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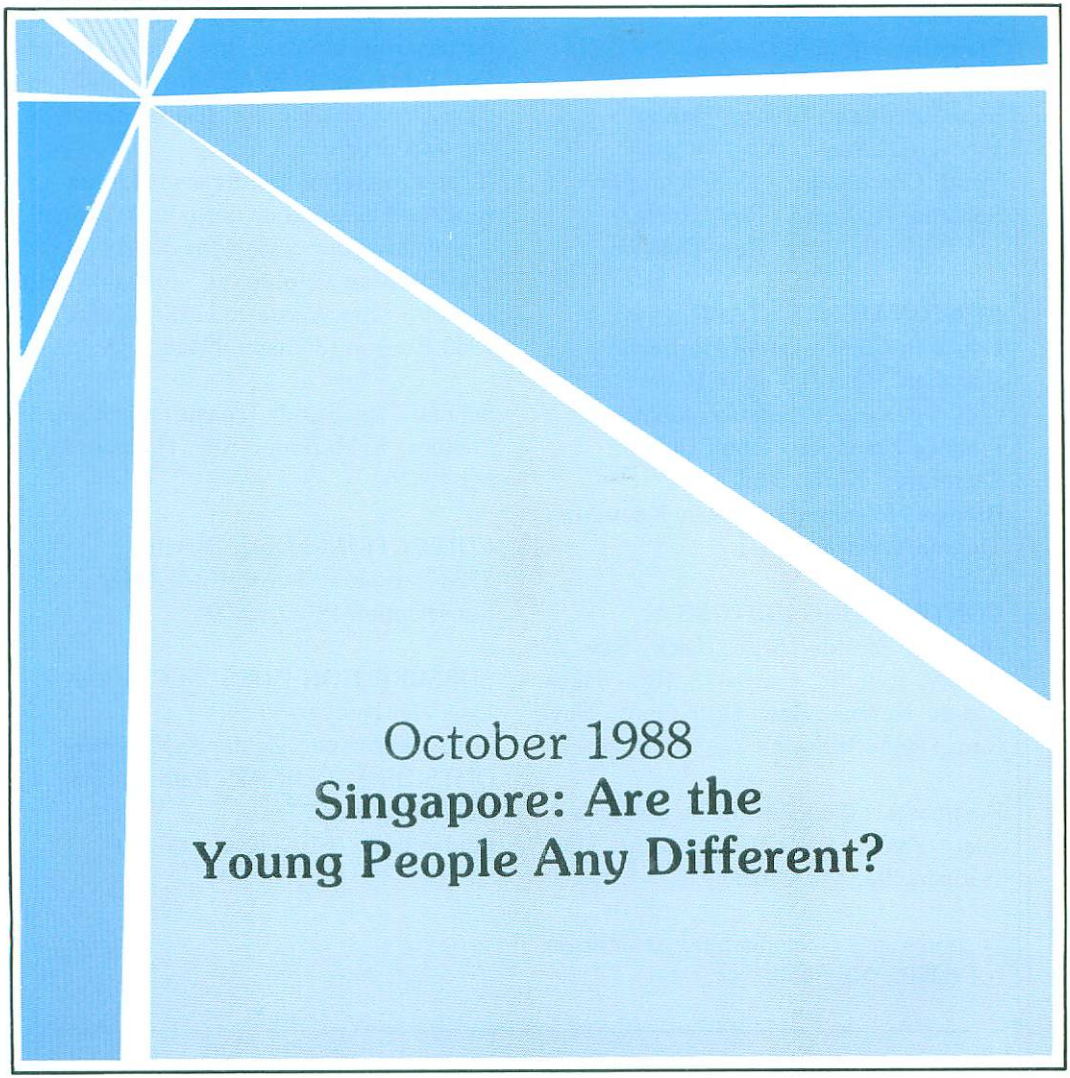

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Singapore: Are the Young People Any Different?

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Editorial

Singapore: Are the Young People any Different?

by Bruce Jabaay

Just recently, Skip Westra from our Faith congregation in Jenison, had the opportunity to visit Singapore during the young people's retreat sponsored by the E.R.C.S.. My article stems from thoughts generated by Skip's experiences and impressions from his visit. I wish to compare life for young people within our churches in the United States to that in Singapore. For the sake of brevity, I will refer to our young people in the U.S. as WE, US or OUR and those in Singapore as THEY, THEM or THEIR.

First of all, let's compare general background and living conditions. WE have been brought up under Reformed teachings by OUR parents. It is almost like not having a choice in whether WE wish to follow the ways of God's children. Of course, WE believe God chooses US for His people, but at times WE feel it is OUR parents who are forcing US to believe. Whereas, THEY feel the power of the Holy Spirit drawing THEM to the church against the will of THEIR parents. We rejoice with Jesus in Luke 10:21 as He says "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight". Living conditions also vary quite a bit. Even though most of US may not live as extravagantly as the rest of our neighbors due to large families, high tuition costs and church budgets, and various other related reasons; WE do live extremely well compared to the majority of the world population and do have quite a number of luxuries if WE really stop to think about it. Whereas, THEY are not quite

as tempted with available luxuries even though THEIR living conditions are quite adequate. OUR unnecessary luxuries may include cars, boats, eating out, expensive dates or entertainment, clothes, and other such items. WE may even tell OURselves those items are necessary for our well being even at the expense of what goes into the collection plate. In Singapore, the average life style in regards to luxuries is far below that of the average citizen in the United States; and therefore when comparing THEMselves to the "Jones" what they have to envy after is far less than what WE have opportunity to envy after. In Singapore, education is very highly regarded in a country of its small size and few natural resources. Since homes in Singapore are rather small and there are limited public facilities, going out to eat is a popular activity as a means of getting together for business or pleasure. Possibly, THEY place too much emphasis on education or maybe even going out to eat, but giving never seems to be a problem when it comes to meeting church budgets. Let US and THEY remember "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (I John 2:16).

What does the typical life style of a young person consist of who ideally has only himself or herself to look after? It is said the years prior to marriage are the best years of one's life, or rather, can be. Those years can also be the most discouraging or uncertain years of one's life. What career will I pursue? Who will I marry, or will I marry? Who will I "hang around with" or do I have anyone to "hang around with"? What do I do tonight? What is everyone else doing tonight? Are WE going out on the town looking for cute or "cool" gals or guys - Christian or non-Christian, or are WE hanging out at the coffee shops or bar discussing the latest in sports or fashions or what is wrong with everybody else? Maybe WE are making sure WE attend OUR Young People's Society so that WE can discuss what it means to live the life of a Christian or how to deal with life's difficulties and temptations. In Singapore, THEIR desire is to fellowship with the "brothers and sisters" in the church. Being at home with THEIR mothers and fathers brings them persecution and sorrow. THEY love their earthly family and earnestly desire their salvation, but "what concord hath Christ with Belial?" Transportation and leaving the house to fellowship with believers can be a problem, but they cherish the weekly "Youth Fellowship". "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Cor. 6). And what does THEIR conversation consist of when THEY do meet together? THEIR discussions generally center around scripture, the church, THEIR parents or school. If the need arises to search scripture, THEY have THEIR Bibles which THEY always carry with THEM - THEIR own personal Bibles with notes and highlights from past studies. THEY have a deep concern about the future of the church, due to pressure placed upon THEM by government restrictions and THEIR unbelieving parents.

How much time is spent in prayer and daily devotions? Do WE always have daily devotions? Often devotions

are the last thing WE do before going to bed, when OUR senses are dull and WE are in a hurry to finish before OUR eyes fall shut. THEY devoted forty-five minutes per day to daily devotions at the retreat on top of the joint Bible studies. THEY also look forward to the participatory Wednesday night prayer meetings that last one and one-half to two hours.

So what was the retreat like? - a lot of Bible study! About 30% social activity and 70% Bible study. How well attended would OUR young people's convention be if WE spent that much time for Bible study instead of "fun" things? Well THEY loved it. THEIR chief reason for being there was to learn more about the Bible, not to find a mate or "have a blast". It is really sad what WE "need" to do to get young people out for fellowship! Several years back, Reverend Mahtani planned an outing to Tahquamenon Falls with a group of OUR young people. There was a sizeable group that was excited about going, until THEY found out it consisted of a good deal of Bible study - the group dwindled to three!

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever, Amen." (II Peter 3:17-18).

YOUTH'S PRAYER

by Sue Looyenga

O Lord, make me to know the measure of my days.
My feebleness, my frailty. Thou dost know,
Who formed me from the dust. I am a tender flower,
Fresh and flourishing, with youth's bright dew aglow;
Yet delicate am I. When winds of time pass o'er
The flower fades and fails and is no more.

So shall it be for me. O let me not forget
As now I bloom in youth's bright hour that youth is vanity.
Its strength must fail, unless that strength be Thine.
Its joys must vanish all, unless their source is Thee.

And, knowing this, let me rejoice in life that Thou dost bless
With strength and joy and Covenant faithfulness.

From the Pastor's Study
RUNNING THE RACE

by Rev. C. Hanko

"Wherefore seeing we also are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1, 2.

A cloud of witnesses.

They are with us every day. They stand along the way, as it were, spurring us on by showing to us the power of faith and what faith does for the believer.

No, not in the sense that they look down from heaven, watching us, and in that way spurring us on. They are not onlookers. More than likely they are not even aware of us, since they enjoy the perfection of glorifying God with their whole being.

But "Abel being dead, yet speaketh". (Hebrews 11:4) We have the record of his faith and of what that faith did for him in the pages of the Scriptures, preserved for us as a witness, along with the other believers of the old dispensation, urging us on to be faithful unto death. They lived by faith. They suffered for their faith. They persevered, and now they experience the reward of faith as they rejoice in the fulness of the glory of God before the throne.

Abel who died for his faith, Enoch who walked with God, Noah who built an ark, assured that God would come with His judgment upon the world, Abraham who offered up his son, Moses who esteemed the suffering with the people of God greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt, and so many more have triumphed through faith, saved by grace, and now are recorded in Scripture as an incentive to us.

A race is set before us.

The figure of a race, so often used in Scripture, reminds us of three things:

There is a certain course that must be run. An athlete, whether he engages in running or in some other sport, has certain skills that he develops, a certain program that he must carry out with all his ability and in great precision.

This requires that every effort, every ounce of strength must be used to run his race or carry out his planned program. Athletes who train for the Olympics will spend eight hours a day, every day for a whole year to become throughly fit and to act with precision.

Each has his or her own goal upon which all attention is focused. They seek what Scripture calls "an earthly crown".

So we also have a race to run. A faith venture.

Faith is that spiritual gift, whereby we are united to Christ by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, whereby we receive a spiritual heart to love God, a spiritual mind to want to serve Him, a spiritual eye to see and a spiritual ear to hear Him as He reveals Himself to us through the Scriptures.

God has given to us certain gifts and talents, a certain place in life, a certain course that we must run to attain the goal of everlasting life with Christ in the new creation. Although our "tracks" may occasionally run parallel to each other, you have your race to run, even as your peers have theirs. We have our divine calling.

We must put forth every effort, strain every muscle, place heart and soul in the race. Athletes want to be physically at their best, watching what they eat and drink, making sure they get the proper amount of sleep, avoiding anything that might be a hindrance to them. In one word, their whole life is focused on the sport they engage in. How much more should we make use of the gifts and talents God has entrusted to us, and concentrate all our lives on the race that God set before us.

And just as an athlete seeks an earthly, perishable crown, so we must seek an eternal, heavenly crown, which the righteous Judge will give us, along with all those who love His appearance. (II Tim. 4:7, 8)

It is a matter of priorities.

Let us!

This is not cast in the form of an admonition: Do this. But it is the determination of believers, who together realize their calling as stewards in God's house. We speak of our conviction, as an incentive and encouragement to one another to be faithful unto death.

This requires perseverence.

The text says, Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience."

When he is training for the race a runner will attach weights to his ankles to strengthen his leg muscles. But when he enters the contest he leaves those weights behind. A hiker does not burden himself with a backpack filled with non-essentials. He travels as light as possible. The child of God sets his heart and mind on the spiritual race before him. Earthly gains and success, earthly friends and pleasures are not his primary concern. They must not interfere with his chief ambition. He chooses his life task, his life mate and his friends with the purpose that they may be advantageous to him as he travels his course. He seeks first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness in the confidence that God will add all other things unto him. By God's grace he keeps first things first, assured that all things work together for good for those who fear God.

There is a Dutch saying, which freely translated, says:

Away, worldly attractions, my goal is not here but in heaven.

Away, earthly lusts, I cannot tarry in the devil's domain.

Impediments! Sin so easily besets us! We dread scorn and mockery. Joining "the crowd" appeals to us. But friends who would lure us off our course are not good friends. The first step in the wrong direction, the first experiment with sin can prove to be disastrous. Bad habits are a power that destroys us.

Our sinful nature is our worst enemy. It is because of the sin that

wars in our members that the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life so readily become a temptation for us. Sin blinds our eyes, stops up our ears, weakens our zeal, and brings untold misery.

Therefore to keep on the course requires daily prayer, a deep awareness of our own weaknesses and of the need for God's grace to keep our spiritual eye bright, our spiritual ear alert, and our determination to live by faith unfalteringly, even unto the end.

Perseverence requires patience. We must run and not grow weary. The course is not always smooth, nor always easy to run. Opponents tend to run interference, or even to cast road blocks on our way. The powers of darkness are out to rob us of our crown. Patience is the spiritual ability to endure temptation, to be faithful even unto death. We think of Abel who became a martyr, or of Moses who endured, not fearing the wrath of the king.

The "now" generation wants their good things in this life. They live only for the moment with their faces down toward the ground, rather than keeping their heads up. Many want "all this", and heaven too. The true runner keeps his eye on the goal.

Looking unto Jesus.

We must realize that if our running and our perseverence depended even to the smallest degree upon us, we would never make it. We must not look to self, but to Jesus.

His name means Savior. He is the Author of our faith, for He is the Christ, the Son of God who is come into our flesh to save us from our sins.

He ran His race, even in the face of greater opposition than you and I will ever know. He was hated, mocked, spit upon, beaten with many stripes, and finally crucified. He suffered unto death. We have not yet experienced anything like that. Besides that, He was forsaken of God in deep, horrible darkness of utter isolation, to merit for us the right to eternal life, yes, even to run the race.

He had His eye fixed upon the goal, the glory promised Him, attained only through a faithful surrender to the will of His heavenly Father. He never faltered. As the Captain of our salvation He carried His cross, passed through death and the grave, and entered into glory, to bring with Him many sons and daughters to share this glory with Him.

He is the Author of our faith, blessing us out of heaven; but also the Finisher, for He who has begun a good work in us will surely finish it. He not only gives us the ability to believe, but the grace to run in faith even unto the end.

It is all of Him, that no flesh may glory before Him.

Let us look to Jesus! He stands at the end of the way with our victor's crown in His hand, urging us on with the assurance: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life."

Death is only a grim porter to let us into a stately palace. -R. Sibbes

He may look on death with joy, who can look on forgiveness with faith.
- Thomas Watson

WHAT WONDERFUL KNOWLEDGE WE POSSESS

by Lim Kok Eng

The knowledge of the mystery of the gospel is beyong what precious metals can buy. We possess this knowledge not because of who we are or what we have done, but only by the grace of God. The carnal man does not have this knowledge. He cannot eat of the spiritual meat and drink of the spiritual drink.

We, the people of God, have been set free from the bonds of sin. Do we know what it means to have the burden of sin lifted from off our shoulders and know that, though I am a worm of a sinner, I now stand before the mighty God righteous.

Lord's Day Questions and Answers 1 and 2 so beautifully express that truth to us. However, it is not my intention to expound on that but to dwell on certain knowledge of that truth we all possess as people of God. It is to the young people that I would like to share my comments. Firstly, because I was requested to do so. Secondly, because I believe the young people of today will be the future leaders of our churches. Thus, I would like to bring out certain points in relation to the knowledge. They are:

I) The knowledge that I have been redeemed.
II) The knowledge that I am a pilgrim.
III) The knowledge that I am a soldier.
IV) The knowledge that He is with me.
V) Our responsibility.

What I am about to say is not anything new. However, it is something which all of us have constantly been brought to mind of.

I) The knowledge that I have been redeemed.

Do you sometimes look up and marvel at the billions of stars in the heavens above? Do we sometimes wonder at nature around us and say to ourselves. "This is the creation of my God!"? Do we not feel small? I do. Do we not feel unworthy of His infinite love? I do.

Do we tremble when we think of God sending His only begotten Son to die a cruel death on the cross? He died that we might live. It would be perfectly justified if Christ chose not to die on the cross. But He did! Do we know what that means? That answer has to come from our hearts. Do not be deceived into thinking that we are saved because our parents are Christians, or because we go to church..

When we hear the wonderful story of God and His love, do our hearts bubble with joy unspeakable and our eyes well up with tears of praise and thanksgiving? Then why is it that we find it a drag to get ready to worship God on the Sabbath, or to attend Society meetings? Is it not a contradiction that we can talk endlessly about the things of this world, but get bored when we start talking about the things of God? Think once, how many of us are ready when it is time for Young

People's? I have seen too many yawns, but so few sharings and questions.

Young people, if the truth does not live within our hearts, then everything becomes a formality, form without godliness. Our going to church would mean nothing. The name "Christian" would express nothing.

II) The knowledge that I am a pilgrim.

Part of a song goes like this:

This world is not my home,
I'm just a passing through.
My treasures are laid up
Somewhere beyond the blue.

Yes, you and I are pilgrims. We are journeying towards Heaven. That is our home! A home where moth and rust do not decay or corrupt; where we will spend eternity praising and worshipping God. Do we look forward to that bright and beautiful home?

A pilgrim does not set his heart on the things of this world. But when he does, he forgets his name and place on earth, and neglects his responsibility towards the kingdom of God. Remember, where your treasures are, there will your heart be also.

The early Christians were prepared to die for their faith because they knew what they believed, and because they knew that they were going to a far better home in glory. You and I must know that in our hearts, for then we would think twice about spending too much on needless accumulation of earthly goods. For then, we would not think twice about giving to the cause of His kingdom. I feel that teenagers who work are not too young to learn to start giving on their own on Sundays.

III) The knowledge that I am a soldier.

Daily, we wrestle against ". . . principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12. Daily, we fight against the old man of sin within us. The more spiritual-minded we are, the more temptations we face.

Some of you are already in college, and some of you will follow. College can be a wonderful experience in learning, but it is also a nest of temptations. One has to pick the right crowd of friends. Friday and Saturday nights are party time. Do we join in? What about the temptation of sleeping in on Sundays, and thus missing church? Mom and Dad are not going to be there to tell you to get up for church: you have to be responsible and you are answerable to God.

Whether in school or at work, one fights to stand up for godly principles, often called "old-fashioned". One fights against being afraid to stand up for his faith. Are we ashamed of our God?

Are we the soldiers of the cross,
The followers of the Lamb?
And shall we fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His name?

No! we must fight if we would reign;
Increase our courage, Lord:
We'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy word.

Thy saints, in all this glorious war,
Shall conquer, though they're slain:
They see the triumph from afar,
And shall with Jesus reign.

When that tremendous day shall rise,
And all Thine armies shine
In robes of victory through the skies,
The glory shall be Thine.

IV) The knowledge that He is with me.

No one said that the life of a Christian is going to be an easy road.

The pilgrim does not travel on a path strewn with roses without thorns; the soldier does not fight with an eternal strength.

There will be discouragements when friends laugh at us, and not think of us as "cool" There will be persecutions when so-called friends shun us or physically mistreat us. There will be pain when we feel that nobody understands us. There will be important decisions we have to make in life. Where can we go to for comfort and strength?

There is a Friend who knows our infirmities. A Friend who will never leave us nor forsake us, but who will always watch over us with His eye. No matter how hard the way is, He understands. How foolish of us to turn this way and that way looking for an answer when we should go before Him in prayer and patiently rest ourselves upon His breast. Be patient! The tendency is we want an answer right away. We have to and must learn to be patient.

Some through great waters,
some through the flood,
Some through the fire,
but all through the blood.
Some through great sorrow,
but God gives a song
In the night season
and all the day long.

V) Our responsibility

What do we do with the Bible, God's word to us? Do we read it and meditate on it, or do we leave it on the shelf to collect dust? Think about it. We really do not spend enough time meditating on the word of God! By meditating, I do not mean a five-, ten-minute effort. Are we satisfied with what we hear on Sundays and do not spend enough time searching the Scriptures on other days. Is it not a shame when we do not know our Scriptures? We draw comfort, joy, peace, and strength for the day when we read God's word.

Other materials help us in the understanding of His word, and in building us up spiritually. The Standard Bearer is given the excuse of being too hard to read and understand. Like some say, "No pain, no gain". The Beacon Lights is placed on the table and forgotten. Do we take the time for religious literature and books?

The Young People's Society should not be a drag to go to. It is an excellent opportunity to dwell together on the things of God. We should speak most enthusiastically about the things of God, not about the things of this world such as the most up-to-date fashion.

The Young People's Convention is a beautiful time for like-minded saints from across the country to fellowship about the word of God. Or is it? Do we spend this time studying about the word of God and learning to apply it to our lives? Or is our primary concern finding a date, or letting our hairs down without our parents around to tell us. It is a time to seriously consider oneself in the light of God's word. It is a time to encourage and strengthen one another in the bond of brotherly love. It is a time to spend pondering over the word of God.

Young people, it would be foolish to think that we do not have to center our lives around the word of God and the church until we are older. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth".

Truth Vs. Error
APOSTASY IN THE LAST DAYS
23. PAUL IN THE LAST DAYS

by Rev. Robert C. Harbach

"Paul:. . .This know, also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" [II Tim. 1:1; 3:1]

The former twenty-two articles of this series under this general heading were expounded according to the inspired perspective of Jude. Now we propose to continue the theme from the perspective of Paul The name **Paul** means **small, little**.1 He was first known as Saul, from the Hebrew Shaul, meaning "**asked**" as a loan.2 "Luther once when asked how he envisaged the appearance of the Apostle Paul. answered with an affectionate guffaw, 'I think he was a scrawny shrimp - like Melancthon!' "3 Chrysostom called him ho tripechus anthropos, the three-cubit man (i.e., the 4½ foot man!). However, the sense in which the name is spiritually understood is as "**Paul**, the lowly, the penitent - who deliberately wished to indicate by his very name, that he was 'the **least** of the apostles,' (I Cor. 15:0), and '**less than the least** of all saints' " (Eph. 3:8).4

Paul gives us an autobiographical sketch of himself: he said, I am a Jewish man, a citizen of no mean city, being a Tarsian of Cilicia,5 a free-born Roman (Ac. 22:26-28), brought up at the feet of Gamaliel in this city, Jerusalem, trained in the strict way of the law of our fathers, and, furthermore, I was God's hyper-chief zealot,6 Him I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience (II Tim. 1:3), circumcised on the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew in descent from Hebrews, as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the Church, in respect to legal righteousness showing myself blameless.7 I was proficient in the Jew' religion beyond many of my contemporaries, being more extreme than they in zeal for my ancestral traditions.8 (See also what Paul says of himself in Acts 9:22, 26; II Cor. 11:16-12:12; I Cor. 15:10 and II Tim. 4:6-8.)

Recently, we read two popular books on the Apostle Paul, one being Johnny Cash's **Man in White** (referring to the man Christ Jesus, whom Saul met on the road to Damascus). This book is a novice's shot at Christian fiction. Yet the author takes unjustifiable liberties in such fancies as, "Who art Thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus **of Nazareth**, whom you are persecuting!" And with Ananias, who knew better, coming and speaking to Saul of his "new mission which **he set for himself**." (bold, RCH). Then the author has Paul, a former Jewish unbeliever in the trinity, say, "God is one, yet He is now three." But there is no evidence that strict old covenant people were

"Jewish unbelievers in the trinity," hence not trinitarian, but like modern Jews, unitarian in perspective! Also, is it really Christian fiction which has Paul implying that God changes: "Yet He is **now** three"? But even if in Christian fiction there may be place for a miracle or two, it seems trifling to have Saul raise a dead donkey to life, especially when the miracle was not performed to confirm one Word of God. None of the biblical miracles were performed so abstractedly. Why, though it be a fictional account, should Paul be made to say, as per Ac. 13:39, that all who believe **can** be justified, rather than as Scripture has it, "**are** justified"? Also why would Jesus, in the story, reply to the Canaanite woman, "I am not sent **just** to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, implying that He also was then sent to the Gentiles (like herself), when actually, and historically, Jesus said, I am not sent **but** to. . .Israel, meaning, For **now** I am sent **only** to Israel! Further strange fictionalizing has converted Saul gushing with, "I must make the people believe." Later, Paul as presented in a sickly mysticism with: wherever he **felt** the call to go, he went! Paul was not motivated by Christ's command, but how, at the moment, he "felt led."

The other popular fiction story of the Apostle Paul is Taylor Caldwell's **The Great Lion of God**. The Roman Catholic author states in her foreward that her aim is to show not only what Paul **did**, but what he **was**, "a man like ourselves, with our. . .doubts, . . . angers. . .intolerances, and "lusts of the flesh" (xiv). On this point we prefer Conybeare and Howson: "If his letters had never come down to us, we should indeed have known what he **did** and suffered; but we should have had very little idea of what he **was**. . . . We must listen to his words if we would learn to know **him**. . . (For) his epistles are **himself**. . . ."9

All throughout Caldwell's lengthy fiction, Paul is called **Saul**. At the end she has Saul reminiscing "I knew Peter had gone to Rome. We never loved each other, for each of us believed that our way was the only way. . . . But in His name we were reconciled, in spite of Mark, who never loved me, either." (p. 583) Thus the great apostle is made sneakily apocryphal, sarcastic and derogatory.

What is it that these two books have in common? It is Romanism! Like the old garb of nuns and priests, the second book is colored solid black Romanism. The first, because of the Arminianistic theology back of it, in its effect, leads dead and duped Protestants back to Rome. This first one, because it is a product of the electronic religious network (which includes thousands of Roman Catholics), one which moves "along the 'Christian highway' from the frontiers of the sects to the high places of the Roman Catholic communion." Modern charismatic, Pentecostal and new-Pentecostal Protestantism, as well as neo-Pentecostal Romanism, move ever closer in fellowship. With increasing momentum, so called "Protestant" ministers and evangelists: (1) appear in Romish clerical garb, (2) participate with Romanist priests in TV shows, and (3) these pseudo-Protestants are co-operating with Roman Catholics in a common aim to convert the whole world to Christ.10

It is especially true of the second book referred to that one may search it from cover to cover and not find a

character that even remotely resembles the beloved, New Testament **Paul**. This is true, too, in many so called Protestant Churches as to the pure Gospel as it is found in the Scriptures of the Old & New Testaments. That Gospel, also Paul's Gospel, is not found in many a modern pulpit. What we are interested in however, with respect to the Apostle Paul is not some phantasized, fictionalized, or dramatized (Hollywood-ized) "Paul," but in the Paul of history, providence and revelation. As for the Paul of history, we turn not to Pelagius, Aquinas or Grotius, but to Luke, above all; then one may with profit consult Alford, Lightfoot, Ellicott, Eadie, Findlay, and especially Calvin. As for the Paul of divine providence and of divine revelation, then we must go again to Luke, to Paul's own epistles and to the rest of the Bible (as Scripture interprets Scripture).

What we love especially about the Apostle Paul is that his writings are infallibly inspired of God to warn us of the apostasy of these last days. Paul was concerned solely with the truth, with (1) the truth of the true church (Rom. 9:6-8), the truth concerning our salvation: objectively (Rom. 9:11, 16), and subjectively: (Rom. 10:9-10); the truth concerning God's sovereignty in our salvation (Rom. 9:18, 21, 22); the truth concerning man's misery (Rom. 1-11), the truth concerning man's deliverance (Rom. IV-XI), and the truth concerning man's thanksgiving for that deliverance (Rom. XII - XVI).
(Rom. I - III),

1. Smith's Bible Dictionary, 487; Hastings' BD, III, 697. See also II Cor. 10:1, 2, 10.

2 Robinson's Gesenius, 1024.

3 R. Bainton.

4 **The Life and Epistles of Saint Paul**, Conybeare and Howson, 137.

5. Acts 21:39.

6 Acts 22:3, Gk.

7 Phil. 3:5, 6; II Cor. 11:22; Rom. 4:1; 9:3; 11:1; Acts 23:6.

8 Gal. 1:14) Acts 26:4, 5.

9 Conybeare and Howson, XI, XII; bold, RCH.

10 **The Trinity Review**, P.O. Box 169, Jefferson, MD 21755; Nov. - Dec. 1986, Essay No. 52 ($.25 ea.), **Evangelicalism, the Charismatic Movement and the Race Back to Rome.**

Let nothing disturb thee;
Let nothing afright;
All things are passing;
God never changes.

Patience gains all things;
Who has God wants nothing;
God alone suffices.

TRANSFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST

by Rev. C. Haak

As a Jeweler focuses his eye with a steady gaze upon a diamond to see its glittering facets and marvel at its brilliance; so we have looked at the diamond of the fruit of the Spirit, whose facets are "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Each facet of the fruit of the Spirit has been held before our mind's eye (eye of faith) in its Biblical meaning, in its reflection in the lives of the saints, and in its perfect revelation in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But what happens to those who behold these graces of the Holy Spirit by a true and living faith? What is the result in the lives of the elect when they are brought face to face with the fruit of the Spirit? We are transformed into the image of Christ! Think of the blacksmith of old who opens the door of his kiln to look in at the metal he is heating. The orange and white hues of light reflected off that white hot metal shine upon him, so that he in the dusty darkness of his blacksmith shop is aglow with radiated light. So the Holy Spirit show us the fruit of the Spirit as they are revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and we are basked in their light so that we are actually transformed into their likeness. No, not perfectly now. In fact, to our shame, only a small beginning is now seen in us, and each fresh revelation of the fruit of the Spirit shows up more dirt and corruption in us by nature. Yet, the Holy Spirit does transform us so that now, in principle, the children of God are being transformed into the image of Christ. True of you?

The Holy Scriptures teach us this in a passage such as II Cor. 3:16. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The doctrine of this verse may be stated thus: The Bible reveals to us the glorious image of Christ. On all its pages, Holy Scripture draws in clear and lucid lines the portrait of Jesus Christ. They reveal His glories - His love, joy, peace, meekness, goodness . . . . And the Holy Spirit, opening our eyes to behold it, transforms us into what we see, so that we are transformed into Christ's image. The Holy Spirit, through the Word, works the fruit of the Spirit within us with the result that we are transformed into the image of Christ. Actually, the text tells us that the Bible is like a mirror giving the believer to behold the image or portrait of Christ. The mirrors of the ancients, unlike ours, were not made of glass, but of highly burnished metal, which reflected images with great brilliancy and distinctness corresponding to the

metal. If the mirror were of silver, a white light would be the result; if of gold, a yellow glow would be diffused. The Holy Spirit takes the glorious image of Christ revealed in the Scriptures in all its brilliance and radiates them upon us so that we are transformed into Christ's image.

There is a certain law which may be stated this way: what we see is what we become. The objects we look at, the books we read, the pictures we see, soon exert an influence upon us and we become like them. And that principle operates in the spiritual realm. Beholding the mirror of God's word wherein is displayed the fruit of the Spirit, all of which are perfectly displayed in the face of Christ: the Holy Spirit by a powerful grace transforms us into what we see.

Make no mistake, we are changed! Remember how Moses' face shone from beholding the glory of Jehovah God? So we are transformed by the Holy Spirit into the image of our Lord and are given the fruit of the Spirit. Ours is not an outward transformation that appears on our faces and soon fades away. It is not simply to be equated to an emotional change. It is not merely an intellectual awakening. But inwardly, as the light of God's Word is directed by the Spirit to our new hearts, the image of Christ is stamped upon them.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit, through the word and especially the preaching of the Word, to beget in us corresponding principles and graces which we see in Christ. Christ displays in His person the fruit of the Spirit perfectly. He is longsuffering, good, meek, love. . . . The Spirit takes of Christ and shows it unto us, transforms us inwardly and spiritually into that image. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" II Cor. 5:17. Changed by the Spirit into the image of Christ we say: "How reasonable and good that I should love with all my heart the infinitely glorious God." How fitting that I should be entirely for Him, subject to His will, who is Lord of all. What perfect peace and joy is mine". Transformed into the image of Christ, the elect soul consciously patterns his life after Christ, to walk as He walked to speak as He spoke, to do as He did.

Bear in mind a number of truths in this connection.

First, the Holy Spirit produces this transformation. Apart from His divine work, whereby He molds us into Christ's image, all is useless. The Holy Spirit must remove the veil of unbelief from our eyes, create a clean heart within, and stamp upon the renewed soul each one of the fruit of the Spirit.

Second, the Holy Spirit does this through the Word. "Beholding" these things, we are changed. Only in the way of reading the Word with a believing mind, does the Holy Spirit effect this transformation. It is especially the preaching of the Word, or the "ministry" which is used of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this transformation.

Third, the Holy Spirit transforms us constantly and continually. Our transformation remains incomplete as long as we are in the body of this flesh and have not been brought to Him face to face. There is a transformation which the Spirit will work instantaneously when He raises our bodies from the dead and makes them like unto our Lord's most glorious body. Until then, the Spirit molds every believer daily according to the image of Christ. He

does this in the way of working in us true repentance and godliness.

* * * * * *

Now, as we come to the end of these articles on the Fruit of the Spirit, we must take inventory of what we have learned and examine ourselves whether or not their fruit is being more and more worked in us. What about you? Is there this fruit in my life - true love of God, joy of salvation, experience of the peace passing understanding, a life characterized by long suffering, goodness, faith, meekness, gentleness, temperance? Whom do I reflect in my speech, deeds, thoughts: Christ? or the Devil?

How can I know?

There are several features to be found in those in whom the Holy Spirit has transformed into the image of Christ and thus implanted the fruit of the Spirit in them. They are:

1.When the Spirit has begun to transform a soul, God's divine law is received as the rule of life. The heart will begin to echo Christ's words: "Oh how love I thy law". There can be no fruit of the Spirit in a life lived in rebellion to God's law. When we are given respect unto all the commandments, the fruit of the Spirit will also follow.

2. Where the Spirit has bestowed the fruit upon the heart, there will be genuine humility. There is no greater proof that a man is ignorant of the truth savingly, and a stranger to Christ experimentally, than for pride to reign in his heart. A lowly heart, awed over God's grace, or the heart in which the fruit of the Spirit resides.

3. Those who possess the fruit of the Spirit find that they are daily drawn to God's word. They feel that they need to look into the mirror and behold the face of their Lord. Only that Word will suffice. They joy in beholding His image in the word and can't get enough of gazing upon Him as He is seen in the Bible.

Go then to the Word! Hear it preached in all its truth! And standing before the mirror, you are changed, from glory to glory, into the image of Christ! Given now in principle the fruit of the Spirit, we long for the day when we shall be like Him and possess in perfection: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

BOOK REVIEW

by Rev. Charles Terpstra

Welcome young Christian reader to our second book review written specifically for **you**! How did you respond to our first review? Did you read the review? Better yet, did you go out and buy the recommended books, and have you begun to read and study them? I hope at least some of you have, and that others of you will. That, after all, is the purpose of these reviews - to get **you** to read the books. So, set aside some of your hard-earned money, and go spend a few dollars on a good book!

I also want to encourage you to

respond. You haven't forgotten the two favors I asked of you in our first review, have you? I asked you to write to either Mr. Harbach, the editor, or to me, telling us what you think of the books, and suggesting some of your own. Please do this, so that I may be helped by your input, as I desire to help you.

In this second review I would like to call your attention to a small paperback book (125pp), entitled **Discovering God's Will**. It is written by Sinclair B. Ferguson and published by The Banner of Truth Trust (1982, reprinted in 1984). Ferguson is a Reformed minister of the Church of Scotland, and currently serves as a professor at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Do not let the author's credentials scare you away from this book, however, because it is written in a very readable and understandable style, for the average young person.

This is a book about how the Christian is guided by God in life, and how he may come to discern the will of God in connection with the many circumstances and choices that face him in this present world. I trust that being guided by God and discovering God's will is important to you, young person. You are at a critical junction in your life, when many important decisions have to be made, such as choosing a specific vocation, and along with that, whether to continue your education at a college or pursue some line of work right after high school; deciding on whether to marry or remain single, and along with that, when and with whom to date. But in addition to these major choices, there are the common, everyday decisions that must be made. Various courses of action confront you all the time. And in these matters you want to be guided by God, don't you? You have the desire to be led by Him in the way of life that is pleasing to Him, do you not? You want your life to be lived in the will of God, isn't that right? And so you ask, "How can I know what the will of the Lord is for me? Where can I find the guidance I need?" This book directs you to the answers to these questions.

However, if you are looking for 'quick and easy' answers to your questions concerning the will of God for your life, you will not find it in this book. That is because Ferguson realizes (as you must!) that God's guidance for our lives is not found by reading a book about guidance. The author puts it well in his 'Introduction': "All that a book on guidance can do for us is to underscore the ways in which God has promised to reveal His purposes to His people, and the principles which He characteristically employs to guide them. As will become clear in the pages which follow, **there is no avoiding, and no substitute for, the sometimes long, arduous experience of discovering the will of God in our lives**" (his emphasis). What this means, young people, is this: discovering God's will is a process, a process that takes time, and therefore a process that requires on your part patience and waiting on God (Ferguson has a chapter on this too - 'Wait For the Lord').

What then does Ferguson write about in this book and how is it of help? Very simply, he directs you to the Scriptures. This is his most basic point and the strength of his book. It is from the Scriptures that you will come to discern the will of God; it is your only rule for guidance. From the Bible you will be taught concerning your Guide

Himself and how He works in the lives of His people. From the Word with its commandments, principles, and examples you will be taught concerning yourself and what God expects of you in terms of life-style and conduct, and with regard to vocation and marriage. These are the subjects which Ferguson treats in the chapters of this book. Hence, what discovering God's will comes down to according to this author is this : knowing God's Word, growing in its wisdom, and walking in obedience to it. It is this emphasis which makes this book so helpful.

Another fine feature of the book is Ferguson's emphasis on the Christian's assurance that God **is** guiding him and **will** guide him in the future. He begins and closes the book with this emphasis, focusing on the familiar Psalm 23, in which the believer confesses, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." His last chapter, 'He Leads Me' is excellent. This assurance is vital to your struggle to discover God's will for you, young Christian. Whatever the circumstances of your life may be (and none of ours are the same!), you must live out of the conviction that God has determined your path, that He leads you down it to His glory, and that He will bring you to the destiny He has planned - your eternal salvation.

In conclusion, I recommend this book to you. If you are looking for help in this area, this small volume will set you in the right direction.

Until next time - good reading!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

by Ruth Bleyenberg

THE LORD BLESSED:

-Mr & Mrs. Greg Lubbers of Faith with a son, Brennen Lee.

-Mr. & Mrs. Jim Van Overloop of Faith with a son, Jordan Michael.

-Mr & Mrs. Bill Zwak of Faith with a son, Douglas Richard.

-Mr. & Mrs. Cal Kalsbeek of Hope, Walker with a son, Seth Michael.

-Mr. & Mrs. Bob Vanden Top of Hope, Walker with a son, David.

-Mr. & Mrs. Kurt Van Overloop of Grandville with a son, Mitchell Alan.

-Mr. & Mrs. Frank Van Baren of South Holland with a daughter, Jennifer Marie.

-Mr. & Mrs. Randy Vander Noord with a daughter, Ashley Rae.

-Mr. & Mrs. Marv Vanden Top of Hull with a daughter.

CONFESSION OF FAITH:

-Robert Buiter of Faith made public confession of faith on May 7.

-Shelley Brummel, Bev Dykstra, Brenda Holstege, Amy Velthouse of Faith made confession of faith on June 12.

-Chris Daling & Ed Van Den Top made confession of faith on June 19.

-Ruth Bleyenberg made confession of faith on July 10.

-Ted Haak & Matt Medema made confession of faith on July 10.

MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS:

-Hope, Walker, Church received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Englesma & their baptized children from our Southeast Church.

SINGSPIRATION SCHEDULE

November 20	Faith (Thanksgiving)
December 18	Hudsonville (Christmas)
February 19	First
March 19	Southwest (Easter)
May 21	Hope
August	Pre-Convention
September 17	Southeast
November 19	Faith (Thanksgiving)
December 17	Hudsonville (Christmas)