arne's Funland for more fun.

The Convention theme "All Whom I Have Chosen" was a good subject since many young people do not know the many duties of missionaries. The purpose for this theme is to teach us our personal responsibilities toward missionary work. Our duty begins in the home where we live a careful, godly life.

The theme song "I Will Sing of My Redeemer" reminds us of the pain Christ went through to free us lost sinners.

I think this Convention was well run, yet I miss the lively singing we did last year. Conventions give us the opportunity to meet friends and renew old friendships.

I'd like to thank God for giving us the opportunity for having a convention, and also thank the chaperones, the Hudsonville societies, the speakers, and everyone involved for the good time they gave us.

Recap of the 1985 P.R.Y.P. Convention

by Jay Kalsbeek

The 1985 P.R.Y.P. Convention was hosted by our Hudsonville Church in Hudsonville, Mich. The conventioneers gathered at Hudsonville Church on Monday before 12:00 P.M. to register. After lunch, our luggage was taken to Grand Valley State College where it was unloaded. When the buses were unloaded, they returned to take the young people to Grand Valley State College.

Once everyone had arrived, they had to get their luggage and dorm key. Then they had free time and most of it was spent in the Field House playing basketball or swimming. We had supper in the Commons after which the Convention Picture was taken. The speech on Monday evening was at the Kirkhof Center on "Missions Abroad" by Rev. Woudenberg. Following the lecture, the buses took the conventioneers to Coopersville for a Hay Ride. Finally, we returned to Grand Valley, had devotions at 12:00 A.M. and lights out at 12:30 A.M.

On Tuesday, breakfast at the Commons was followed by a two hour slide presentation on the church in Singapore presented by Sem. Jaiki Mahtani. Immediately following the slides, there was a delegate meeting in the Kirkhof Center. A short break was taken for lunch and the sports began. There was Chinese soccer, volleyball, and softball all afternoon. In the evening Rev. Van Overloop spoke on "Missions of the Church Body" at the Kirkhof Center and then the buses were again loaded but this time for a skating party at Grand Roller Rink in Holland. Devotions were held at 1:00 A.M. and lights out at 1:30 A.M.

Wednesday started with breakfast at the Commons followed by Discussion Groups on "Relationships of the Home" led by Rev. Van Baren, the pastor of the hosting society. To the disappointment of us all, it began to rain so we had to cancel the beach outing and we went bowling instead. Supper again at the Commons and then Free Time till 11:00 P.M. at the Field House where many played basketball or went swimming. Some tried to play racquet ball but learned that this activity wasn't open to us. Devotions were held at 12:00 A.M. and lights out at 12:30 A.M. This ended our second day of fellowship.

On Thursday morning, our Discussion Groups were led by Rev. Bekkering on "Dating". After discussions there was a delegate meeting and later everyone boarded the buses to go to North Shore Beach. We had lunch at the beach and free time for everyone. There were some that played football and some volleyball. Some hardier souls even swam in the cold water.

The highlight of Thursday was the banquet held in the Kirkhof Center.

Rev. Haak gave the speech on "Personal Missions". Afterward everyone went to Arne's Funland where they played miniature golf, rode go-carts, went water sliding and spent money on video games. Back at Grand Valley, devotions were at 1:30 A.M. and lights out at 2:00 A.M.

After breakfast on Friday, those who bought shirts or pictures picked them up in the lounge of the Robinson House where we stayed. Packing and cleaning of our dorms followed and then we met for devotions for one last time. After lunch we boarded the buses for Hudsonville Church.

Another convention is history. Speaking as a "first-timer", it was great meeting people from some of our other churches out West and spending time with them and old friends in our fun times and also in our serious times of discussion and devotions. The chaperones did a great job and many of us returned home weary (from lack of sleep) but also full of new experiences and looking forward, the Lord willing, to the next P.R.Y.P. Convention.

CONVENTION IMPRESSIONS

by Lori Bouwkamp

The 45th Annual P.R.Y.P. Convention, held at Grand Valley State College, Allendale, Michigan, is now history. The hosting society, Hudsonville, did a fine job in preparation.

The waiting lines were often long but when the wait was finally over, fun and festivities awaited. The hayride on Monday was a great success and many formed friendships that night. Many spent freetime at the Fieldhouse swimming, playing basketball or volleyball. Time spent at the beach and rollerskating was well worth it. After the Banquet on Thursday we went to Arne's Funland. It was a little too cool to really enjoy it, though.

I think that the things most lacking were the food and the rooms. The food lacked homemade taste, freshness, and variety at one meal. Besides being small, the rooms were very plain. The worst thing was that there were only four showers per floor - about one shower to every 8 people.

One thing is sure if nothing else, almost everyone enjoyed the speeches and discussion groups. The topics were well chosen, and easy to discuss. The speakers were very good and that helped all who attended to grow spiritually.

The week could be summed up as a time when young people got together as one denomination to grow both spiritually and physically. On the whole the convention was great. The Lord willing we will meet again next year to renew friendships and grow in the Knowledge of our God.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

by Chuck Pastoor

Relationships in the home, as set forth in the article by Rev. Van Baren, was the issue taken up by the first of two discussion groups of the 1985 Convention.

One very important point our group focused in on was that a foundation of love is imperative to a successful, God-glorifying family.

What does this mean? If you read I Corinthians 13, you'll find that love (charity) is longsuffering, is not proud, behaves not unseemly, and on and on. If we apply what we read in this chapter to our interactions with other family members, we will have assurance that our homes are pleasing to God and will be, in turn, wonderful places to live in too. Everything exists to glorify God, and when we work to have our homes do this, we can have faith that God will make them prosper and not forsake them.

But a family is not just a group of people who love each other. Each member has a specific role to play. We know what these roles are because the family is a picture of the church of all ages. Fathers are types of God the Father in so far as they make rules and bestow blessings. They, as husbands, are types of Jesus, Who is husband to the church, by being the headship of their wives. Jesus is known as the elder brother, and while it is everyone's responsibility to consciously be like Christ, we can see how likeness to Christ in older children would be a special benefit to the family. Wives in their devotion to husbands are pictures of the church in its devotion to God. And children, content, obedient, and in subjection to the father, are types of the church as children of God are in their relation to Him. But all of these, in order to survive as a unit, must show true love towards each other as defined in I Corinthians 13.

At the end of his article, Rev. Van Baren asks if it isn't "cool" to be spiritual. Essentially, the family itself is not something we conventionally think of as cool. But even within the family, it is very hard to talk about spiritually personal things, and very easy to lose faith and forget the spiritual importance of the family altogether. Family members are responsible for tuning in to each other's spiritual conditions. If this is neglected, apathy will destroy the family.

Therefore, only he has progressed in the Gospel who reckons himself happy in communion with God and rests in that alone. He puts it before the whole world and is ready for its sake to give up everything.

Calvin on I John 1:4

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

by Marsha Van Baren

Rev. Bekkering introduced this topic by using the texts II Corinthians 6:14-18, and I Peter 3:1-4. He reminded us that dating is used for young people to get to know each other. They should treat each other with love and respect in the Lord. Young people must not be selfish when dating, but should follow the Biblical principles of love, doing everything honorable to the Lord. God alone knows who our future husband or wife will be.

When young people go steady, the opportunity for meeting other young people is often lost. We must be pleasing to God with our end goal as finding a marriage partner.

Prayer is the most important thing to use in helping us make our decisions. We must pray all the time, and not make hasty decisions, but as they come to us, approach God in prayer.

We decided that dating a non-christian was unacceptable. When dating someone from outside the church, we should be aware of his or her beliefs, and be very careful of their ideas.

The question was brought up, is the parent's consent necessary to a marriage? We decided that it depended on the basis for their denial to the marriage, and the couple's reason for wanting the marriage. If the parents have a Biblical reason for denying consent, the couple should seriously reconsider their decision or whether they have reason to believe God has put them together.

Parents should have guidelines for their children to use, and also to get to know their children's dates before they make their judgment.

Today there is much peer pressure concerning dating. A girl should not be required to go out with any Christian guy who asks her. If a person hasn't a date but would like one, they should try to make friends first, without getting serious. Most of all, we must always be compassionate for the girl who is never asked, and the guy who is consistently turned down.

"It is so often exactly in a way that we would never choose, that we meet the Lord and taste that He is good. And then we can say with the Psalmist of Psalms 119:71, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes.' "

Rev. Herman Hoeksema

CONVENTION IMPRESSIONS

by Jerry Kuiper

My impressions of the 1985 Convention were mainly good impressions. I can add a lot of memories to my memories of my 5 other conventions. Once again God provided us as young people the opportunity to meet new people, renew old friendships and fellowship with other children of God.

I would like to say that, as a Fed. Board member for the past 2 years, I have had opportunity to see the great amount of work and dedication which has to be put out by the Steering Committee and advisors. I think they did an excellent job with the convention, making it run smoothly, even if our beach day did get rained out again.

I think also, that the topic of mission work was a very relevant topic. Mr. Mahtani's slide presentation was very informative about our mission work there in that heathen city of Singapore.

I enjoyed the convention at Grand Valley's beautiful campus and thought it ran quite smoothly, with very few problems. I am sure that we as young people have grown greatly in the faith and I look forward to next year's convention. I also look forward to seeing many young people there, eager to learn more about our heavenly Father, and ready to have a good time.

Report of the Committee for Reformed Education in Ulster

by Jack Lenting

As the two missives that follow, the first by the Rev. G. Hutton, on behalf of Covenant Christian School in Northern Ireland, and the second by Mr. Deane Wassink, show, the Lord has blessed our response to the plea for help of Reformed saints in Northern Ireland, in the Christian education of their children, in the past year.

We (and by "we" is meant all who supported the work in Ulster, whether by prayer, gifts, work, teaching, or some other way) - we could help brothers and sisters in the Lord with a real need, as they struggle, financially and in other ways, to give their children instruction in a good, Christian school, according to their calling in the covenant. We could be instrumental in the support of a fledgling movement on behalf of Reformed education in another land. We could provide Biblical, Reformed teaching to some 20 children for a school-year. We could, through

Mr. and Mrs. Wassink, bring a powerful witness to many across the ocean. Although this was not our purpose, we could leave a testimony to the good name of our Protestant Reformed people and, thus, of our Protestant Reformed Churches. We could express the communion of the saints in a concrete way, thus enriching that communion. In all this, we could serve on behalf of God's covenant, to the glory of His Name.

We thank God for prospering our way.

Now that the work is concluded and the Wassinks have returned home, the Committee can see that several thousands of dollars are still needed, to take care of the financial aspects of the work. About $2,500 is needed for various expenses connected with the work, e.g., insurance for the Wassink family while they were in Northern Ireland; several thousand dollars are to be given to the Wassinks for their support. We trust that God will supply the needed money.

We ask for the support of our people and of all who are zealous for Reformed education. Those who have not yet given have the opportunity to do so,, now; those who have already given may now see the work through to a proper conclusion.

If you are willing to help, make your check payable to the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland (Fund for Reformed Education in Ulster) and send it to:

Mr. Jack Lenting
17014 Wausau Avenue
South Holland, IL 60473.

May God bless the work done, so that it bears fruit in years to come and to all eternity; and may He bless the rearing of His covenant children in the Truth, in Northern Ireland, in the U.S., in Canada, and in all the world.

by George Hutton

When the future of Covenant Christian School in Ballyclare, Northern Ireland, looked to be in jeopardy because a teacher could not be obtained for the year 1984-85, Deane Wassink answered the Macedonian Call for help. Leaving behind family and Christian friends with whom the Wassinks undoubtedly had strong ties, they made their home for almost a year amongst people they had never met before and knew little about. They were confronted by a culture and a way of life somewhat different from that to which they had been accustomed and they tolerated honourably the lack of American conveniences and coped with added inconveniences, resulting from their involvement with the school.

Coming to the "Emerald Isle," the Wassinks soon won their way into the hearts and affections of the people in the little Bible Presbyterian Church in Larne, while Deane gained the confidence and respect of the children with whom he worked in the Christian School in Ballyclare. Assisted by his wife Donna, Deane settled into a difficult situation with all the unique problems of a small, young, and struggling Christian school. Seeing the need for simple music lessons in the school, Donna offered her services and soon became involved two mornings each week. As a team, Deane and Donna rendered very valuable service, not just to the school, which was vital, but also to the cause of Christ more

generally by their walk and conversation. Covenant Christian School in Ballyclare will always stand indebted to the Wassinks and to the Protestant Reformed people who made their involvement with the school possible. Because of the generosity of our friends in the P.R. churches our covenant children under God have received another year of Christian education and for this we are extremely humbled and thankful.

by Deane Wassink

Dear Fellow Saints,

The academic year which has just ended was a very special one for my family and me as well as for the witness of our churches and schools. We have had opportunity to teach in Covenant Christian School in Larne, Northern Ireland. As far as my family and I are concerned, I can say that we experienced many things that will never be forgotten. We have made many friends with those of like faith. We have seen and experienced the covenant faithfulness of God in a land and among a people very different from our own.

I think the thing that impressed many people over there was that our people were so committed to the cause of Christian education that they sacrificed in order to put a family in Ulster to help in a time of need. Actions speak louder than words. Many observed and appreciated that.

I stand amazed, now that I am able to reflect on the year gone by, at the many opportunities we have had to witness. We became a part of the small but lively Bible Presbyterian Church in Larne. Leaving them was in many ways like leaving our family. We had the wonderful opportunity to teach a school full of covenant children. Not only did we meet many fellow saints in Northern Ireland who have a like commitment to Christian Education, but we also visited England and met with struggling saints there. we gave them samples of material on education from our churches and schools and offered what help we could. We hope and pray that we may be able to be of further assistance to all these fellow saints.

There is so much I would like to say. Perhaps I can tell you more about it when I show my slides.* We express our thanks to those who have helped make it possible for us to work this past year in Northern Ireland. The labors there were difficult at times, but we are convinced that God blessed them to His glory.

*Deane has expressed his willingness to show those slides and to tell his story to any of our societies or other groups who ask. Deane's address is:

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Zeeland, MI 49464
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LECTURE

"Psalm Singing,
A Reformed Heritage"

Rev. Jason Kortering

Tuesday, October 29, 1985
8:00 P.M.
SEVENTH REFORMED CHURCH
950 Leonard, N.W.
Grand Rapids, MI