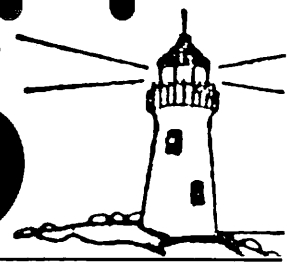
BEACON LIGHTS



FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

JANUARY 1991

"Trust your parents. . . . When I was young, I felt my parents were very strict; but it struck me when I had my family that the values I wanted to teach my children were very much what my parents had taught me. Now I have the joy of seeing my daughters instructing their children."

Mothers and Daughters - A Special Relationship,
by Mrs. Jean Kortering

VOLUME XLX NUMBER 1

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EDITOR'S NOTES JANUARY 1991

by David Harbach

Are you prepared?

"Prepared for what?" you ask.

Are you prepared as a young person to take on the responsibility of leadership in the home and in the church? We need leaders. We need strong leaders in the home and in the church. Are you prepared to be a leader?

Although this could be a special issue on a young person's responsibility toward leadership in the home and in the church, it is not. As you read, however, you will find four articles by Mr. Kevin Inskeep, Mrs. Kortering, Bruce Miedema, and Mrs. Trice, that bring to our attention some of the important aspects of preparing for leadership in the home and in the church.

I have given Prof. Hanko's series on "To Lose The Battle and Win The War" and Mrs. Brands' series on "Ecclesiastes Letters" a one month rest because of the abundance of copy for this issue. Both of their series will continue in next month's issue.

You will notice that Bruce's article on "Beliefs, Values, and Norms. . ." is supportive of the other articles. Bruce clearly defines the words in the title of his article and provides many examples to show what the words mean.

Mr. Inskeep, who is a deacon in the Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand, speaks about our

young men and gives six necessary preparations for full service within the church. And may our young men take to heart the possibility of being called to be a minister in our churches.

Mrs. Kortering is the wife of Rev. Kortering and the mother of four daughters who are now all married. Mrs. Kortering's article on "Mothers and Daughters - A Special Relationship" speaks from the viewpoint of a mother's responsibility in preparing her daughters to assume their responsibilities in the home and the church. Mrs. Kortering also emphasizes the need for young women to listen to the instruction of their parents.

Mrs. Trice is a guest writer. She lives just outside Roanoke, Viginia. She is a mother of six children. Mrs. Trice graduated from Radford College, now called Radford University, with a Bachelor of Science degree in English. She is a teacher at the moment. Mrs. Trice and her family are charter members of a new church, Grace Presbyterian Chapel. We welcome her as a guest writer to the Beacon Lights. Her article, "A Woman's Role: Preparing for Leadership in the Home," uses the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 as the example to follow. She uses other passages of Scripture to bring out womanly virtues that young women will want to develop in their lives.

We thank these four writers for providing us with four encouraging articles on preparing for leadership in the home and in the church. We know that they could have written a lot more on this subject but they had to limit their writings to five typed pages. May you benefit from the godly concern that these writers and that the church has for her sons and daughters.

As promised earlier, I have included the first of the three con vention speeches given by Rev's. Terpstra, Gritters and Haak. Rev. Terpstra was the keynote speaker on the theme: "Love: the Bond of Perfectness." His speech "Love, the Gift of God," has three points: Love Rooted In Eternity, Love Manifested at the Cross, and Love Poured Out Upon the Church. May these articles refresh our memories of what we learned at the last convention but also serve to encourage us to give all our energies, our life, to living by the love of God.

Also included in this issue is a poem received anonymously intended to help other young children who are treated poorly in school to remember they are loved by One greater and more important than anyone else.

The Church News by Lora Bouwkamp brings us through the month of October. There is a lot of news for this issue so we thank the bulletin clerks for helping Lora out by sending their bulletins to her.

"When God bears us on His wings, or when He carries us in His bosom, it is easy to pray; but when we seem to be cast into the deepest gulfs, if we thence cry to Him, it is a real and certain proof of faith and hope."

- John Calvin (on Lam. 3)

BELIEFS, VALUES AND NORMS . . .

by Bruce Miedema

As a member of the staff of this magazine I am a part of ground level issue planning; themes, securing writers, etc. As well, I am a contributing associate editor, and occasionally you will read my articles on these pages. As a result of the above capacities, I have written the following article in such a way that it will associate with the featured articles of this issue. Therefore; by intent, the nature of this article is supportive.

It has been my experience most often that when young people (men and women) study or discuss leadership - as to its character and content - it is among other things, understood as "that state of being to which one will attain in the future." That is true but I ask you to notice as you read the feature articles that these writers bring out the idea of "natural groundwork being laid from early on." As to this groundwork I want to direct your attention to beliefs, values, and norms which are influential in leadership.

Beliefs, values, and norms are within the realm of human responsibility - that is to say, those things that you are able to and expected to develop.

BELIEFS are assumptions or convictions that you hold to be true regarding people, concepts, or things. All people have beliefs about things, concepts, and people. One may believe that being a student means putting in time only from 8:00 to 3:00. Another may understand being a student as an occupation - albeit not life long - for which they are responsible to themselves, other people, and though not in an immediate direct sense, ultimately to God.

Some people believe a car is simply a means of transportation. Others believe a car is a status symbol.

Some people in authority (those from whom guidance is expected) believe young men and women tend to be lazy and irresponsible, that they must motivate by fear. Others believe true leadership is no threatening experience. They lead with the understanding that they too are in subjection to God and that their leadership arises out of this ideal.

VALUES are attitudes about the worth or importance of people, concepts, or things. You may place high value on a family heirloom such as your grandmother's pendant or grandfather's watch. You may value a clean, well maintained car. You may value freedom to make certain decisions or to go places. You may value a friend, a relative, or an adult who helped

you during a particular time in your life.

Values influence your behavior because you use them to weigh the importance of alternatives. For example, a person who values personal pleasure more than he values a fit, healthy body continually makes choices about eating and exercising that will result in his becoming overweight and out of shape. Your values guide you in choosing whether to go out with your friends for the evening or to a family gathering on your grandfather's 75th birthday.

NORMS are formal and informal. Formal norms are official standards or laws that govern behavior. Traffic signals and other laws of the land direct the behavior of American people. They dictate what actions are required or forbidden.

Informal norms are unwritten rules or standards that govern the behavior of group members. Certain military regiments have held an informal norm that the wounded were evacuated after a battle, regardless of danger. At the root of this norm was a shared value about the importance of caring for each other.

While I was a young teenager there was a group of young men (late teen and early 20's) who shared an informal norm that was not at all dissimilar to that of the military regiment. Whether they were fully aware of it or not the norm they shared guarded their spiritual life. They each were a watchdog for the others. They each were accountable to the others. For example, if one of the group was getting physically involved with a girl and any of his friends was knowledgeable of the situation he/they confronted him and if need be removed him from the impending peril.

Each of these young men and members of military regiments, mentioned above, found comfort in knowing that they would be cared for when in danger or wounded.

Informal norms can also be counter-productive. Norms such as heavy drinking or drug abuse are physically harmful and also spiritually harmful.

Negative informal norms create peer pressure to conform.

IMPORTANCE. Beliefs, values, and norms guide the actions of individuals and groups. They are powerful. People will risk danger and will often die for deeply held beliefs and values. Many early Christians died for their beliefs because they valued service to God more than their lives. Death in the service of God was an accepted norm.

". . . We receive this holy sacrament in the assembly of the people of God, with humility and reverence, keeping up amongst us a holy remembrance of the death of Christ our Saviour, with thanksgiving: making there confession of our faith, and of the Christian religion. Therefore no one ought to come to this table without having previously rightly examined himself; lest by eating of this bread and drinking of this cup, he eat and drink judgment to himself. In a word, we are excited by the use of this holy sacrament, to a fervent love towards God and our neighbor."
Confession of Faith, Article XXXV

1990 Young People's Convention Speech

Theme: "Love: The Bond of Perfectness" (Col. 3:14)

Speech #1 - "Love, the Gift of God"

by Rev. Charles Terpstra

I. INTRODUCTION

Let me begin by thanking the host society and church here at Redlands for having us all here, and for giving me the privilege of being one of the speakers. This is a first for me, and I am grateful for this opportunity. I also commend you for the theme you have chosen for us, "Love: the Bond of Perfectness", based on the Scripture in Col. 3:14. This is and ought to be a vitally important subject for you believing young people of Christ's church. God's love is the ethical source of and spiritual reason for our salvation. It is the heartbeat of the Christian's life. What is it that brings you young people together for this convention? It is the bond of love! What is it that we are here to enjoy and have enriched? It is the bond of love with God and with one another!

The aspect of the theme which I have been asked to speak to you on is love as the gift of God. This is the proper starting point, for all true spiritual love is of God; there is no love apart from Him, as says the scripture In I Jn. 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love Is of God. . . ." The love we have is a gift from Him. But when we talk about love being the gift of God, we do not merely mean that the love we have is from God; we also mean that He loved us first, before we had any love for Him or any one else. His love for us is preeminent and foremost. Of this we read In I Jn. 4:10,19: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We love him, because he first loved us."

That is a blessed beginning - God's love for us. Someone has well said that to know God's love for us is heaven on earth. I hope that you count it so, young people. There is nothing greater for you to know and be assured about than the love of God for you. If you have that, you have everything. Yet to speak of the love of God is to enter the realm of the sacred and profound. Someone else has written that when we look at God's love, we look into His heart. That makes me tremble and makes me want to say, "What can I say about the love

of God?" Well, we can say something about it because God has told us about it in His word. In His love-letter to us He has opened His heart and showed us what His love is.

Such a passage is Col. 3:14. I want to make just a few introductory comments about this text before we delve into our subject. Paul is not as such talking about God's love for us here. He is talking about our love for our fellow believers. Yet as we said because all love is of God and since his love for us is first, we may apply this passage to God's love for us. But what we want to point out especially is that something is said here about the very nature and character of love. Love is said to be the bond of perfectness. That's almost a definition of love.

That is quite a bit different from the popular idea of love. Usually love is defined in terms of its emotional nature. Love is said to be a strong feeling of attraction to something beautiful. Now it is true that love, also God's love, has this dimension. But this is not the heart of it. The heart of God's love is that it is a bond, the bond of perfectness. That word "bond" comes from a root that means "to tie together, to fasten on all sides". That is the nature of God's love - it ties us together in an intimate bond, in an unbreakable union. Hosea 11:1, 4 says it well: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love. . . ."

That is a very beautiful concept. It Implies that love is basically a covenant concept. In loving us God establishes a personal relationship with us, a relationship of friendship! We find that beautiful idea expressed in I Jn. 4:16: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." That's the perspective we want to take in this speech.

II. ROOTED IN ETERNITY

The love God has for His people is rooted in eternity. This is the wonder of God's love - He loved us before time, before the worlds were made, before we had any being or existence! His love does not just begin in time, when we were born or when we were converted. No, it is from eternity; it extends back into the eternal heart of God. Jeremiah was given a vision of this truth, "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Jer. 31:3

This implies the great and precious truth of your election. From eternity in His perfect plan of salvation God determined to make you an object of His love. He wrote your name in the Lamb's book of life. He engraved you on the palms of His hands. But besides that, that choice of you on God's part was itself an act of love. You were elected in love. This is what Paul says in Eph. 1:4, 5: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, . . . in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself. . . ."

That ought to make you and me fall down before God In humble adoration, that He would so choose us in love and determine to make us know His love. Remember, He didn't do that for everyone. Election is discriminatory, particular. God didn't choose all men to

know His love. Just as He singled out Jacob and loved him, but hated Esau, so He has singled you out, believing covenant young people, and loved you. And what did He see in you that would make Him love you? Did He look ahead and see your giftedness, your beauty, your love of Him, your faith in Christ, your good works? No, none of that. There was nothing in you and me to attract God's love to us. In fact, as sinners we are wholly unlovable. God loved us simply because it was His good pleasure. That is humbling, isn't it?

But perhaps you ask at this point What is so important about the fact that God's love for us is eternal and rooted in eternity? Isn't it more important to know that God loves us in time, right now? And besides, isn't this whole idea rather impersonal? If love is the bond of perfectness, how could God love us before we had any existence? How could there be a personal bond before we were real beings?

In answer to these questions, let it be said that your election in love and to love is far from impersonal. Not only did the personal, living God choose you, but He also chose you as a person. You see, He foreknew you and thus chose you. That foreknowledge of God means that He knew all about you; He knew your person, your make-up, your life. To the mind of God therefore you were a real person. And thus the bond of love between God and you was also real as far as God was concerned. But what about that first question. How important is it to know that God loved you from eternity?

There are a couple of reason why I believe it is vitally important to know this. In the first place, because it shows us that God's love for us is sovereign. It is not that we loved God and therefore He loved us. No, He loved us first, loved us sovereignly. And so, you see, that also means that we are not loved with a weak, human love but with the mighty love of God. And therefore in the second place, this is important to know because it shows that this love of God for us is sure. Because it is God's eternal love, it will not die out as temporal human love does. Because it is from eternity it will extend to eternity. We have an eternal bond with God! Nothing can break that bond, nothing can pull us apart. Now that's comfort, comfort for you young people who live in a world of fickle, uncertain human love!

III. MANIFEST AT THE CROSS

Let's go on now to ask the question, How does the love of God manifest itself? We may certainly say that the very desire on God's part to bind us together with Himself in a personal relationship of friendship manifested His love. That He would even want to do that, considering the fact that He already had fellowship within Himself and was perfectly happy, shows his love for us.

But the Word of God drives us to a more concrete manifestation of the love of God - I Jn. 4:9,10: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Love, as you know is often measured by what it gives to oth-

ers and what it does for others. That's the way we measure love and that's the way the Bible talks about the measure of God's love too. True love is in its nature sacrificial; it gives. True love manifests itself in deeds; it does something for its objects. How did the love of God manifest itself with regard to these two things?

Scripture is very plain on what God's love gave to us. We already read from I Jn. 4:9,10 about that, but perhaps the most familiar verse is Jn. 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God gave what was most precious, most dear to Him - His own Son. You remember how the Bible speaks of Abraham giving up Isaac. Well, that's just a faint picture of what God did when He gave us His Son. What a sacrifice! What a love!

Scripture is equally plain on what God's love did through that gift of His Son. We already read from I Jn. 4:10, where mention is made of the fact that God gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. But let us quote an Old Testament passage - Is. 38:17: "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." That's what God's love did - it delivered our souls from the pit of corruption - that's death and hell, and gave us life with Him, everlasting life. What an act! What a love!

But now I want us to see the absolute necessity of this gift and act of God's love in order for that love to be complete. I mean complete from the viewpoint of what Col. 3:14 says about love. God's love toward us is said to be the bond of perfectness. That means that for the tie of love to be mad there must be a perfect subje and a perfect object. In oth words, for there to be a person relationship of friendship betwee. God and us, both God and we must be perfect. God's love cannot operate in any other sphere than that of perfection. Only in holiness can it be completed and a bond established.

But now we know that while there is no problem with the subject of love being perfect, namely, God, there is a problem with the objects of love, namely, ourselves. God is perfect and holy; there is no sin in Him. But we are sinners, not perfect, but full of sin. We are dead in sins; we are in the pit of corruption, impure, vile. How then can the love of God be shown to us? How can He love such sinners as we? How can He tie us to Himself in the strong bands of love and have fellowship with us?

The answer is that He cannot - except He deliver us from sin and make us holy and perfect. And that is what He did in giving His Son to the death of the cross. This is the amazing nature of God's love. It went to this extent to bind us to Himself in the cords of friendship. And now let's turn to one more Scripture that speaks of this marvelous work of God's love - Rom. 5:6-8. Here we find God's great love for us sinners contrasted with the greatest manifestation of human love. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were

yet sinners, Christ died for us."

This then is how and why the bond of perfection has been made between God and us. God sees us in Jesus Christ, free of sin, perfect in holiness, and He draws us to Himself in the bond of holy, divine love. What wondrous love!

IV. POURED OUT UPON THE CHURCH

Having reached this point in this message, you may be ready to ask, But how do we know that we are loved by God? How do I know personally that God loves me? How do I know that the love of God manifested at the cross is for my benefit, so that I am fastened to God in a covenant relationship? After all, God chose me in eternity and the cross took place nearly 2,000 years ago!?

That is a good question, and deserves a good answer. And from the scriptures that question receives a good answer. You must know that God has taken care of that too. Rom. 5:5 tells us how: "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. God has given us another gift - the Holy Spirit, and by that Spirit who comes to dwell in our hearts by faith the love of God for us is worked in our hearts, so that we know it and are assured of it. By the work of this Spirit we are able to say with Paul in Gal. 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

But perhaps you still say, How do I know that I have the gift of the Holy Spirit so that I know that I am loved by God? The answer is, by your interest in God and in Jesus Christ. The Spirit not only works in the elect person's heart the knowledge of God's love for him, but He also works in that heart a love for God on the part of the saved sinner. And what is more, that Spirit also works in an elect person's heart a saving faith in Jesus Christ, such that one believes in Him and embraces His work on the cross.

And so my questions to you are, What is your interest in God? Do you love Him? Do you find in your heart and life a desire to be in the presence and fellowship of God? And, what is your interest in Jesus Christ? Do you believe on Him? Do you embrace what He has done for sinners? If you do, then you also know that God loves you. That is the way of personal assurance of God's love.

Do you see how fully God's love is a gift to us? Our Triune God has taken care of every aspect of it to make it a reality. God the Father chose us in love to be the recipients of it. God the Son came and died to lay the foundation of that love. And God the Holy Spirit applies it to our hearts so that we have the knowledge and assurance of it.

What does that make you do? How do you respond to that love? You are filled with awe and praise, such that you say, "O my God, how great is thy love to me!" And you respond with the words of the hymn-writer: "Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all." May God bless you young people with the knowledge of His love for you, and may you by the power of the Spirit keep yourselves in that love.

JESUS IS HOLDING MY HAND

I started school with all the exuberance
of a normal six year old.
"Remember be kind to everyone, in what
you say and do." Mama said, "For remember,
Jesus is holding your hand!"

After two years, I changed schools.
Our own school! New Friends! It seemed
Wonderful. It was easy to remember,
Jesus was holding my hand!

Another two years, my best friend left the
school. Things started to change. I had
no friends in my room. Kids became cruel.
They said cruel things. It became harder
For me to remember that
Jesus was holding my hand!

Next came high school. I'd do anything to
have friends, many times the wrong kind of
friends. I just wanted to be liked.
Most of the time I forgot that
Jesus was holding my hand!

It took me another four years after
high school to remember that the Lord made me.
He gave me my looks, my intelligence,
and my personality. He loves me!
I can't blame my sins on others cruelty.
I have to give account for myself.
He loves me! He sent Jesus to die for me.
Jesus, who is holding my hand!

My experience in childhood filled me with
a lot of self doubt, but now I pray
constantly for guidance.
The Lord has given me a God fearing husband,
Who loves me. He has given me wonderful
children, who love me. From the day I was born
He gave me God fearing parents
and siblings, who love me.
But the most wonderful knowledge of all is
He Loves Me! And I thank Him daily
For all He has given me, and for
Continually Holding My Hand!

Feature

A Woman's Role: Preparing for Leadership in the Home

by Mrs. Trice

"Though rejecting feminist politics and lesbian posturing, American culture has absorbed the underlying ideology [of the feminist movement] like a sponge. The principal tenets of sexual liberation or sexual liberalism—the obsolescence of masculinity and femininity, of sex roles, and of heterosexual monogamy as the moral norm—have diffused through the system and become part of America's conventional wisdom.

George Gilder, Men and Marriage

The first question that might enter the minds of young females who are reared in an atmosphere of respect for the Holy Scriptures is— "What do you mean, leadership in the home? I thought he was supposed to be the leader!" If that question did enter your mind, it shows you have been listening in church, because certainly passages such as Eph. 5 show very clearly what God's order for the family is to be. In this beautiful passage we see a husband who loves his wife with a selfless, cherishing love, and a wife who responds to that love, giving back to him holy submission.

You cannot assume from this passage, or indeed any Bible passage that I know of, that since God has ordained man to leadership [and all of the attending responsibilities, I might add!], that women have no right exercising any leadership abilities at all. Most men would love to have more of the kind of woman described in Proverbs 31—one to whom he can delegate responsibility and know that it will be carried out; one who uses her intelligence creatively, and for his good, so that he is treated with respect; one who is industrious, trustworthy, and unselfish; and all of the rest of the qualities found in that passage.

It is not the relinquishing of leadership that we are talking about here, but the right use of it. The modern day feminist movement-there has been more than one feminist movement—would have you think that leadership is an either/or situation. Either men are leaders, or women are leaders, and there are not enough women leaders. But this wrong attitude has brought about untold distress and heartache in our land, as books like George Gilder's point out. If you are a young woman, you need to know something of leadership. The only problem is that today most people have a skewed idea of godly and feminine

leadership.

Since the beginning, the Bible has been clear that woman was made for man—to be his "completer". Except for those to whom God has given special grace to be single, the proper state for men and women is to be completed in each other—to be whole. When the two become one, and endeavor to live to the glory of God together, they have tremendous potential that would not be realized by them alone, but they need to learn to work together in their God-ordained roles. The pressing question before us, however, is how young women can prepare for this important role of "completer" of a husband. Does she prepare by becoming an attractive "doormat", as we are led to believe all happy homemakers must be, or is there more to this subject of "leadership in the home?"

I don't think anyone can read Proverbs 31: 10-31, and come away believing that a godly woman must be an attractive "doormat." Just in reading the passage through quickly, the force of her personality fairly leaps out! This woman was an energetic person! She "works willingly with her hands. . .brings her food from afar. . .rises while it is yet night. . .provides food for her household. . .considers a field and buys it. . .extends her hand to the poor. . . ", and on and on and on. But the best part is in the end where she is given her reward. . .and it is not an Oscar, or an Academy Award, or a raise, or a promotion. "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her; a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised." How do we become like her?

Firstly, we must learn to love the Lord with all of our hearts, and ask Him to mold us in His image of the godly woman. If we do not turn our hearts to Him, all else that is said is for naught. I know that some of you young ladies are saying, in the privacy of your own hearts, that you will have plenty of time to become a "better Christian" after you have landed that young man you have set your heart on. I am telling you that you have the cart before the horse! If you do not make knowing God a priority now, you may have a severe disappointment in the young man that you become yoked with. Are you willing to take that chance?

Secondly, as we prayerfully consider our strengths and weaknesses, we must ask God to change those things that need changing, and increase those things that bring glory to Him already. Many of the virtues that we must pursue are generic—that is, both men and women should be honest, trustworthy, kind, compassionate, chaste, etc. There are some things, however, that pertain just to women, and we should anticipate those things especially, because it seems they are the ones that cause the most trouble.

Peter seems to approach women's conduct in the gentlest manner. In I Peter 3, he has some good advice, and he backs it up with some reasons. Do any of you young ladies have a proud and willful spirit—one that wants to be the boss, or have the last say, or have its own way? If you want to marry a godly man, you will need to practice submission first. When you know what true submission is, then you can prepare to exercise leadership in the home-teaching it to your children. Ask the Lord to show you how to submit cheerfully

to your parents, even when you may think they are wrong, or when you cannot do what seems perfectly good to you.

Peter mentions also how important the adornment of a gentle and quiet spirit is—much more important than perfect makeup or a sexy outfit. In fact, the importance that is attached to the outside appearance often signifies a lack on the inside—and that goes for both males and females. Pray that God will use the gifts that he has given you, while enabling you to become more thoughtful, considerate of others appreciative of little things and above all, a good listener. You will need this as a wife, and if God grants you the blessing of children, you will need it more as a mother. A good leader knows how to listen first.

Many more womanly virtues are mentioned in Proverbs and I Timothy that I would encourage you to seek out and pray about. But I must hasten on here to the third point in preparing for leadership in the home, which is: Now is the time to develop those skills that are needed for this task.

As you read Proverbs 31, you must be struck by how much that woman can accomplish. Of course, we are told that she had servants, but I notice that she is not lying in bed waiting for one of those servants to bring her breakfast. She is right there preparing for them! How are your cooking skills? What about knowing how to clean a house? Can you "sew a fine seam?"

Many today would tell us that the average housewife does not need to know these skills today. Prominent show hostess Oprah Winfrey thinks it incredible that women still operate such appliances as sewing machines and irons. I would point out here, however, that the wisest and most beloved of leaders has often, "risen from the ranks," and knows what the ones he is leading must do.

If you expect to operate an efficient household you should watch carefully what your mother does at home "practicing" by helping her. Offer to make some of the meals, if you don't already, and start your own file of good things to eat that will go with you when you leave home. Learn to clean all the parts of a house, and what to do each season to maintain it in the best condition.

Try something new that will broaden your knowledge of the womanly arts. If you don't care for sewing, maybe you would like basket weaving. Learning about things like that add a dimension to your life that taking courses and reading books—as important as they are—will not give you. You will have a better appreciation of your heritage and have more to pass on to your children, as well as be a more interesting person for some guy to get to know!

Lastly, if you are really serious about learning how to be a good leader in the home, add to your reading pile biographies of godly men and women. Some people have to learn everything the hard way by brutal experience. But if you can learn by reading, then some of the lives of the old saints are replete with good lessons, and you could read several chapters on a Lord's Day afternoon that would challenge and encourage you.

There are still young men who are looking for the kind of wife that Martin Luther described— "The greatest gift of God is a pious amiable spouse, who fears God, loves

his house, and with whom one can live in perfect confidence." Our culture needs more women like that.

Read the
Beacon Lights

Feature

SIX STEPS TO LEADERSHIP

by Kevin Inskeep

There should be no greater concern that occupies the attention of a young man as he goes into adulthood than his calling to take his place in the church. Therefore, it does us good to consider what is appropriate in that preparation. We must keep in mind that for young men that calling will be one of leadership. That leadership may be to a greater or lesser degree; for he, as a covenant husband and father, must lead his family, or, the LORD may call him to lead as a deacon or an elder in due time. The LORD may even direct that covenant man to be a minister of His Word.

What then should be the necessary preparations for this full service within the church?

First, I believe, is that absolute necessity of personal union and life in Christ (Jn. 15:4). This is the foundation upon which all the other areas of preparation are built; yet, as we labor in all these other areas, we must never forget it.

Second, I think it is essential for a young man to obtain a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and the doctrines taught in them. In our Protestant Reformed Churches we are blessed with systematic preaching Sabbath day by Sabbath day. We also have our catechism classes for children which follow a wonderful set pattern of learning the Word of God and the doctrines of the church. All this is further strengthened by systematic Bible teaching in the Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. Not all of us have had such schools wherein to learn. Sadly, my own children do not. We should highly value our Protestant Reformed Schools. Due to all these things it is relatively easy for sons born into Protestant Reformed families to obtain this thorough knowledge. But do we pursue it with a joy and longing? Do we endeavor to grow in that knowledge and to retain it so it will strengthen us in life ahead?

Third, sons of the church should seek to become well read in good Christian books. Time can easily be spent in the many entertainments of this world, some of which are not necessarily wrong, but they often take the youth of

the church away from reading. Time should be set aside to pursue a reading program which would bring into focus and make clearer the things learned from the Word of God.

Fourth, a good knowledge of church history is very important for our young men, especially how that history affects the doctrine and life of the church. This should be part of their reading program. We live in a period of history in which we can learn so much from those of the church who have gone before us; but there is much ignorance of church history.

Fifth, young men should endeavor to become well grounded in the errors of the other beliefs and doctrines. Knowing what others believe, why it is wrong according to the Word of God, and what is the right teaching concerning these matters are absolute basics for us in the world today. Not only will this keep enlightening us as to what we believe, and show us that what we believe is Scriptural, and teach us that all the things God has revealed in His Word stand together, but also, it will enable us, as members of our Protestant Reformed Churches, to bear testimony to the things God has given us in His Word. Truly, God has given us a high calling, unworthy as we are of it; yet, we must make known the truth, for we have the clearest manifestation of it. From one who came from outside the fellowship and life of the Protestant Reformed Churches, I can say that we have a wonderful beauty to declare, although few will see it.

Sixth, the sons of the church must learn to be able to talk and communicate with each other. Communication is so important in the church that not to communicate denies our fellowship together. So our young people must strive to develop this.

Patterns developed in youth under God's blessing, are easily maintained in adulthood. So we must labor now to prepare foundations in all these ways, so that when called to various duties in the church, we will be ready.

"O God, give us patience when the wicked hurt us, O how impatient and angry we are when we think ourselves unjustly slandered, reviled and hurt! Christ suffers strokes upon His cheek, the Innocent for the guilty; yet we may not abide one rough word for His sake. O Lord, grant us virtue and patience, power and strength, that we may take all adversity with good will, and with a gentle mind overcome it. And if necessity and Thy honor require us to speak, grant that we may do so with meekness and patience, that the truth and Thy glory may be defended, and our patience and steadfast continuance perceived."
- Prayer of Miles Coverdale, early Reformer, Bible translator, and exile for the Faith

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

by Mrs. Jean Kortering

Christian mothers are rightly concerned regarding the growth and development of their daughters. This is very true as regards their physical needs. From infancy on we see to it that they are properly fed and receive good nourishment, we look after their clothing, we try to maintain a clean and happy home for them, when necessary we take the to the doctor and dentist, and the list could go on and on. As they develop, we instruct them in taking care of themselves and letting them assume some responsibility for their own needs. All this activity requires much time and energy of a mother.

Interwoven with all the busyness of day-to-day living is the high calling of the Christian mother to help her daughter develop as a godly young person. This training must be done with consistency, with a knowledge of and love for the Word of God and with a life of prayer. This is a difficult task and a truly God-fearing mother will take her calling seriously.

The training of our children begins at a very early age as we read in Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it." We teach them about God, we teach them to pray, to recite Bible verses, and to sing. We are training them constantly by word and example regarding the walk of sanctification, that they may gradually become more and more Christlike. The training of our children takes place in the home, church, and school. The home is the foundation. If there are strong homes, it will be very evident in the life of the church and school. Parents bring their children to church and talk about the sermon with them afterwards, parents teach their children the catechism lessons. Parents send their children to the Christian school where there are Christian teachers who instruct them in the various subjects according to the Word of God. Parents also assist the teachers by following up on the schoolwork at home.

The real test of a good mother-daughter relationship is when our daughters are of high-school age. Suddenly the outside influences and peer-pressures seem to take over. The little girl that at one time believed everything we said and did everything we asked, begins to have her own ideas about things. As mothers, we can easily identify with this development in their lives, because we went through the

same things ourselves. There is no need for panic, we view it as a new opportunity to grow in our relationship together.

We realize however, that we cannot expect a good mother—daughter relationship at this time unless we have prepared for it. Two things are of top priority. By this time we must have developed good communication skills. Our teen-aged daughter will not be open with us unless she has grown accustomed to talk things over from childhood on. Even though she will turn more to her friends and see less need for Mom, she will still need a shoulder to cry on, and some help in dealing with frustrating situations in her life. It also is of utmost importance that we can trust each other. As mothers, we know our daughter's strengths and weaknesses. We know how easily they can be influenced by others in a bad way or how independent they can be. At the same time we know their child-like faith is being tested. All this can be fractured when we learn that our daughters are not honest and open with us. Our daughters must learn that our relationship is as meaningful as they are trustworthy. On our part as mothers, we must not talk to others about the things they talk about with us. No teen-aged daughter wants her mother to gossip about her problems with others. She has a right to expect her mother to keep it confidential. When this trust is established, groundwork is laid for a meaningful relationship.

Take for example the tension that can easily develop over the time our daughters spend in the bathroom. We smile to ourselves as they go through that stage of life when their appearance is so important. Perhaps they need a particular kind of shampoo, conditioner, hair spray, make-up, etc. At the same time we want to impress upon them the truth of I Peter 3:3, 4, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." The greatest influence we have upon them during this time is our example. If we as mothers make that so important by spending so much time and money on appearance, we're telling our daughters that it is not a passing phase of their life but that is what they will continue to do. Rather, we should show them by example that we can be neat and clean in our appearance without allowing ourselves to be influenced by all the advertisements of the cosmetic industry.

We must teach our daughters certain values in regard to entertainment and Christian liberty. Many times this can be an area of conflict in the home. Teen—agers often feel that parents are too strict and will not allow them to do anything. It is true however, that rules help to control their lives and most of them appreciate this loving concern of their parents, if not now, then later. In homes where there are no restrictions, they feel their parents do not care and they lose respect for them. Encourage your daughter to say "No" to temptations right from the start rather than to experience the hard way of sin and the burden of guilt. Sometimes it is necessary for them to learn this way and then we must show them the error of their way

and lead them to repentance and forgiveness. The Christian life is a daily crucifying of the old nature, and a striving to walk in a new and holy life - not only for older people but for young people also. If we keep in mind that Christ is our companion and guide, it will not be difficult for us to know what is acceptable behavior.

Guidance must be given so they are careful in choosing their friends and boyfriends. It is best to limit dating only to those who would be considered a good mate. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" II Corinthians 6:14. In Christian Child-Rearing and Personality Development Paul Meier writes, "I don't think Christian teenagers should be allowed to date until they have reviewed the Scriptures and written out a personal list of dating rules that are in agreement with Scripture. They should then determine in their hearts that they will never violate these rules for any reason, even if it means losing some dates. What a teenager does or doesn't do during his dating years can significantly influence his future husband-wife relationship." When we seek to honor and glorify God in all we do, and in all our relationships, this can be a truly happy time in the life of our daughters.

What place will our daughters take in the church? Scripture gives many examples of godly women - women who were faithful in the instruction of their children in the ways of the Lord, women who were given to hospitality and gave liberally of their belongings. At this time when the role of women in the church is called into question by many, it is good for us to consider just what place the woman does have. We are all familiar with Proverbs 31:10-31 which shows us many of the virtues and activities of the godly woman. Although the woman's place in the church is different from the man's, it is by no means an inferior position. Men and women are "heirs together of the grace of life;" I Peter 4:7. In this article, we will not refute arguments which are used to defend deaconesses, or women in the office of elder or minister. For a good explanation of that subject, I would suggest the reading of the pamphlet entitled Phebe: An Example for the Christian Woman which you should be able to find in your church's pamphlet racks. Have the things pertaining to the kingdom of God been top priority in our lives? Have our daughters seen us faithfully attending church and society? Are we remembering members of the church who are in need with a visit, a word of encouragement, or a meal for their family? By this time our daughters have learned a lot from the example we are to them. Some of our daughters will marry and have families of their own and will instruct their children in the ways of the Lord. Other girls will remain single and can use their gifts and talents in another way.

Writing this article for our Young People's magazine, I would also encourage our young girls to listen to the instruction of their mothers (and fathers). Sometimes we tend to become very impatient, feel we've listened to everything they have to say so often already, why must we hear it again? Do remember that when your parents caution you regarding behavior,

friends, etc., they do this because they know that our only happiness is when we walk according to God's Word and in love for you they do not want you to have to learn by making mistakes and hurting yourself. Parents have "no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. III John: 4. This is absolutely the most important and we rejoice in that God is faithful in establishing His covenant in continued generations. Trust your parents. As you become older and more mature, you will understand this more completely. When I was young, I felt my parents were very strict; but it struck me when I had my family that the values I wanted to teach my children were very much what my parents had taught me. Now I have the joy of seeing my daughters instructing their children. Parents will admit that we are by no means perfect, we are very much aware of our weaknesses and shortcomings but we pray that God will use our weak and feeble efforts to His glory and the strengthening of His people. Thank God for loving, Christian parents! and may God bless all our precious young daughters.

CHURCH NEWS

by Lora Bouwkamp

HOLLAND

The public confession of faith of Richard Elzinga was made Oct.7.

Jeffrey Mott and Kristine Doezema were united in marriage Oct. 27.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Elzinga was baptized Nov. 25.

Mr. Joel Hirdes celebrated his 81st birthday Dec. 2.

SOUTH HOLLAND

Tammy Lenting made confession of her faith Oct.7.

The baptism papers of Shelly Lyn Haak were sent to her home.

Lauren Judith, daughter of Jim and Leah Lenting was baptized Oct. 14.

The congregation expresses its sympathy to the Lenting family in the death of Mr. William Lenting, husband, father, brother, and uncle.

The Consistory has received the papers of Karen Buiter from Hope PRC(GR), Amy DeVries from Randolph PRC, and Larry and Elizabeth Abel from Orangewood Presbyterian Church, Orlando, Florida.

The Choral Society presented a program October 21 after the evening service.

Homer and Evelyn De Jong were blessed with the birth of Case

Nathaniel.

The infant daughter of Don and Jann Bruinsma was baptized Nov. 18.

HUDSONVILLE

The Sr. Young People's Society prepared a breakfast for all the senior citizens of the congregation Nov. 3.

Mrs. Don Dykstra celebrated her 86th birthday Nov. 13.

Lynn Kamminga and Robert Huizinga were united in marriage Nov. 30.

The consistory received as members Mr. and Mrs. John Zandstra with their two daughters from Byron PRC.

Chad Brummel made public confession of his faith October 21.

The sacrament of baptism was administered October 14 to Joel Michael, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ron Schut.

HOPE (WALKER)

The baptism of Lynette Joy, daughter of Nicholas and Deb Kleyn took place Nov. 25.

The congregation extends its sympathy to Elder H. Van Dyke and family in the death of their niece, her husband and daughter, in a car accident.

The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Randal Feenstra and Jacqueline, Gerald, Lauren and Craig. were received.

The marriage of Marsha Engelsma and Rick Shepard took place Nov. 3.

The baptism of Nathan Jon, son of David and Vonda Jessup and Justin William, son of Bill and Karen Langerak took place Oct. 28.

Edson Reitsma and Jillayne VanderYacht were united in marriage Dec. 7.

The choral society presented their program Nov. 25.

Tom Schimmel and Beth De Went were united in marriage Oct. 13.

Dean Dykstra, Marsha Engelsma, Joseph Kamps and Brent Klamer made public confession of their faith Oct. 21.

HULL

Dave De Boer and Lisa Hoksbergen were united in marriage.

The mother of Mrs. Norman Vogel passed away and the congregation extends its sympathies.

The sacrament of baptism was celebrated Sept. 16 for Kelsey Renae, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Van Den Top.

The consistory has received the membership papers of Jack and Hazel Andringa from Sanborn CRC.

Also from Sanborn CRC, the consistory received the papers of James and Karen Andringa with Chad as a confessing member, and Tanya and Robert as baptized members.

BETHEL

Kathy Ditchman made confession of her faith Oct. 28.

Brittany Joy, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Phil Looiker was baptized Nov. 11.

The Evangelism committee sponsored a lecture Oct. 25 by Rev. Slopsema.

DOON

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Danielle Lynn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. D. Burgers, and to Jessica Kay, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. G. Van Bemmel.

Kim Hoogendoorn and Mike Van Bemmel made confession of faith Oct. 28.

The membership papers of Mr.

and Mrs. Jim Regnerus have been received from South Holland PRC.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Van Den Top were blessed with the birth of Chad Wayne.

LOVELAND

On Oct. 21, Pat Alsum, Rod Griess, Shon Griess, Julie Griess, and Chris Wilkerson made public confession of their faith.

The congregation welcomes the fellowship of Miss Joy Ophoff (from Southeast) and Mr. Dan Hanko (from Faith).

Ray Schwarz and Joy Ophoff were united in marriage Nov. 2.

Chris Wilkerson and Julie Griess were united in marriage Nov. 16.

The congregation extends its sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Art Schwarz in the death of her sister.

HOPE (REDLANDS)

The sacrament of baptism was administered Nov. 18 to Jacob Scott, son of Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Feenstra.

The consistory received the membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Jabaay and family from Faith PRC.

The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. James Bleyenberg and family were sent to Edgerton PRC.

Miss Audrey Den Besten requested her papers be sent to Lynden PRC.

Mr. and Mrs. Ben Meelker celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary.

Mrs. Effie Krikke celebrated her 84th birthday Oct. 21.

Mr. Ben Meelker celebrated his 85th birthday.

Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Feenstra rejoice in the birth of Jacob Scott.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence DeVries celebrated their 52nd wedding anniversary Oct. 6.

The congregation extends its sympathy to Mrs. Mary DeVries in the death of her brother, Martin Reiffer.

FIRST (GRAND RAPIDS)

Mark Voortman made confession of faith Nov. 11.

Mr. Mart Doezema celebrated his 92nd birthday Nov. 24.

Miss Sandy Storey made public confession of her faith Dec. 2.

The membership papers of Miss Ruth Bleyenberg were accepted from Hope PRC (MI).

The congregation extends its sympathy to the Newhouse family in the death of Irene Newhouse.

The membership papers of Cheryl (Bleyenberg) Corson were received from Grandville PRC.

The membership papers of Frank and Dawn Dykstra and family were received from Calvary CRC of Lowell.

The congregation expresses sympathy to the Zandstra family in the loss of their grandmother, Mrs. Jennie DeVries.

We extend congratulations to Mrs. Helen Newhof, who celebrates her 86th birthday Oct. 18.

The congregation expresses sympathy to Mrs. Henrietta VanderMeer in the death of her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Carmin VanderMeer.

John Prince and family mourn the death of wife, mother, and grandmother, Mrs. Hilda Prince Oct. 22.

Condolences are extended to the Mina Bouwman family. Mrs. Bouwman passed away Oct. 24.

EDMONTON

Mr. and Mrs. Kors Van den Boogaard celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary Nov. 14.

Joe Van Gelderen and Valerie Zylstra were united in marriage Nov. 9.

SOUTHEAST

The consistory has received the membership papers of Jane Woudenberg from Kalamazoo PRC.

Jim and Kathi Holstege rejoice in the birth of Joseph Andrew Nov. 19.

The congregation mourns with the family of Mr. Louis Velting who passed away Oct. 26.

Mr. & Mrs. Don Kuiper rejoice in the birth of a son, Michael Ross, Oct. 28.

Congratulations to Craig and Thea (Kluitenberg) Glupker, who were united in marriage, Oct. 13.

The congregations also extends its sympathies to Elder G.J. DeVries and family in the death of his father.

LYNDEN

Jake and Amy deHoog were united in marriage Nov. 2.

Jeff and Cheryl Liedekker were blessed with the birth of Tyler Layne.

LACOMBE

The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Pattinson have been received by the consistory.

August 20 was the 25th wedding anniversary of Rev. and Mrs. Kuiper. The congregation held an open house Aug. 24.

BYRON CENTER

On October 21 Patrick Jay, infant son of John and LeAnn Streyle, was baptized.

Mr. Iman Imanse celebrated his 91st birthday October 27.

Byron Center church was organized 7 years ago on. October 20. May the Lord bless and guide them in the future as He has done in the past.