

# BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT  
REFORMED YOUTH*



VOLUME XLIX

Convention Issue  
**CONTENTMENT**

# BEACON LIGHTS

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## MINUTES OF THE 1989 CONVENTION HOPE PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCH

by Jory Kalsbeek

Monday, August 14, 1989

Registration took place at 1:00 at Hope Church. The afternoon was spent in Covenant's gym with several games and contests going on. Free time was allotted for the conventioners to get ready before supper was served at Hope School and the convention picture was taken. At 7:00 Prof. Decker gave a beautiful speech on "Contentment In Suffering". After the speech we went on a hayride. We were back at our hosts' house at 12:00.

Tuesday, August 15, 1989

Discussion groups were held at Covenant at 8:00, followed by the Delegate Board Meeting. Minutes are as follows:

Art. 1: Greg Holstege opened the meeting with scripture reading and

prayer.

Art. 2: Roll was taken of the alternates and delegates. Members were absent from Edgerton, Faith Sr., Faith Jr., Hope (Redlands), Hope Sr. (Walker), and Trinity.

Art. 3: The minutes from the Delegate Board Meeting of the 1988 Convention were read and approved.

Art. 4: The Federation budget was presented for approval. The floor was opened for discussion.

Art. 5: Discussion was closed and the budget was approved.

Art. 6: A proposal to amend the Federation Board Constitution was given by the Federation Board. The floor was opened for discussion.

Art. 7: Discussion was closed and the amendment was passed.

Art. 8: The Scholarship recipients were

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read.

The floor was opened for discussion.

Art. 9: Discussion was closed and the recipients were approved.

Art. 10: The names of the nominees for the following Federation Board offices were read:

A: Vice President

1. Dale Vink
2. Dave Hop

B: Vice Secretary

1. Julie Huizinga
2. Joan Buitter
3. Chris Bylsma

C: Vice Treasurer

1. Jon Eldersveld
2. Dave Rietsma

D: Spiritual Advisor

1. Rev. Bruinsma
2. Rev. Slopsema

Art. 11: The floor was opened for nominations.

Art. 12: The nominations were closed and the officers elected.

Art. 13: A motion was made, supported and passed to adjourn. Jay Kalsbeek closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Jory Kalsbeek

Fed. Board Secretary

After the Delegate Board Meeting, the busses were boarded and the conventioners headed for a day of water slides and fun at Pleasure Island. Lunch was served and a tug-of-war contest took place. The afternoon was spent as free time and at 5:30 the busses were loaded as we traveled to Grand Haven. We had supper on the beach. Volleyball was played and walks were taken and we left for home at 10:30 to be in bed at our hosts' at 12:00.

Wednesday, August 16, 1989

Discussion groups were held at

8:00 and at 10:00 busses were boarded as we left for a day of fun and fellowship at Grand Valley State University Field House. We left at 5:00 to prepare ourselves for the speech and to eat supper. At 7:00 a beautiful speech was given by Rev. Gritters on "Contentment in Self-denial". The speech was followed by rollerskating and bowling and we were again at our hosts' by 12:00.

Thursday, August 17, 1989

Discussion groups were again held at 8:00. The day was spent canoeing. I'm sure this day will not be forgotten soon. We left at 5:30 and prepared for the banquet - "a pig roast" - at Douglas Walker Park. Rev. Van Overloop gave a memorable speech at 8:00. The topic was "Contentment Under Authority". The new officers of the Federation Board were announced and welcomed aboard. They were:

Vice President - Dale Vink

Vice Secretary - Julie Huizinga

Vice Treasurer - Dave Rietsma

Spiritual Advisor - Rev. Slopsema

The retiring members are:

President - Greg Holstege

Treasurer - Randy Corson

Secretary - Jory Kalsbeek

They were thanked for their time and effort spent on the Federation Board.

After the speech the conventioners divided up and some went to the YMCA and others back to Covenant to play in the gym. Curfew was 12:00.

Friday, August 18, 1989

At 8:30 a Farewell Breakfast was served at Hope School, followed by an awards assembly and a slide show of the convention. Pictures of the convention and directories were handed out. Farewell was said. Many new friend-

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ships were made this past week. It was a week to remember. Everyone was wished a safe trip back to their home - through travels.

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## CONTENTMENT IN SUFFERING

by Prof. Robert D. Decker

Thank you for the privilege of speaking to you. It has been a number of years since I have spoken at a Young Peoples' Convention. And I am grateful for the opportunity to address you tonight.

Christians, you and I too, know a SECRET: it's the secret of being content not just when things are going well for us — then it is easy to be content. But we can also be content when things are not going so well; in fact when things are going badly; we know the secret of being content even in suffering!

Unbelievers don't know that secret. They are never content. When they prosper, when things are going well, when they have wealth and health they are covetous. They always want more. And they are never satisfied, never do they have enough; and at the same time they refuse to acknowledge God. They boast in their own accomplishments.

When things go badly, the ungodly grumble and complain.

I once met a man in the hospital on my way to visit a sick member of my congregation. He must have seen the Bible I was carrying for he asked: "Are

you a minister?"

"Yes," I answered, thinking I would have opportunity to talk to him about God and Jesus and His Word.

Do you know what he said to me? He snarled: "Go to hell!"

Far from being content, that man was rebelling against God!

The Christian is content; he knows that secret.

Let me tell you a true story. There was a wealthy businessman in Chicago; a Christian man who had four beautiful daughters. He gave them a trip to Europe and they traveled by ship. The ship ran into a terrible storm and sank. All were drowned, including the man's four daughters. The same day that the man received this tragic and terrible news he learned that he had lost all his money through a bank failure.

That night he wrote these words:  
When peace like a river attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll,  
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

That man was able to triumph over the worst and most tragic of life's circumstances! Why? Because he knew

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the secret of being content! Do you?

## CONTENTMENT IN SUFFERING

I. Suffering, the Lot of Christians

II. Being Content in that Suffering

III. How That Contentment is Attained

### **Suffering, the Lot of Christians**

There is the suffering of persecution. Think of the church and the saints of the Old Testament. Adam and Eve were attacked by Satan when he tempted them in the very beginning. Their righteous son, Abel, was murdered by his own brother Cain. What a grief that must have been to Adam and Eve.

A little later, Enoch, who walked with God and who prophesied of the coming judgment upon the wicked, was delivered by God from his persecutors when he was translated to heaven.

And there is Noah, a preacher of righteousness. He and his family (8 people in all!) were all that were left of the church. God saved them from their persecutors with the waters of the flood!

The patriarchs suffered persecution. Isaac had two sons, twins in fact – Jacob and Esau. And Esau was a reprobate. Jacob finally died in Egypt, far from Canaan.

Think of the terrible persecutions the Israelites suffered in their long history. In Egypt, in the wilderness, and even in Canaan there was persecution. Then they were carried away captive by Babylon where they wept when they remembered Jerusalem. The faithful remnant, which returned to Canaan, had to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other.

And Hebrews 11:35-38 sums up the suffering and persecution of the Old Testament saints. We read: "Wo-

men received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yet, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

Things are no different in the New Testament. John the Baptist, in Herod's prison, lost his head because he loved his Lord. Jesus was hated, mocked, rejected, opposed, and finally nailed to the cross.

Jesus warned us repeatedly that we would be hated of all men and made to suffer as His followers. But the Savior also encouraged us. He told us not to fear for it is His Father's good pleasure to give us the Kingdom. And He told us that we are to rejoice and be exceeding glad for so persecuted they the prophets who were before us. Jesus promised that those who suffer with Him will also be glorified with Him!

The apostles suffered persecution. They were mocked, whipped, put into prison, exiled on lonely islands. And many of them suffered a martyr's death.

That has been the case ever since. Many saints had to worship in secret in the catacombs, yet thousands died during the persecutions by Rome. More thousands died for their faith at the hands of the Roman Catholics during the Reformation. Guido deBres was hanged on the last day of May, 1567 because of what he had written in the

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Belgic Confession! Our Dutch fathers (Van Raalte) came from the Netherlands and settled just 25 miles from here in what is now Holland, Michigan so they could worship freely in 1847. That same year, Rev. Scholte led his followers to Pella, Iowa (city of Refuge) for the same reason.

There are many Christians suffering persecution today in China, Romania, Malaysia and elsewhere.

And the Bible promises there will be a Great Tribulation just before Jesus comes again! How true are the words of Scripture in II Timothy 3:12, "All who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

In addition, there is the suffering which is the result of sin. All kinds of sicknesses and diseases are prevalent: physical diseases - heart disease, cancer, and others with terrible pain; emotional/mental illness - depression, anxiety. And all of us, sooner or later, will face the last enemy, death. Death means the end of all our earthly relationships. It means sorrow and loneliness. All of this suffering and more is the experience of every child of God!

### **Being Content in that Suffering**

Our calling is to be content in this suffering.

Contentment is the opposite of the reaction or attitude of unbelief toward suffering.

The ungodly avoid the suffering of persecution. One of the reasons they reject the faith is that they do not want to suffer for Jesus' sake. They are of the world and, as Jesus told us, the world loves his own. These, in fact, become the very ones who persecute the church and make God's people to suffer.

But, the ungodly do experience the sufferings that result from sin — sickness, sorrow, depression, pain, anxiety, and the rest . . . ultimately death, eternal death. And they manifest various attitudes in that suffering. Some show stoic acceptance: whatever will be will be; just take the bitter with the sweet. They are defiant in the face of God. Others get depressed, bleak, black discouragement, anxious, uncontrolled grief, hysteria. Still others openly rebel, like Job's wife: "Curse God and die!"

The Christian is content in suffering. And to be content is to be perfectly satisfied with one's lot or circumstances. It is to say: I have enough, no lack. My needs are met. It is to confess that God is good always. It is to say: All is well with my soul. To be content is not just to accept and bear whatever the Lord sends. To be content is to be satisfied with our circumstances, even thankful for them, and even to rejoice in them. In one word: it is to triumph over even the most tragic and worst circumstances in life!

This is true even in suffering. It is easy to be content when there is no suffering, when things are going well with us. It is easy to rejoice, to be thankful, to be content then. But we are to be content also in suffering — when we are on a bed of pain, when we have cancer, or some other disease; when we have to watch a loved one suffer and then die; when we are mocked for the faith and our way is made very difficult; when life is full of dashed hopes, unfulfilled dreams, disappointments, and crushing burdens. Are we content in those ways? Can we be? Have we learned the secret?

### **How That Contentment is Attained**

How is this possible? The answer

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is found in Philippians 4:11-13. There Paul says, "I have learned . . . to be content!" To learn something is to increase one's knowledge. Paul says, I know how to abound and to be abased, to be humbled and brought low . . . I have learned to be content in whatever state I am! So, we have to learn to be satisfied, to rejoice in suffering, to be thankful and content always.

How do we learn that? God must teach us this! That is what Paul says in Philippians 4:12: I am instructed both to be hungry and to be full. That word "instructed" means that I have been taught the mystery or the secret. God taught Paul and He teaches us the secret of being content!

And what is that secret? It is to know that God loves us in Jesus Christ and has saved us from sin and death through Him. It is to know that nothing comes by chance, nothing just happens. Everything, all of life's experiences are in God's all-wise plan. And thus they work for our good and salvation, even suffering!

That is the secret we and all

Christians know! And knowing that, we are content! And that is only through the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

That is why Paul says in verse 13: "I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me." All things! Not just some, many, or even most things — but all things I can do. Through Christ! Not through myself, not by my own strength. I can not do a thing by myself. But only and always through Christ! Through my Savior I can do all things! He is the One Who strengthens me. Literally, He pours power into me! And through that mighty power I am content, satisfied. I can rejoice even in suffering! I have learned that secret!

And God teaches us that secret. He gives us the grace to be content, pours that power into us. He does this chiefly by the preaching of the Word. But He also uses godly instruction of our parents and Christian school teachers and the reading of His Word and praying. Has God taught you the secret?

Are you content?

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## A REPORT ON THE 1989 CONVENTION

by Holly Ondersma

Because of the enjoyable time I had last year at my first young peoples' convention, I was excited about the activities that were planned for this year. I hoped to renew last year's acquaintances as well as make new friends.

Monday noon registration was held at Hope Church. Between registration and lunch and again between lunch and the gathering for our group picture there was a lot of waiting around,

walking from church to Covenant High School and back to church, wasting time until the next activity.

The hayride at night boasted a great turnout. The fact that we had a "rip-roarin'" time was evident at the end by hayless wagons, hay clinging to clothes, hair, and sticking to sweaty backs.

Pleasure Island, a water theme park in Muskegon, Michigan, about 40 miles northwest of Grand Rapids, was



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the site of our Tuesday afternoon activities. We were free to experience the "Runaway River", "Black Hole", and other tamer water slides, bumper boats, or paddle boats. Most of us left at 4:30 p.m. with glowing faces as a result of the sun.

After all the water activities, those charcoaled hamburgers tasted so-o-o good! They were grilled on the Lake Michigan beach at Grand Haven, Michigan. After supper we had a lot of time on our hands and it seemed like an eon before darkness came and the musical fountain show began. (For the benefit of out-of-staters, this is the world's largest computerized fountain, set to music, motion, and colored lights).

Wednesday afternoon activities at Grand Valley State University in Allendale consisted of a track meet with a 100 yard dash, a one-mile run, softball throw and long jump. Because points were to be earned by pre-arranged teams, participation in the events was excellent. Free time included many activities as we had the use of almost all G.V.S.U.'s facilities — basketball, volleyball, raquetball, swimming, etc. Later the older conventioners went bowling; rollerskating for the younger people left them tired because most conventioners had been on their feet all day.

Canoeing on the Muskegon River on Thursday, at least for me, was the most fun of all the activities planned. Almost every boat capsized once and some more often. It seemed like my partner and I were always bailing water out of the canoe or paddling as hard as we could to get away from other canoeists who were planning to tip us over.

Later Thursday night, we spent a

couple of hours at the YMCA in Grand Rapids. This was a rather disappointing experience since the place was too crowded. It was midnight before the buses left the YMCA; and the ride back to Covenant High School and then home made it after 1:00 a.m. for most, too late for a lot of us after such an active day.

Friday morning was our farewell breakfast; and I would especially like to compliment the mothers who prepared the breakfast. It was really delicious and most plates were emptied.

Reporting on the speeches given throughout the week could take up two pages, but I will make it shorter. Prof. Decker, Pastor Gritters, and Pastor Van Overloop delivered speeches that were direct, drawing from their own experiences, and certainly keeping the attention of all the young people, a feat which is usually difficult to achieve. They were excellent and we thank you! We were left with many points to ponder and the directive to be content with whatever God holds in store for us.

The morning discussion groups were also very worthwhile. The leaders did an excellent job of involving each person in the discussion of that day's particular topic.

We thank the Steering Committee for all its work in planning the activities that everyone enjoyed and for the sacrifice — the men who took vacation time, the women who paid babysitters so they could volunteer their time in our behalf.

But all glory goes to God for His divine providence whereby we again could meet as Christian young people, to learn and to fellowship with people of like faith and establish lasting friendships.

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# CONTENTMENT UNDER AUTHORITY

by Rev. Ronald Van Overloop

I do not believe that this subject has been chosen because specifically young people or Protestant Reformed people need to learn about contentment under authority. During this week of the convention I have watched you and you have exhibited both a consciousness of authority and a respect for that authority. You do not need to be "blasted" for your lack of respect for authority.

Rather I believe that this subject was chosen because it is a vital part of our Christian life. It is something about which you, and I, always need encouragement. We always can use some reminders as to how our God would have us live.

. . . . .

It cannot be denied that we are always under authority. It begins with the authority of our parents. Later we become conscious of the presence of the authority of the church, of school, and of the state.

Often there are times when we believe that those who exercise this authority are unjust and not worthy of respect.

This past week, as you heard some of the rules for the convention and some of the decisions of the steering committee, did you conclude that the steering committee was tough and rigid, especially about the curfew? Did you think that the steering committee was improper in forbidding you the use of your cars?

There may be other times that you

heard your parents, while talking about a decision of the consistory or synod, express strong disagreement and dissatisfaction; and your reaction was that you wondered whether that decision should be followed.

Do you believe that the discipline of your school or of your parents is horribly harsh and unjust?

Do some of you have fathers who are very demanding, who present themselves as someone with whom you cannot talk because it seems that they are not interested in you, or do not show any concern for you? Do you believe that you are justified in not talking with your father because you cannot see his love and concern for you? Do you smirk cynically when we sing, "the tender love a father has for all his children dear"? Or do you find your father gone from home a lot, and when he is home he still is so busy that he appears to have no concern for you? Or do you see him fighting frequently with your mother, and the house constantly filled with tension between them?

Do some of you have a mother who is so possessive and nosey, always asking about what you do and even looking into your drawers? Does she ask so many questions after you come home from going away - questions about what you did and with whom you went? Is she always disapproving of your clothes and friends?

Do you sometimes look at your home as a jail and your parents as

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prison guards, always depriving you of your liberties, making rules to cover every conceivable situation? Can you have fun with your classmates, but do you believe that no one in your home understands you? Do you find that your parents sin against you, but they never apologize? Do you find yourself becoming bitter because they make you apologize, but they never do? Or is it worse (which may God forbid): are you the object of abuse physically, psychologically, or sexually?

Do you look at the homes of others and conclude that they are much better than yours? Parents in those homes allow their children to go places and do things that you are not allowed to do? Would you rather have those parents than your own?

Every single one of us, whether we are young or older, have had some of these experiences at one time or another, to one degree or another. We looked at our homes, parents, teachers, elders, steering committees and said that we hate it and wish it were changed.

But God has other ideas. The God, Who you wish would make some changes in your life, is the God Who loves you to such an extent that He bought you from sin's dominion at the cost of His own Son's life. And He is the God Who is so deeply concerned with the whole of life that He knows each of the hairs of your head and each detail of your life.

God is pleased, as a part of His perfect plan for your life, to have you live under authority, whether it be your father or your mother, the convention's steering committee or your consistory, or your teachers in school.

Not only is God pleased to place us

under authority, but it is also the will of His good pleasure that we be content under that authority.

What is authority?

We learn much about authority by clearing up some wrong conceptions and learning what is not authority.

Authority has nothing to do with might or power. Authority is not necessarily in the hands of those who are the strongest. Authority has absolutely nothing to do with the fact that your parents or teachers are stronger than you are.

Nor does authority have anything to do with the majority. Because your parents are two and you are one, you are always outvoted. In my house it may be seven (children) to one (their father), but that does not change a thing. The majority of the citizens in the United States may believe that abortion is legitimate, but that majority vote does not make it right.

Authority, rather, consists of three things. First, it is the right to determine for others what is right and wrong, to set the standard. Second, it is the right to demand obedience to the determined standard of right and wrong. And third, it is the right to punish those who do not meet that standard along with the right to reward those who do meet that standard.

All authority in heaven and on earth belongs to God. Authority is His because He is the Creator. He not only creates us, but also He creates the relationships in which we are to live. As the Creator He has the right to determine what is right and what is wrong for His creatures.

God conferred all this authority on Christ (Matt. 28:18), and Christ, in turn, delegates authority to certain

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positions among mankind (John 19:11). while retaining to Himself the final authority. When He dispenses authority to some of the positions He created among men, He does not give it away completely. The authority remains His always. All those to whom He gives that authority must, in the judgment day, answer to Him for their use of His authority. Those to whom authority has been delegated by God must exercise it in God's name, to His glory, and as those who must render a final accounting to Him.

While you young people may think it is difficult to obey the authority put over you, but I would contend that, from a certain perspective, it is more difficult to exercise authority. Those in positions of authority will have to answer to God for how they represented Him. I would rather be in the position of doing what someone else tells me to do, because if they tell me to do something wrong, then they also bear the blame. Sometimes you think that you cannot wait until you are the "boss"; but I say to you, "Don't be so quick."

The authority which God delegates (to your parents, for example) is so authoritative that they have the right to determine whether you will go somewhere or not, whether you will do something or not. And when you question their judgment, they might find it wise to explain their judgment, but they do not have to explain why. Their authority gives to them the right to determine what is right and wrong for you, regardless whether "everybody else" is doing it, or whether you understand and agree with them.

Those under authority must submit and obey to those in authority over

them - **for God's sake**. This submission and obedience must be willingly and not grudgingly. This implies three things.

First, those under authority must show honor and respect. When you look at your mother, father, teacher, or elder, you must respect God, the office He established, and the persons He places in those offices. Whatever their character, it is by the appointment of Divine providence that they are there. On account of their station, the Supreme Legislator commands that they be honored.

Second, those under authority must obey. They must do what the authority demands. They must yield themselves to do as the authority wishes.

And thirdly, those under authority must submit. If they find themselves in a position when they cannot obey because something contrary to God's law is demanded, then they must submit, that is, willingly bear the consequences.

Now we come to the heart of my speech. You must be content with the authority that God has been pleased to place over you.

The God Who is far beyond the universe, Who created all things and holds it all in the palm of His hand, Who gave you life and breath, strength and beauty, that God loves you. He loves you for Jesus' sake. He loves you so much that He gave His only and beloved Son for you. I might die for someone, but I would not want to give my son to die for them; I would rather give myself. God gave His Son, because He loves you. He does not love you only when you are old; He loves you now. He loves you with the

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tenderness that characterizes a father holding his just born child. He loves you every moment of your life. His love never lets you go. You cannot escape God's love for you. Never.

This love of God for you is that which determines the whole of His plan for your life. Every little detail of your life is included in His plan of love. Nothing escapes His control. Everything that happens to you, your strength or lack of it, your kind of beauty or the lack of what you think is beauty - everything, including your pimples, is a part of the plan of the God Who loves you.

God wants you to know this and to be happy in this knowledge. He wants you to rejoice in what He is doing in your life.

Part of God's plan for you is that He gave to you just the right kind of parents that you need. Someday (if it is God's will that you marry) He will give you just the right kind of husband or wife. It will be a perfect match, because it will be a match made in heaven. No mistakes are ever made in your life.

The dad that you have is exactly the right one for you. God makes no mistakes. He makes no mistakes when He gives the reprobate their fathers. But when God gave you your father, He gave you the father you need, because He loves you. And your mother is just the right mother. Someone else's mother would not do. She would not do, because God, in His perfect wisdom, is molding you to be just the right kind of person (not the kind that you want yourself to be) He wants you to be.

In our lifetime He is molding and shaping us for the place that He has determined for us in heaven, and all of

this molding is because of His love. God carries you every step of the way, with every blink of your eyes, every nod of your head, every movement of your mind. Every part of your whole being is a part of His perfect, love-filled, caring plan.

Therefore, accept and trust His wisdom. Do not set yourself up as a judge of God, your Father.

When someone is unhappy about and not content with any part of His perfectly wise, love-filled plan, then they are the first and the most hurt. When we work against God's plan, then we lose our joy and happiness. When we fight and resist God's will for us, then we are the ones who are hurt the most. When you run into your bedroom and cry into your pillow, then the devil is using one of his most powerful tools: self-pity. We love ourselves so much that we judge God to be foolish and wrong in putting us under the people He has placed in authority over us.

God wants you to be content. He commands you to be content! He wants you to look at His plan for you and conclude with Him that it is right and perfect.

The way to achieve this contentment is not by considering the persons in authority over you, but by looking at God. Look at God as He sits upon His throne of glorious majesty, which makes the sun become a candle in comparison. Look at God Who is perfect. Look at God Whom you nailed to the cross, and hear Jesus' agonizing cry when He experienced hell for your sins. This is the God Who says that this is the right mother and this is the right father for you. Do not look at them, but look at God.

When we are rebellious, then we

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are not first rebelling against our parents, but against God. When you begin to become frustrated at what you perceive to be a lack of understanding on the part of your parents, then remember that God put them there. They may be wrong; they may be improper; they may be nosey; they may be disapproving; and they may be misunderstanding you. But what difference does that make for you? Do you think that God will accept that as a legitimate excuse? God knows better. Isaiah says that His ways are higher than our ways.

Contentment becomes our experience when we remember that God knows what is best for us. Think of His love. Remember what the Scriptures say about His love. Live in the tranquil assurance that all this is working out just right, that no mistakes are being made in any part of your life. Honor your parents. Honor them, even when you see their sins and weaknesses, for God's sake. Honor them because you love God. Honor them because of the huge debt you owe to God for His love for you. Thank God for your parents!

Contentment is a gift of God's grace.

And contentment is a lesson to be learned in the tough school of experience (Phil. 4:11). Often when we learn this lesson in God's school, it is hard. It is hard because God does not tell us why, and give us a reason. His ways are often in the dark, as well as being rough.

But learn contentment we must and learn it we can. You have already learned contentment. You can learn contentment and be content because you are the recipients of the constant grace of God. In your own strength you

cannot. But you can do all things through Christ Who strengthens you (Phil. 4:13).

You can be content, when you remember what the Bible says of God's love for you. And you learn contentment when you pray. Sometimes you might pray, somewhat like Paul, that God remove these parents from you. But God answers every time, "My child, My grace is sufficient for you. In every step of your life, My grace is sufficient for you."

You are able to play a big role in the tranquility and happiness of the Christian home.

Return to your homes and look at your father and mother differently. Begin to understand why your mother is so possessive at times. For nine months you were a part of her very body. She experienced tremendous discomfort and pain for you. She lost sleep in order to nurse you. She missed innumerable opportunities to advance herself personally, because she loved you and gave herself for you. She was a great means that God used to make you to be who and what you are. You carry part of her nature and personality with you wherever you go.

You say that you do not see the tender love a father is supposed to have? Maybe there is a reason why YOU, at this time, do not see his tender love - maybe it is because of the way you have been acting. But there is tender love. When your dad first held you and his chin quivered, or the tears rolled silently down his cheeks, then there was tender love. In your father is the tender love that works long and hard, in order to clothe you. In your father is tender love: He cares so much for you that he will sacrifice much so

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that you can obtain a Christian, though expensive education. There is tender love.

Return home and see your parents as human beings. You want to be treated in a certain way. Treat your parents in the manner you wish to be treated. Think of your parents as having their own personal interests, instead of only considering your own interests. Rather than criticizing, try to understand them. Understand why they get frustrated. Look at them as God's gifts to you. Instead of blaming them, encourage them by being cheerful and helpful. School is not the only place to be cheerful; it is legitimate at home too!

Do not be quickly discouraged. It is going to be difficult to change things at home, because patterns have been set. But the situation at your home and your relationship to your parents can be changed. It is not in cement. Though all things are impossible with men, all things are possible with God. By God's grace you can change your relationship with your parents, because you can do all things through Christ Who strength-

ens you.

Return home with a renewed commitment to be content. You can make your home a happier place, not by changing others, but by changing yourselves. Do not be discouraged, even if your parents keep the old patterns.

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Are you willing to be content?

Because God wants you to be content, are you willing to change the way you conduct yourself in suffering, in self-denial, and while under those in authority over you?

Are you willing, for God's sake?

When you consider yourself mistreated, then remember that God's Word says that you are receiving just the right kind of treatment, for all things are working together for your spiritual good. When you think you are not understood, then remember God, your Father, understands you perfectly and He is doing everything right.

Return to your homes believing that God is planning all things well for you.

Be content!

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## CONVENTION REFLECTIONS

by Laura Van Dyk

If I were giving a grade to this year's convention, I'd probably give it an "E". The "E" I'd give them would be more representative than real, in fact it wouldn't be an actual grade at all, it would probably be more of a complement than a criticism. I'd give it an "E" for excellence, and "E" for effort, and an "E" for effectiveness.

This convention's excellence had

three parts: the excellence of the theme, excellence in the choice of discussion group topics, and excellence in the group of young people that attended. The theme of this year's convention was contentment; that contentment that we must have in suffering, self-denial, and under authority. Contentment is an aspect of the Christian young person's life with

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which we struggle every day. I know I do. It's hard to be content when you can't go to the movies, and it seems everyone else is. It's hard to be content when mom and dad say you can't do something when it seems everyone else can. I felt the speakers did an excellent job with dealing with the subject and applying it to our lives. The discussion groups centered around topics that also affect our every day lives either in the world or in our own families. The discussion groups I was in really added a lot to my learning experience and were fun to be in. This may not have been true in other groups, but I felt that the excellence of the topics may have allowed the young people to talk about something that they could relate to. The group of young people that attended this year's convention were excellent too. I thank each of them for making this year's convention the most memorable yet.

The effort by the chaps, hosts, and steering committee made an impression on this year's convention too. The hosts who opened up their homes and made us feel welcome are appreciated more than any of us could ever say. The chaps were great too. They put up with us for more than twelve hours each day and still had enough energy and enthusiasm to keep a smile on their faces. The steering committee did a

great job in keeping us busy, and most of all making sure we were on time, at least most of the time.

The effectiveness of this year's convention is something only you yourself or I can measure within ourselves. I had a great time meeting new people, some as far away as Australia and New Zealand that I might otherwise have never met. The Christian friendships that I made, and the old ones I renewed will be part of a place and time that I will never forget. But beyond the friendships there is another direction in which I grew and that was one of a spiritual dimension. I learned a lot about myself and at the same time grew and learned a lot about God and my relationship with Him. Conventions are more than just meeting people and going to discussions and speeches and going places, conventions are also a means of strengthening your faith by being with people who believe as you do. I feel that the convention was effective because it affected me personally. If a convention affects one person in a special way then it's done its job. To all of you who attended this year's convention, did it affect you?

This year's convention was one I wouldn't have missed for anything. Thanks again for all of you who made it so memorable. See you all in California!!!



The sign outside of Hope Church recorded the day's activities.  
This one: Welcome Conventioneers



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# CONTENTMENT AND SELF DENIAL

by Rev. Barrett Gritters

I'm glad for the opportunity to speak to you this evening because of the subject that the host society chose. I believe that Christian young people live in one of the most difficult ages that the church has ever lived in. And I pray that you might be able to be **content** with your lives in this age. I pray especially because when I look at the young people, I see so many young people that don't really **look** content. They don't very often look satisfied, don't very often look like they are happy that things are the way they are. Sometimes the look in their eyes tells me that they wish things really were different.

Now, I don't claim to be able to read your minds, or be a specialist on the behaviour and feelings of young people. The simple fact is that it was not that many years ago that I was sitting there listening to the ministers speak. And I remember pretty well that, although it looked like I was enjoying myself (and most of the time I was), deep down I wasn't really content with the way things were going.

I want you to be content in your lives—content in suffering; content under the authority of parents, teachers, employers and government; and, content in self denial you are called to exercise.

There are some mistakes I don't want to make this evening. It would be very easy for me to introduce this subject by saying that "You young people better get on the stick and start

practicing self denial," or "You young people better take your parents for an example of self denial." That would be a mistake, because if there is ignorance of self denial or a lack of practicing self-denial, it is not limited to young people. All of us are at fault. It would be just as easy, but probably just as mistaken a notion, to say that we are failing miserably to practice self-denial, to make this speech one continuous and sharp rebuke to you for failing to deny yourselves in any way. That would not be correct. You may not practice self-denial as you ought. There may be some present who don't deny themselves in the least. But I believe very strongly that, because self-denial is a distinctively Christian virtue, and because I believe that most of you are Christians, I also believe that to one degree or another, you are practicing self-denial. I believe that the committee that chose this subject was thinking the same thing, since the theme for this speech is "Contentment in Self-denial" which assumes that you are practicing self-denial, but need to know how to be content in that.

Self-denial is a fundamental element of the Christian life because self-denial is a requirement of Jesus Christ. It's not the case that self-denial is a nice option that I hold before you this evening—take it or leave it. It's not true that there are two different kinds of young people that are going to heaven—Christians who practice self-denial. and Christians who don't

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practice self-denial. This is a mistaken notion that some are spreading today. And I don't want any of you to have that notion either. I want you to know exactly what's up. This is what's up: If you are not practicing self-denial, the simple fact of the matter is that you are not a believer. I'm not saying that you are not an elect. I'm not saying that you will not live eternally in heaven. You may. But I'm simply saying that you are not a believer; and you have not been born again. And if you die like that, you will not go to heaven. This is not my conclusion that I pulled out of my sleeve before I came tonight. This is the very word of Him Whose name you carry (see Matthew 16:24.)

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Self-denial is a denial of self. You may say, "Tell me something I didn't know," but sometimes I think that we suppose self-denial is simply a denying ourselves of **certain things**. If we think that self-denial consists of simply giving up certain things, and that if we are successful in giving up certain things we have practiced this Biblically demanded virtue, we are dead wrong!

As a young person, you may take the position that you will never drink in excess, smoke pot or sniff cocaine. In itself, that sounds good. A child of God should never drink too much; a child of God should never do drugs. But there are many young people, who are not Christians, who say the same thing: "I will never drink in excess, and I'm not going to take drugs." It may be that the reason you will never drink in excess is not that Jesus Christ forbids it, but that you know that it will ruin your life—your chances for financial success, your reputation in the world. And this is just what non-Christian young people say as well. Then you are

not denying yourself; you are affirming yourself. You deny yourself certain things so that you will be better off.

Maybe you say to yourself, "I'm going to deny myself the sexual pleasures that many young people are enjoying today. I'm not going to be promiscuous; I'm not going to sleep around; I'm going to be and remain a virgin." But if you say that to yourself because you don't want to ruin your reputation or become pregnant or become infected with some horrible disease, then you are not denying yourself, you are affirming yourself, the priority of yourself.

Self denial is a denial of **self**.

You remember when Christ was being taken captive by the bands of soldiers when Judas betrayed Him that the disciples ran away in a panic. John Mark ran so quickly that he left his clothes in the hands of his pursuers. But Peter followed at a distance to see where Jesus was taken, and went around the fire to warm himself and watch what was going on. But soon Peter was recognized for who he was, a disciple of Jesus. And when faced with more than one accusation that he actually was one of His, Peter said, "I know not the man; I am not one of His disciples; I refuse association with Him; I disown Him forever; He never was, nor do I wish Him to be today, a part of my life and my desires; I will do nothing for His good." What did Peter do? He denied Christ.

This illustrates the way we are to deny ourselves. For the sake of Jesus, we refuse intimate association with ourselves. For the sake of Christ, when pleasures call, when material possessions beckon, I will not consider my wants, my desires, my pleasures. I disown myself. That is self denial.

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Maybe you say, "Come on, be reasonable, Deny intimate association with myself? Tell me another joke." Or, "Why should I deny myself? I'm a Christian; shouldn't I rather affirm myself? Shouldn't I, in order to feel good about myself, let my self be in control, in the driver's seat?" Or, "How is it possible that I deny myself, that I deny **me**? If I am denying myself, who's in control here?"

This is possible and necessary because there is more than one "self" in me. And if this sounds paradoxical, just read Romans 7 to find a good paradox. And now your Reformed theology that you've learned in catechism is important and comes into play. When you were born, your parents gave you only one thing: a completely sinful, depraved nature. There was not an ounce of spiritual good that was handed down to you when you were born. This is the truth of total depravity; in you, that is, in your flesh, there is no good thing. But that's not all there is to you. If you are a believer, a regenerated Christian, there is also in you a new man. That man in you is Christ! Christ lives in you. Christ has given you His resurrection life. And that means that in you there is a battle going on, the hottest battle that ever raged on the face of the earth, battle of the old man against the new man.

Did you ever have a guilty conscience? That's a little skirmish in the war. Did you ever change your mind "half a dozen" times about whether you were going to go to the party with the friends? That's the battle going on with your old and new man.

Self denial is your new man saying "no" to you, to your old man, when the old man wants the upper hand.

Sometimes I tell the catechism students that inside of me something is going on like goes on at homes where there are brothers. Brothers, don't **always** get along winningly. Although we are best of friends now, my brother and I would fight once in awhile. And, because I was older, in our fights I would often pin him down and tell him that I would let him go if he would promise that he wouldn't hit me. The promise usually came pretty easily, but when I let him up, he would come up swinging (probably with good reason). Well, the same is true with our old man. He's always there. You will not rid yourself of him until you die and go to heaven. And you can never believe Him if he promises he's going to be good. If you're ever off your guard, you'll "take it in the chin."

You must deny your **self**, that is, deny that old man that would always have the upper hand and paste you one on the chin.

Now, let's make this practical and apply it.

Regarding dating.

Perhaps there's a nice looking young man from school who asks you out. And he's not only nice looking, he's got a personality that won't quit, and maybe rich besides. There's only one problem: he's not a Christian. Or, he's a Christian, but only in name. Or, he's not a Reformed Christian and has shown antagonism to the Reformed faith. What do you do? Your old man is saying "Yes, I'd like to date him. I haven't had anyone ask me out for months and even years. And if it takes much longer, I might just end up single for the rest of my life. I'm going to date him anyway." But you say "NO" to that old man. For the sake of Jesus Christ Who commands me to date and

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marry in the Lord, I say "NO." What have you done? You've not only denied yourself something pleasurable; you've denied your **self**.

Maybe you have a date. Maybe your date is a Christian. But maybe your date says, "Let's take this dirt road down into the woods, and I have a nice blanket in the trunk." Or, "There's a movie just out that's supposed to be really good. We're going there tonight." Or, "How about if we go to that party at so and so's house. They're supposed to have a keg of beer there; everybody's coming." Your old man says, "Yes." He says, "We won't get caught." Your old man says, "Well, that sounds good." But your new man (Christ in you) says, "No; for the sake of Christ, Who forbids this kind of behavior, I will not."

Regarding marriage.

When you get married, self-denial is the kind of behavior you will have to become familiar with, because your marriage will not be a happy marriage if you don't know anything about self-denial. When you get married, your old man will say, "Well, she doesn't need me around the house. It sounds much better to join a couple of ball leagues and play a couple of nights a week; and then on the other free nights I can be fishing or hunting. As long as I'm home a night a week, and always on Sunday, it'll be all right." And your new man needs to say, "You're a fool, man. I must deny you. I must put you down. I must keep you down because my wife and children need me at home."

When you marry, you take the vows that promise you will deny yourself. You are going to be with your husband or wife for better and for

worse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health. That means when the spouse is in an automobile accident, and lives, but cannot perform the duties of a wife and mother, you remain married to her the rest of your life, denying yourself the "privilege" of divorcing her and marrying another who will be able to satisfy your needs. That means that when your spouse deserts you, you deny yourself the opportunity to marry another, and you remain single for the rest of your life, for Christ's sake.

Regarding entertainment.

My old man says, "Yes, I want to be entertained at the movies; yes, I want to have fun dancing with worldly music in worldly company, enticing myself sexually with the dances of the world." My new man (Christ in me) says, "I will not be entertained with sin at the movies; I will be entertained in Christian company with Christian entertainment and Christian friends. I will not amuse myself with the worldly dance, violating the seventh commandment."

Regarding your faith.

My old man says, "The doctrine of total depravity is nonsense. The doctrine of total depravity goes against my grain. I want to think better of myself than that there is nothing in me that is good, and everything in me is evil, except what God gives." The doctrines of limited atonement and unconditional election can be offensive. Christ died for only some, and those for whom He died are those whom God chose before they were born, without reference to what they were or would become? God is sovereign over the sin of men, so that, without being responsible for it, He is still in perfect control over it? Nonsense! Nothing I want to accept."

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And my new man (Christ in me) says, "Away with you, I don't know you."

Regarding unbelieving friends or relatives.

Then it happens that relatives are excommunicated, or walk in open unbelief and rebelling against God. The word of God says, "Have no fellowship with them; no, don't even eat with them." Maybe that's your brother or sister. Maybe that's your mother or father. Someday that could be your son or daughter. And your old man says, "There's no way in the world that I'm not going to visit with my parents, with my brother and sister. There's no way in the world that God could require that of me." And your new man (Christ in you) says, "I must deny you, old man. I must put you down. I must obey the word of God."

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And then we're tempted to say, sometimes, "It's not worth it." When the dates aren't there; when the drinking is tempting, "everyone else" is calling me to go along; when I'm lonely of my parents and friends; then we are tempted to say, "It isn't worth all the suffering, all the misery, all the giving up, all the sacrificing, all the losing."

Well, I have an incentive for you, (a carrot, if you will) that is God's incentive. And knowing this is the power to give you contentment in your suffering.

Look with me at Mark 10:28-31.

The incentive for you to deny yourself is the future blessing that God promises ("in the world to come, eternal life"). This isn't the only world; there's a world coming. And we will receive this reward of eternal life in the world to come. Now is the time of work; now is the time of losing, of forsaking,

of giving up, of denying self. The time of reward is in the future. And the people of God must look ahead to the future when they think of their self denial. God promises this to those who deny themselves.

What a precious incentive is this that God gives to all of His people. It is life. It is life for the soul and for the body. The resurrection from the dead of our body belongs to this reward. It is life for the soul that will be everlasting life of the highest quality, the best life, the fullest life, the richest life that is possible; that life which God has worked out and prepared for us in the death and resurrection of His own Son, Jesus Christ.

And that is so much more precious than all those things we've given up, there is really no comparison. That's what Paul says in Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time (and the context is clear that these sufferings are the good works of suffering with and for Jesus Christ) are not worthy to be compared with the glory."

Knowing this, we can be content!

Sometimes when we want some earthly pleasure very badly, we say that all the misery we go through in order to attain it is worth it. Maybe you want a new car very badly. So you take on another job, and work in all your spare time in order to get that car. And when you get it, you say, "It was all worth it." Some of you are here from Loveland. When we visited Loveland 4 or 5 times in the past 10 years, we wanted to see the view of the Colorado mountains from the 14,000 foot height of Long's Peak. You have to hike and hike and hike, in weariness and pain. . . until you finally come to the top and say, "It was worth every minute of

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the hiking. . . .”

And yet Paul says, the reward that we await is not worthy to be compared with the suffering that we experience now. And that’s why Mark says, “It’s a hundred times better than what you give.” So with self-denial. It’s drudgery and pain; it’s giving up and losing; it’s hurt and misery. But in the end there awaits us a reward that will overshadow all the pain and misery, so great that all this in the present time will not even be remembered for the glory that we have then.

But what about now?

There is also a reward for God’s people today.

Mark 10 says, “he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands.” There’s eternal life in the coming world, but there is also a reward in this time.

This does not mean abundant earthly possessions. It might seem on the surface that the Lord is teaching here that the reward in this life for His people’s good works, is abundant, earthly, material possessions, and relatives, and friends. Sooner or later we will get back what we gave up and then get it back a hundred fold? For many reasons, it’s obvious that that is not what the Lord intends to teach.

The Lord promises here that God will give us in this life a great good; He will give us a good that we will also experience to be a great good, and that we experience to be a hundred times better than that which we gave up for the sake of Jesus Christ.

But that good in this life is just the beginning of eternal life, and the enjoyment of eternal life by the child of God. When the Lord says a hundred-fold lands and mothers and others, He

is saying, “the joy of the experience of eternal life will be a hundred times better to you than what you gave up for my sake.”

Contentment in self denial is the incentive God gives to deny ourselves. And the incentive in this life is Christ and the experiences of the fellowship with Christ for the sake of Whom we abandoned those things. We gave them up for the sake of Christ. We gave them up to have Him and to walk with Him and to know His friendship; and now that friendship with Christ is to us in our own experience a hundred times better than what we gave up for Christ.

We forget that sometimes.

Isn’t Christ better than everything that we might give up for him? Don’t feel sorry for yourself, because you’ve lost something for Christ’s sake. You mustn’t feel sorry for yourself when you lose everything earthly for Christ’s sake. You must feel sorry for those who refuse to give up for the sake of Christ; they also have their reward. But you have a hundred-fold reward for that which you have given up.

Isn’t that incentive for you? the knowledge you need to be content in your self-denial?

You say, “I’m much happier when I affirm myself, when I give in to my old man”? You say, “I don’t believe you when you say that the reward is a hundred-fold joy even in this life”? Well, you’re wrong.

And I call to witness a dozen old friends before you tonight. And I wish to God that I could parade them before you, one by one, and have each tell his tale of woe to you. I call to witness the ones whose lives are completely ruined by drugs and drink, because they said “Yes” when they should have said “No.” I call to witness the ones whose

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marriages are nothing but a living "hell" because they said "Yes" when they should have said "No" and "No" when they could have said "yes." I call to witness the ones whose souls are ruined by despair that God sends as His judgment upon them because in the troubled times of their marriage they denied their marriage vows of "till death do us part" and they made new marriages.

And I call myself to witness tonight. By the grace of God I was able to say "No" to the riches that I wanted, not because there is anything wrong with riches, but because there was a call to the ministry to which I had to say "Yes," and to which my old man said, "Not for the world!" By the grace of God I said "No" to the unbelievers I

could have (and anyone could have) married, and said "yes" to my wife of ten years. By the grace of God there was a renunciation of self, and an affirmation of Christ. This is not to say I'm perfect. Far from it. I'm a sinner no less than you. My flesh is just as corrupt as yours; I have nothing to brag about. And I hope that you understand that I'm dead serious about that.

And I've never been happier in my life. God gave me a hundred fold joy for those things I've given up. Oh, that's not to say that it wasn't misery, and it isn't misery today. It is. It's a denial of **me**. And I don't like that. But I have Christ. And having Christ, I have everything!

That's contentment!



Volleyball game held at the YMCA on Thursday evening.

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# CONVENTION IMPRESSIONS FROM "DOWN UNDER"

by Theo deKlerk

My first day at the 1989 Young Peoples' Convention and I am eating this thing called a "sub" for lunch. Please excuse my ignorance but back where I come from we do not eat things big enough to hit someone with! We call them bread rolls and you can generally carry them in one hand. Well, anyway, I am about half way through my first mouthful and I nearly choked in the baloney. Ruth Bleyenberg just asked me to write an article on Convention Impressions for **Beacon Lights**. Put yourself in my shoes. I had only been in the U.S.A. for about one week or so, after having spent three-and-a-half weeks traveling through Australia, England, and The Netherlands. The closest I had ever been to the Young Peoples' Convention was reading the articles in the **Beacon Lights** (which arrive two months late where I live!). The last thing I was expecting to do was WRITE ONE!! Reluctantly, I agreed.

This whole trip was a bit of an adventure because I had had no idea of what was in store for me in all these different countries. As my plane flew into New York there were all these questions floating around in my mind. "Am I going to like it here?" "Will I feel at home?" "Are these American young people any different to back home?" Etc., etc. My intention was to come with an open mind but still one wonders. It did not take me long to realize the folly of my fears. Before the

convention I spent five days in South Holland (Ill.) and four days in Grand Rapids. The warm welcomes and openness of heart that I experienced everywhere gave me a real sense of security - like I would feel if at home. The fact that there were a few Australians hanging around with the right type of accent helped too!

Like I mentioned before, the closest I had ever come to the Young Peoples' Convention was reading the articles in **Beacon Lights**. Thus, I thought I had some idea of what goes on at these Conventions. As it turned out, you gotta see it to believe it because little did I know that sleep was NOT part of the program!! Well, anyway, on Monday one of the "mixer" activities included the "lap change game" - the fastest way to meet 140 people in half an hour that I have ever seen. The Slam Dunk Contest showed up a little weakness in basketball that three of us from "down under" had. Somebody had obviously taken note of this because it showed at the prizegiving on Friday - more about that later. After Prof. Decker's speech at Hope Church everyone went on a hayride. All I shall say is that the hay did not last long!

Prof. Decker's speech on Contentment in Suffering was excellent. It raised some interesting questions for me. Think about it - do we usually associate contentment with suffering? Do we ever think about those Christ-



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ians in other parts of the world that are being persecuted for their faith? Will we be ready to face persecution, with contentment for Christ's sake? It is coming, the Bible tells us so.

Tuesday morning saw the first discussion group on Family Communication take place. A topic that, taken at face value, may seem easy to examine if talking about someone other than yourself. The questions that arose were personal and needed to be answered honestly to oneself. The main question being "Can we and do we talk to our parents honestly and totally openly; is it a two way link?"

After the discussion groups everyone boarded the buses for Pleasure Island, a place with waterslides to suit your fancy - from downright slow to spine tingling in pace. Then we must not forget the tug-of-war. All civility and serenity went by the wayside while this event took place. There were some croaky voices afterwards but our ministers make good coaches!! The evening was spent at Grand Haven beach where we had supper and free time.

The second discussion group on Stewardship took place on Wednesday morning. Again some very good questions were raised. Take "talents" for example. There are talents as in pieces of gold or silver (money), but there are also God given talents of abilities. How must we use them? A very apt question for those young men considering the vocation of the ministry. After the discussion groups everyone piles into the buses again and we were off to Grand Valley State University Campus. The mini track and field events were held there. It looked like some blood sweat and tears were lost in the quest for team supremacy. If nothing else, a

good appetite for lunch was worked up by most! After lunch was free time basically. While wandering around in amazement at the size of the campus I bumped into a group of people in a wallyball court. "Do I want to play what?" was my reply to the invitation to join in. Excuse my ignorance again, but I had never played the game before and back home if you call someone a "wally", you are basically calling him an idiot! Understandable reaction I guess. Great game - we ended up playing it all afternoon. We staggered back to the bus at 4:30 a little worse for wear and tear but having had a great time. After the speech at Hope Church by Rev. Gritters the under 18's went roller skating and the rest of us went bowling. What a giggle that turned out to be - well, that is all you could do when viewing the scores afterwards!

I was deeply moved by Rev. Gritters speech on Contentment in Self Denial. A lot of what he said had a very personal significance for me. Being content while practising self denial, i.e. living the life of true Christianity, is not always easy. Self pity is a formidable temptation to resist and can only be done with the grace of God. In the face of adversity we have a comfort as the Heidelberg Catechism states in Lord's Day 1 and Rev. Gritters quoted from Mark 10:30 that it is worth more than one hundred fold of the best life we could possibly have on earth.

Thursday morning everyone gathered again at 8:00 am (too early for some by the looks of them!) at Covenant Christian High School for opening devotions and the discussion groups. The topic being very applicable to us young people, "The Body, A Temple Of The Holy Spirit". Do we ever sit down and think about it that

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way? I must confess to not thinking about it often enough; I think a lot of us young people may have to. All you have to do is think back to some of the strangest and most daring things you have done in your life! Would we have done them if this truth was in the forefront of our mind? Talking about strange and daring activities - canoeing down the Muskegon River! After being dropped off by the buses and having had lunch, this was on the agenda. It did not take long after launching for the dunking to start. Jim Schimmel and Hank Vander Waal proving their prowess at this. I must have made too many friends at this convention because everytime I ran into someone I knew, they came after me - or was it the yellow Chicago Cubs hat?! Three hours and some sun burn later everyone was piling back into the buses to head back to Covenant.

After a change of clothes, and half an hour in the bathroom with the hair curlers everyone looked a little respectable again!! So back into these buses again and off to Douglas Walker Park for the informal Pig Roast and Rev. Van Overloop's speech. The fact that the Pig Roast was informal worked very well indeed. The peer pressure of getting dates was removed by doing this. Don't get me wrong, I have got nothing against dating, absolutely nothing(!) - but peer pressure can be done without.

Rev. Van Overloop's speech on Contentment under Authority was excellent. The emphasis was on the authority of the parents because it is the part of the topic that most concerns us young people. Rev. Van Overloop gave a very good definition of the word "Authority" and made a very good point regarding our parents and

this authority. Our parents were given to us for a reason and the authority they have over us is a God given authority which is quite some responsibility to have - something to bear in mind if we ever become parents.

On Friday morning the farewell breakfast was held at Hope School. To me the atmosphere seemed a little subdued because of the realization that it was time for good-byes. This realization did not hit me till later and was rather sudden. After breakfast the "Awards" were handed out. All I can say is that there were a pair(s) of very observant eyes watching everybody. The mini basketball rings that the three of us from "down under" got were no little hint! The recipients of the "agreeability" award seemed a little reluctant to come up to the front and collect them - why guys?! Then let's not forget Shari Huizinga's prize! It was apparent straight away as to who had organized it when she started beating up her sister in front of everybody!

No one can blame her, or the rest of the Steering Committee for that matter, for having trouble getting up in the morning. They did a fantastic job in organizing and running this Convention and deserve a hearty "thank you". It is obvious that a lot of time and effort was spent in running everything and the chaperones deserve many thanks as well - don't forget they go along and put up with a bunch of "Yahoos" like us voluntarily!! Our gratitude must also go out to our three speakers for a job very well done. Their speeches were informative and thought stimulating. The topic was very relevant to us young people and they gave us plenty to think about.

In closing, I would like to thank the

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editorial staff of the **Beacon Lights** for the opportunity to write this article. This was my first convention and it has made a deep impression on me. Back home in New Zealand, I can only dream about having this kind of fellowship and fun with young people of like faith. Having never really had it, I couldn't miss it. After having experienced this convention, I shall miss it very much. Therefore, I shall be saving hard in the coming year to try and make the trip (the Lord Willing) to next year's Convention in California. It costs a lot

of money to fly but I firmly believe it will be worth every last penny. That brings me to the reason for writing this article - an admonition to my fellow young brothers and sisters in Christ, especially the over 20 year olds. These conventions ARE WORTH IT. So what if you have been 3 OR 4 times before - GO AGAIN. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God". I ask you to think about it, my fellow young people. Hope (the Lord Willing) to see you at next year's Convention.

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## CONVENTION IMPRESSIONS

by **Mike Feenstra**

It was back during the convention of 1988 when I heard a rumor. The rumor was that during the 1989 convention we would have to stay at homes instead of the usual dormitory. When I learned that the rumor was true, I did not want to go at first. I changed my mind and decided to go because I thought the activities might be fun. I was glad I went because I had a very good time.

I thought the convention organizers did an excellent job in planning the activities. I also thought that the theme of the convention, Contentment, was a good choice because it is very hard for us as young people to be content. The speeches brought this theme out very well.

In the first speech by Prof. Decker we learned to be content with whatever God wills for us, even things as harsh as the death of a loved one. The second

speech by Rev. Gritters taught us to be content in being able to say no to things we shouldn't do. This is hard for us as young people because of "Peer Pressure" or "everybody is doing it". In the third speech by Rev. Van Overloop we learned to be content under authority, whether it be parent, employer, or teacher. This is difficult because it is against our human nature.

The discussion groups also dealt with key issues in young peoples' lives, such as communicating with your family, learning to be good stewards, and learning to treat our bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost.

If I look at the convention overall it was planned well in all areas. The hayride, the canoe trip, and the trip to Pleasure Island, etc. were a lot of fun. I look forward to more conventions in the future as fun as this convention.



Games were held at Covenant on Monday afternoon.



Boy! Don't we look excited. Wish they hurry with the food.