BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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"Captain of Israel's host and Guide
Of all who seek the land above,
Beneath Thy shadow we abide,
The cloud of Thy protecting love;
Our strength, Thy grace;
Our rule, Thy Word;
Our end, the glory of the Lord."

Charles Wesley
Quoted in "Learning God's Will."

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EDITOR'S NOTES: May 1990

by David Harbach

In August there will be a 50th Anniversary. Whose anniversary you ask. Why, none other than the 50th Anniversary of the Annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention to be held at Hope Protestant Reformed Church, 1307 East Brockton Ave., Redlands, California 92374, from August 6-10. The purpose of the convention is to provide you opportunity for Christian fellowship and to exercise yourself spiritually by listening to the speeches and participating in the discussion groups and devotions. Not only do you get to meet other Christian young people but you also get to have a great time. Redlands Young People's Society is providing you many exciting activities, such as a roller-skating party on Monday, activities at U of R, speeches. ice cream social, beach outing, olympic activities, a banquet and a farewell breakfast.

By now you have returned your registration form way before the June 1 deadline. Right? You haven't! Well hurry up and join the crowd. For those of you taking to the skies from the Grand Rapids area you can contact Jay Kalsbeek 616-531-6553 or Dale Vink 616-538-2062 for more information. The more of you that do decide to go by airplane the better it is for all you air travellers.

In our next issue, we plan to have the outlines for the discussion groups that will take place during the convention.

* * * *

As stated in the last issue of

"Ecclesiastes" a good outline of a book of the Bible is often the key to keeping the main thought of the book in perspective. In this issue you will find that very helpful outline "Ecclesiastes: The Preacher's Sermon." I goofed in two ways, by not including the outline with the last issue or in not telling you that the outline would be in this issue. I apologize for any mental confusion this has caused you. Mrs. Carol Brands has developed the main theme of Ecclesiastes in the form of a question, "Is there meaning in labor or life?"

The quote from Charles Wesley is from a series of outlines written by Pastors Charles Terpstra and Ronald Van Overloop. These outlines were used on the occasion of the 1989 Fall Retreat which had a main theme of "Learning God's Will." The outlines cover three thoughts: the general principals for learning God's will, learning God's will in dating and marriage, and learning God's will in your vocation. These are current subjects and the form of an outline will serve for beneficial discussion, whether by young or older adults. Many of the thoughts in the first section are taken from other people and mostly from Sinclair Ferguson's book, **Discovering God's Will**. If you use these outlines you are urged to purchase this excellent book for further instruction and edification. The first outline will be followed by the next two outlines in the next two issues.

Recent events in the Grand Rapids area in the sudden death of Renae Noorman, age 3, and Katie Brummel, age 5 months, are divine instructions in the preciseness of God's plan for our lives. God has numbered our days on earth and marked them out with gracious care. Be thankful, therefore, that our heavenly Father has furthered our lives that we may serve Him as young people who are His friend-servants now. And if He should end our earthly life today, know that He will bring us to our heavenly home to see our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lori Bouwkamp is our new News Editor. The bulletin clerks of our churches are reminded to send their church bulletins to Lori at the address under her name which is given on the inside cover of this issue. Her May news was actually her April news but was not put in that issue. Thanks Lori for keeping us informed as to what is happening in our churches. Your faithfulness in attending our meetings is also appreciated.

Rev. Ron Cammenga writes,

Dear Dave,

Enclosed is a paper written by Marla Van Baren, a member of our Loveland congregation and a sophomore at Hope College in Holland, MI. I thought the paper might be worthy of publication in the "Beacon Lights."

You were right, Rev. Cammenga, Marla's paper is worthy of publication in our magazine. "Deceived by the Light of Darkness" defines what a cult is, gives several examples of present day cults, and tells why America's searching youth are deceived by the light of darkness. The works cited will provide further reading on this relevant-to-today topic for those of you who wish to study the devilish cults of today.

As an editor and a member of the Protestant Reformed Churches, I am thankful that there are many spiritually strong youth in our churches who know the deceit of the world and who resist the ungodly practices of the world. May they serve as encouragement to those youth who are easily

lured into the ways of the world by the deceit of Satan.

How well is your young people's society attended? In this issue you will find a letter written to the secretary of The Federation Board. The letter is real and is not meant as a boast by one young people's society. The letter is meant to encourage all of the youth to attend their young people's societies which are a blessing from God to you.

"Living becomes an awesome business when you realize that you spend every moment of your life in the sight and company of an omniscient, omnipresent Creator." J.I. Packer, **Knowing God**. Shirley Gunnink, from Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church sent me Packer's "tidbit." Shirley likes the tidbits that are interspersed throughout the pages of the "Beacon Lights." We can thank our typesetter Jim Van Overloop for providing these instructional quotes for us. Other readers have voiced thanks for these quotes and, like Shirley, have also found the new cover to be sharp. The staff appreciates these encouraging comments.

The steady flow of articles sent in by you for publication is a good indication that not only is the "Beacon Lights" read by many but also is supported by many who desire to contribute their sanctfied written thoughts to the benefit of others. One of the joys we have as God's people is to have Christian fellowship through writing. Putting down sanctified thoughts on paper for others to read is not being proud but is using a means of communication that our God has provided for us so that we may experience His blessings upon our lives. May many more of you take up the pen and write for the cause of His kingdom.. We thank God for your writings that He has provided us.

I NEEDED THE QUIET

I needed the quiet so He drew me aside,
Into the shadows where we could confide.
Away from the hustle where all the day long
I hurried and worried when active and strong.

I needed the quiet though at first I rebelled
But gently, so gently, my cross He upheld
And whispered so sweetly of spiritual things.
Though weakened in body, my spirit took wings
To heights never dreamed of when active and gay.
He loved me so greatly He drew me away.

I needed the quiet. No prison my bed,
But a beautiful valley of blessings instead,
A place to grow richer in Jesus to hide.
I needed the quiet so He drew me aside.

Alice Hansche Mortenson

DECEIVED BY THE LIGHT OF DARKNESS

by Marla Van Baren

In 1978 America was shocked to learn that 900 people took their lives for one man, Jim Jones. In Billings, Montana an infant girl was born dead because the religious group her mother belonged to refused medical aid. Shirley MacLaine leapt to the headlines after voicing her belief in reincarnation. Seemingly overnight, Eastern mysticism cults became America's "new" religion. These practices and beliefs have been around for centuries, but they are now coming to the forefront of religious consciousness. By offering easy answers to life's hard questions, cults lure America's searching youth into an oppressive lifestyle from which it is almost impossible to escape.

To truly understand how cults grow it is necessary to define what a cult is, not an easy task considering the diversity of cults themselves. Different perceptions of cults are continually being expressed, which are usually based in a radical reaction to an isolated incident. People tend to have wrong views of cults and their very nature encourages this: as Robert Burrows says ". . . overtly religious (cults) may seem compatible with Christian faith. When inconspicuously secular they may seem spiritually neutral" (23). A very general and popular definition developed by sociologists states that cults are any religious group which break with the mainstream of religious tradition in their society. Dr. Ronald Enroth, a sociologist who has studied cults for many years, categorizes new religious movements into five basic groups (Enroth, Lure, 22). First on the list is Eastern Mysticism which is made up of some form of Eastern sect or spiritual discipline such as the Hare Krishna and Zen Buddhism. Aberrational Christian groups are those which are much "closer to the margins of mainstream Christianity like the Way or the Unification Church" (Enroth, Lure, 26). These groups are harder to identify as cults because their leaders usually were once members or leaders of good standing in conventional evangelical denominations. Some of the most popular groups today are the Self-Improvement groups which use "mind/body interaction" (Enroth, Lure, 29). One of the best known self-improvement cults is Transcendental Meditation, which in recent years has practically become a household word. Another of these groups is Scientology, founded by L. Ron Hubbard. Those new religions take "elements and truths from several different spiritual/mystical traditions and reformulate (them) into a single religious system" (Enroth, Lure, 31). The Unification Church of Sun Myung

Moon is most likely the best known group of this category. The last category Enroth discusses is most likely the group that people think of when defining cults and that group is the Psychic Occult-Astral group. These groups investigate "worlds beyond the ordinary realm of knowing" (Enroth, Lure, 33). Many new groups consult stars for their guidance and direction. The above categories are meant only as guidelines, and are mixed in various combinations. One may be tempted to believe that the New Age culture has grown quickly because of the many facets of religion it offers, but these types have been around for ages and only now do they appear everywhere in America.

The counterculture of the 60's "rejected materialism and turned inward—and eastward—to Hindu mysticism" (Hopkins 69). It brought with it an openness to new ways of thinking, new higher consciousness, experimentation with transformation of self (Enroth, Lure, 109). The new eastern religions replaced the once popular drugs to reach the "higher consciousness" which enables one to experience life more intensely. " 'Spiritual states of rapture are' induced by chanting, meditation and other forms of spiritual technology" (Enroth, Lure, 43). Members discover truth by using mystical insight and the "opening of cosmic energy" (Enroth, Lure, 43). America was ready for this New Age movement to replace, or rather, continue what the counterculture began.

New Age religions are founded on the belief that man is his own god or the leader of the group is the Messiah. An example of this ego-pleasing philosophy is found in the religion "est," which claims ". . . that we are each Gods who create our own universe" (Hunt 183). The charismatic guru-god symbolizes man's salvation from man; their followers believe whatever he or she says is law and definitely words to live by. Finding the god-like qualities within oneself frees a person from dependency on other people and gives him/her the reason for self-confidence which everyone craves.

Surprisingly though, everyone who is attracted to this new form of spirituality is not an ex-hippie or even a poor misfortunate looking for a way out. Actually, the people most susceptible to the pull of the New Age are the middle-class youth who come from **nominally Christian homes and are in the immediate post-highschool years or are college seniors.** Being exposed, however minimally, to some religion instills a desire for some sort of spirituality. Parents are not fulfilling this need, so the youths are forced to look at all options presented to them. The after-graduation predicament of "what now?" gives a sense of confusion, longing and desire for answers. Cults willingly remove the necessity of facing reality and give all of the "right" answers to searching youth. The cult provides the yes and no, black and white answers to life's complicated questions (Enroth, Youth, 152).

There are certain times when kids need the black and white answers the most, and it is at these times when disciples approach their prospective converts. "When someone is feeling exceedingly anxious, uncertain, hurt, lonely, unloved, confused, or guilty, that person is a prime prospect for those who come in the guise of religion offering a way out or 'peace of mind' " (Enroth, Youth, 154). The above scenario may sound familiar and it

should. Today people are constantly expounding on the unloved and misunderstood youth in America. Cults will offer the friendship and strong emotional support that society doesn't offer the prospects during their time of need, until the member is completely inducted into the group. With most cults the deeper one is involved the less friendly and more occultic in practice it becomes, and the more difficult it is to get out.

Before a member reaches the inner levels of a cult he must undergo a process of induction. Candidates are completely stripped of their identities, or at least are severely weakened to make them easily conform to the belief systems of the cult. In essence, they are given a totally new identity which is the same as every other member's. Common teachings in cults instruct that the evil and moral problems of the world are caused by society violating God's will (Pavlos 48). Towards the end of the conversion process the thought processes of the converts are changed, their behavior modified, and their belief systems conformed to that of the group (Pavlos 49).

It is obvious that cults have a firm hold on their converts, but some people do break away and others are taken away. Those who want to leave sometimes are unable to because of the strong holds cults keep on their members. Some groups use techniques such as sensory deprivation which usually involves lack of food and sleep. They will also sever all social ties and keep them in a "totalitarian environment where all aspects of one's life are controlled" (Enroth, Lure, 74). Basically, the power behind the hold that cults have lies in the member's fear that they will be unable to care for themselves outside of the cult or the fear of lost salvation.

Once the ties with a cult are successfully broken, ex-members have a difficult time adjusting to the "outside world." Andrew Pavlos, speaking on the " 'Aches and Pains' of Postcult Adjustment" (150), says that the sense of pride and elitism provided by the cult leaves ex-cultists incapable of facing life's difficult problems. They also deprive the cultist of the feelings of personal ambition and competitiveness which are such an integral part of society today. Those who are forced to leave cults are usually subjected by their families to a series of long, intense questioning of their cultic beliefs. This process is done by a deprogrammer who, if he does his job, leaves the ex-cultist in a spiritual vacuum which the ex-member will search to fill, most likely in another cult. Sometimes the ex-cultist is totally incapable of surviving in the "real world," much like a mental patient.

Cults are far from being fully understood, and the New Age movement is far from over. The number of people involved in this movement is unknown and almost impossible to determine, but it is most definitely growing. The church needs to love and to support our youth to counteract the effect and attraction of cults and—just as important—help and support those trying to leave the cult.

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ECCLESIASTES

by Mrs. Carol Brands

"The Preacher's Sermon"

Theme: "Is there Meaning in Labor or Life?"

CHAPTER 1: Introduction to the Sermon
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- B. The Theme of the Sermon (1:2-11)
  1. The Theme as Answer and Question (2-3)
  2. Illustrations of the Theme (4-7)
  3. The Theme's Basic Logic (8-11)
- C. The Origin of the Sermon (1:12-18)
  1. In the Preacher's POSITION (12)
  2. In the Preacher's CALLING (13)
  3. In the Preacher's UNIVERSAL OBSERVATIONS (14-15)
  4. In the Preacher's PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS (16)
  5. In the Recognition of WRONG CONCLUSIONS (17-18)

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- A. The Search (2:1-10)
  1. In laughter (1-2)
  2. In drunkenness (3)
  3. In wealth and accomplishments (4-8a)
  4. In music (8b)
  5. Using wisdom (9)
  6. With enjoyment (10)
- B. Its Conclusion (2:11-23)
  1. In Summary: all was vain (11)
  2. In Analysis: why it was vain (12-23)
     a. Reason 1: The LABOR must be repeated (12).
     b. Parenthesis: Some profit occurs during life (13-14a).

c. Reason 2: The MAN must still die (14b-15).
d. Reason 3: The MAN will soon be forgotten (16-17).
e. Reason 4: The LABOR must perish also (18-21).
f. Reason 5: The LABOR was wearisome toil (22-23).

II. Confession of Meaning With God (2:24-3:22).
A. Only God makes possible any joy in labor (2:24-26).
B. Only God makes everything beautiful in its time (3:1-15).
1. There is a perfect time for each event (1-8).
2. Ungodly man fails to see this perfection (9-15).
a. Ungodly man fails to see the beauty (9-13).
b. Ungodly man must learn to fear God (14-15).
C. With God, even the ugly things have meaning (3:16-22).
1. A strong example of ugly wickedness (16).
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a. To equalize all things in the judgment (17).
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1. The Workaholic (4)
2. The Lazy Man (5)
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1. The Miser Described (7-8)
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B. Vows are dangerous if not performed (2-7).

III. Error 3: Laboring for SOCIAL POWER (5:8-9).
A. God will oppress those who oppress (8).
B. Rulers need the products of their underlings (9).

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1. Riches cannot SATISFY (10-20).
a. Lust makes us always crave more (10).
b. Lust makes us loathe to pay our expense (11).
c. Lust makes contented sleep difficult (12).
2. Riches often do real HARM (13-17).
a. Riches if lost mean NO INHERITANCE (13-14).
b. Riches are always lost at the GRAVE (15-16).
c. Riches are always lost in UNHAPPINESS (17).
3. Things may be ENJOYED (18-20).

a. God gives us things themselves (18).
b. God gives the ability to profit from things (19).
c. God gives the joy which overcomes obstacles (20).

B. Basic REASONS to Downplay Earthly Riches (6:1-9).
1. Though gained, riches often not enjoyed (1-6).
a. A common loss of honored riches (1-3a).
b. This man worse off than a miscarried baby (3b-5).
2. Though gained, riches are no advantage (7-9).
a. Argument 1: Both the rich and the poor labor for the necessities of life (7).
b. Argument 2: Both the retard and the competent poor have nothing less than the rich man (8).
c. Argument 3: Whether rich or poor, it is better to enjoy possessions than to covet non-possessions (9).

(Conclusion: NOTHING satisfies apart from God! (6:10-12))
1. God is sovereign and will not be ignored (10).
2. No attempt to ignore God succeeds (11).
3. Man cannot find meaning apart from God (12).

PART II: MEANING IN LABOR AND LIFE FOUND IN GOD (chapters 7-11)

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I. God Teaches His Wisdom in Mysterious Ways (chapter 7).
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B. Through wise **Rebuke** rather than Foolish Laughter (5-6).
C. Through **Patience** rather than Impatience (7-10).
D. Through **Knowledge** rather than Money (11-12).
E. Through **Adversity** as well as Prosperity (13-14).
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1. The wise man submits to God as King (8:1-5).
2. The foolish man experiences time and judgment (8:6-8).
B. Recognition that God will Punish Evil (8:9-13).
1. Men sin openly because God's wrath is delayed (9-11).
2. Though delayed, man's sin will be punished (12-13).
C. Recognition that God's Justice is Unseen Now (8:14-9:6).
1. On earth, wicked and righteous share experiences (8:14-15).
2. On earth, wisdom cannot discern God's purposes (8:16-17).
3. On earth, wise and wicked die unrewarded (9:1-6).
D. Acceptance of God's Portion in this Life (9:7-10).
E. God's Rule supreme over Human Abilities (9:11-12).

(Conclusion: Wisdom is Appreciated Only in "Quietness" (9:13-18).)

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I. Wisdom Lives Submissively before Decadent Rulers (Chapter 10).
   A. The ORIGIN of the Folly of Rulers (10:1-3).
      1. Folly starts small (1).
      2. Folly starts in the heart (2).
      3. Folly becomes manifest in life (3).
   B. The INJUSTICE of the Folly of Rulers (10:4-7).
      1. It is quick to anger against the godly (4).
      2. It chooses foolish people for high offices (5-7).
   C. The SELF-DESTRUCTION in the Folly of Rulers (10:8-10).
      1. Tampering with God's boundaries is dangerous (8-9).
      2. Bad government demands use of more force (10).
   D. The VENOMOUS TONGUE of a Foolish Ruler (11-15).
      1. It is like the hissing of a serpent (11).
      2. It lacks graciousness, and boomerangs (12).
      3. It becomes progressively more evil (13).
      4. It boasts of what hasn't happened yet (14).
      5. It lacks the fundamentals of wisdom (15).
   E. The IRRESPONSIBILITY of Foolish Rulers (10:16-19).
      1. Their Immaturity (16a).
      2. Their Debauchery (16b-17).
      3. Their Slothfulness (18).
      4. Their Sumptuous Living (19).
   F. The RESPONSE of Wisdom to Foolish Rulers (10:20).
      1. Total Submission in thought and word (20a).
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II. Wisdom Uses This Life With Eternal Perspective (chapter 11).
   A. The Wise Person GIVES and LABORS in Faith (11:1-6).
      1. Giving of his own necessities (1a).
      2. Giving in conviction of future reward (1b).
      3. Giving generously (2a).
      4. Giving because he may lose it all tomorrow (2b-3).
      5. Giving—and laboring—without excuses not to (4).
      6. Giving—and laboring—leaving outcome to God (5).
      7. Giving—and laboring—at every opportunity (6).
   B. The Wise Person ENJOYS LIFE in Light of Eternity (11:7-10).
      1. An Admonition to the Older Person (7-8).
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   A. Admonition to "remember" God before old age (12:1-7).
   B. Admonition to esteem the truth (12:8-12).
      1. In contrast to the vanity of the world (8).
      2. As it was taught by the Preacher (9-10).
      3. As it is taught in all of Scripture (11-12).
   C. Admonition to fear God in light of judgment (12:13-14).

LEARNING GOD'S WILL

(The outline given below is the combined effort of Pastors Charles Terpstra and Ronald Van Overloop. It was used on the occasion of the 1989 Fall Retreat. It is believed that the subject is one which is always current, and that the form of an outline would serve well for beneficial discussion, whether by young or older adults.

There are three parts. The first approaches the subject of Learning God's will generally. Many of the thoughts in this section are taken from others, mostly from Sinclair Ferguson's book, **Discovering God's Will**. The reader is urged to purchase this excellent book for futher instruction and edification.

The second and third sections of the outline apply the learning of God's will to specific areas of life, first to the subject of dating and marriage, and the second to the subject of one's vocation.)

General Principles

I. God has a plan for our lives and He has promised to guide us.

A. All the details of our lives, including our mates for marriage (or lack of one) and our vocations, have been determined by God in His perfectly wise counsel, and these plans are worked out for us by His marvelous providence.

1. If "the very hairs of your head are numbered" (Matt. 10:29, 30) and if God "worketh **all things** after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11), then we can confess "Thou shalt guide me by Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psalm 73:24). Also Psalm 23; 25:8, 9, 12.
2. It is God's promise that He will guide us.
   a. Psalm 32:8, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go." Also Psalm 48:14; Isa. 42:16; 58:11.
   b. One of the roles of Scripture is to guide us.
      1) "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (II Tim. 3:16, 17).
      2) "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105).
   c. And one of the roles of the Holy Spirit indwelling us is to guide us. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things . . . the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and

is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." (I John 2:20, 27)

B. Within and under this will of God we are called to live consciously and intelligently, making judgments and choosing one course of life over another.
   1. God made us rational, moral creatures, who think, will and act. As such we can and must **discover** God's will for our lives and act accordingly.
   2. "Teach me good judgment and knowledge" (Psalm 119:66); "Teach me to do Thy will" (Psalm 143:10); "be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17); "that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" "be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." (rom. 12:1, 2)

C. The chief end of our lives, including our dating (marriages) and the choosing of our vocation, is to glorify God.
   1. This is the purpose for which God has created us and it is the purpose of His saving us. "That we should be to the praise of His glory" and "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. 1:6, 12, 13); "That ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9); also Isa. 43:7, 21.
   2. This implies that **the** basic question for us to face in pursuing any course of action is: Will this choice and course of life serve to further God's glory (I Cor. 10:31)?

II. How can we learn God's will for us? How does God guide us?

A. There are some basic errors, of which we must be made aware.
   1. That God guides essentially via inward prompting apart from the written Word. (E.g. "just knowing" that something is God's will because of a feeling in the pit of one's stomach, or something equally ridiculous.)
   2. That God's will can be learned by a direct application of a Bible verse. (E.g. a minister determines God's will concerning a call by letting his Bible fall open and letting his finger fall on the opened page with his eyes closed.)
   3. That God's will can be learned from an event of providence that opens doors or closes them. (E.g. knowing it is God's will to move simply because an adequate home is found in a new location.)

B. The fundamental mode by which our rational Lord guides His redeemed, rational creatures is by means of a rational understanding and application of the current thought of the Scriptures.
   1. It is the pressure on our conscience of Scripture's portrayal of God's character and will, which the Spirit uses to enlighten us.
      a. The true way to honor the Holy Spirit as our guide is to honor the Scriptures through which He guides us.
      b. The Holy Spirit's prompting must always be checked by the Word.
   2. The main and most frequent guide God gives us is the Ten

Commandments.

3. Therefore, being "led by the Spirit" (Rom. 8:14) is not inward voices and certain emotions or experiences, but a conscious mortifying of sin and living for God's glory.

C. The HOW of God's guidance.

1. The Christian knows God's will by learning from the Scriptures, the character of the God as well as the commands of the God revealed in the Scriptures.
2. The Christian comes to submit to God's will through the means of prayer.
   a. Having searched the Word and ourselves concerning a matter we lay it before the Lord in prayer. Learn to pray these prayers with David, "Teach me to do Thy will", "Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me", "Teach me Thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path" (Psalm 143:10; 25:5; 27:11).
   b. Ultimately, our prayer is "Thy will be done." Matt. 6:10; 26:39, 42; James 4:13-15.
3. The Christian can find God's will only while walking in obedience. living a Christian life-style, walking in love, light, and wisdom. Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 5:3-17.

III. Common pitfalls in learning God's will.

A. Unwillingness to think. It is false piety to follow inward feelings and impressions without a rational basis. Be on your guard concerning how you "feel"

B. Unwillingness to think long term, considering the implications of our decisions.

C. Unwillingness to take advice (Prov. 12:15). Often others (usually our parents) know the Bible and us better than we know ourselves. Even if we cannot accept their advice in the end, only good can come to us from carefully weighing what they say.

D. Unwillingness to suspect ourselves. Feelings of well-being, especially, can be mistaken as guidance, can silence the conscience and inhibit critical thinking.

E. Unwillingness to wait, if in doubt.

F. Unwillingness to realize that right guidance does not mean a trouble-free course. Trouble can be opportunities to check the original guidance and to consider our way. Trouble is not necessarily a sign of being off track, for God often chastens us. Also God demands self-denial of His disciples.

IV. Hence, the Christian must be guided by various principles of conduct, put in the form of six quesitons based on I Cor. 6:9-11.

A. Is it lawful?

B. Is it beneficial for me spiritually?

C. Is it enslaving? Some things are legitimate, but have the capability of controlling me.

D. Is it consistent with Christ's Lordship (I Cor. 10:31; 6:19, 20; 7:23).
E. Is it helpful to others or does it make them stumble?
F. Is it consistent with Biblical example (I Cor. 11:1)?

"Captain of Israel's host and Guide
Of all who seek the land above,
Beneath Thy shadow we abide,
The cloud of Thy protecting love;
Our strength, Thy grace;
Our rule, Thy Word;
Our end, the glory of the Lord."
Charles Wesley

Could Your Young People's Society Write This Letter?

Dear Karen,

The Young People's Society wishes to extend her warmest greetings to you! The Lord has blessed us richly in the past society year, and He continues to do so this year. We thank the Lord for giving us opportunity to meet every week to study and grow together in God's Word. For we really need these times of fellowship together in a day when we are sorely tempted by the vanity of this present world.

We started studying the book of Genesis this year using Rev. Harbach's commentary on Genesis as our study guide. Our meetings have been very lively, and our attendance has been almost 100 % every meeting!! We hope and pray that our sister societies are also experiencing God's blessings upon them as we are.

The Society will be sponsoring a Christmas Singspiration in December where an offering will be collected for the 1990 Convention in Redlands. Many of us hope to attend this event and, consequently, are very enthusiastic about having fundraisers this coming New Year.

It is our sincere desire that the Lord may continue to bless you as Federation Board officers in your work and also all the societies in the Federation. We are thankful for the one faith or our Lord that we all share and are founded upon. May the Lord keep you in His care.

50th Annual Prot. Ref.
Young People's Convention
August 6-10, 1990

Registration will be held:
Hope Protestant Reformed Church
1307 East Brockton Avenue
Redlands, California 92374

Daily Events:
Monday: Registration, Roller-Skating Party
Tuesday: Activities at U of R, Photo, Speech, Ice Cream Social
Wednesday: Speech, Beach Outing
Thursday: Delegates Meeting, Olympic Activities, Banquet, Speech
Friday: Farewell Breakfast

* Please use this schedule when planning what clothes to pack for each day. Remember, this is California! Temperatures will range from 90-100 degrees and cool off slightly in the evening.

RULES:

1. We expect exemplary Christian behavior of our covenant young people. Any instances of violating these requirements of behavior will result in dismissal from the convention and notification of parents and consistory.
2. Remember that there are other on-going conventions at the U of R with whom we are sharing the cafeteria and other facilities. Be prompt for meals, keep the property clean, and in every way respect these others groups in attendance.
3. The curfew hour will be 12:15 A.M.; everyone must be in their dorm rooms by this time. Devotions will be from 12:20 - 12:30 A.M. Lights out by 1:00 A.M.! Exception: banquet night—curfew will be at 12:45 A.M. and lights out at 1:00 A.M. Please cooperate, as curfews will be enforced.
4. Smoking is prohibited in any public place in the residence halls. Smoking is allowed in designated areas in the cafeteria.
5. Alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs are expressly forbidden on the U of R premises or at any activity during the convention. No radios or tape decks allowed.
6. Conventioneers may not leave the U of R premises or church grounds at any time without first receiving permission from their chaperone.

7. Cars are not to be used while attending the convention, and will be stored on the church premises. Keys will be turned in at registration to a designated person. Should some need arise for the use of your car, you must have permission from designated person.
8. U of R personnel will distribute keys for dorm rooms, two per room. Conventioneers will pay $20 for keys not returned to chaperones at end of convention.
9. Anything broken or damaged at the U of R must be replaced. Person responsible will reimburse Redlands Y.P.S. for costs.

WHAT'S HAPPENED

by Lori Bouwkamp

BYRON CENTER, MI

A Young People's Singspiration was held February 18.

Mr. Jeff Berens was received as a baptized member from Faith PRC.

The baptismal papers of Denise Holstege were received from Hudsonville PRC.

FIRST, Grand Rapids

On February 8 Adams St. Annual Soup Supper was held at the church.

IMMANUEL, Lacombe, AB Canada

January 7 the sacrament of baptism was administered to the infants of Mr. and Mrs. D. De Groot and Mr. and Mrs. B. Tolsma.

The consistory received the membership of Mrs. Agnes Wierenga as a member in full communion.

The Young People's Society sponsored a singspiration January 21.

The Tim Zylstra family was blessed with the birth of a daughter, February 2.

LOVELAND, Colorado

Heartfelt sympathy is extended to Mr. and Mrs. Lorenz Bertsch in the death of his sister the week of February 18.

The sacrament of holy baptism was administered February 25 to Joshua Alan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Griess; Dale James, son of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Kooienga; and Kerri Lynn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ron Koole.

SOUTH HOLLAND, Illinois

Mary Kuiper and Tim Lobbezoo were united in marriage on October 7.

Lou and Cheryl Regnerus were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Leah Christine.

Debby Lenting made confession of her faith on October 22.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Keith and Mary Vooys in the death of his father.

The membership papers of Mr. Martin De Vries were transferred to our Hope PRC, Redlands, CA.

Mrs. Anna Pfau celebrated her 75th birthday, October 17.

SOUTHEAST, Grand Rapids

Mrs. Margaret Stursma celebrated her 89th birthday February 9.

HOPE, Redlands CA

The Young People's Society sponsored a singspiration February 18 with the proceeds going to Hope Christian School.

The consistory received the membership papers of Wayne Buiter and Pastor and Mrs. den Hartog and family from our church in Randolph, WI.

Jordan Wayne, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roger Gritters, was baptized February 11.

Mrs. Hilda Meelker celebrated her 79th birthday the week of February 4.

HOPE, Walker, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Nienhuis rejoiced in the birth of a son February 2.

The membership papers of Jordan Engelsma were transferred to our Grandville Church.

HUDSONVILLE, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Dave Holstege give thanks to God for the birth of their daughter, Brittany Rae, January 30.

We extend our sympathy to Mrs. Bob Garvelink in the death of her father and to Mr. George Yonkers in the death of his father.

Mr. and Mrs. Dave Vander Kooi celebrated their 50th anniversary February 3.

The baptismal papers of Jim Koop were transferred to our Southeast PRC.

The Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Society sponsored a ski outing at Bittersweet February 15.

Mr. Johannes Bosch was taken to be with his Lord March 2.

The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett Kamps were transferred to our Southwest PRC.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Mr. Ralph Vander Veen in the death of his father.

SOUTHWEST, Grand Rapids

Paul Andrew, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gary Noorman, received the sacrament of baptism February 26.

The baptismal papers of Sara Hoving were sent to Hope PRC, Redlands, CA.

We extend sympathy to Mrs. Itse Vander Veen and to Mr. and Mrs. Randy Vander Veen in the death of husband and father.

HULL, Iowa

Mr. and Mrs. William Hoksbergen celebrated their 55th anniversary January 3.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Korver whose son, Kelly Joel, was delivered still-born January 16.

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Laura Lee, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gerb-De Jong; and to Tyler Ross, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roger Buys.

The Ladies Guild sponsored a Father-Son Banquet on February 26.

Melanie Moore and Stacie Brummel made confession of their faith March 4.

Note: If there are news items you feel should be in the **Beacon Lights**, please feel free to send that information to Lori Bouwkamp, 4820 Eisenhower Dr., Hudsonville, MI 49426.

Singspiration Schedule

May 20 Hope

August Pre-Convention 1st Jenison CRC

The Young Peoples' Society of Hope Prot. Ref. Church of Redlands, CA welcomes you to the 50th Anniversary Young Peoples' Convention to be held August 6 - 10.