

"Bits and Pieces" for Cadet Sunday sermon "God Is in Control"

Introduction for those who plan to use these "Bits and Pieces" for a Cadet Sunday sermon, let me start with the (by now) usual *caveat*:

As in previous "Roadmap" postings, what follows here is not a sermon. It is, instead, a collection of bits and pieces indicating what I think might be some salient points to use in a sermon. Why not present a full sermon? Because it would be my sermon, not yours, written to be preached with my personality, my inflections, my spontaneous insertions and deletions. All that I gladly leave up to you. You know your cadets and will find your own ways of connecting with them. This collection of bits and pieces obviously needs filling in. It is no problem finding images on the internet for the things that are included in this "sermon" if you are so inclined to use them.

One thing, however, I do have in mind: I hope that whatever you preach will be aimed at the Cadets (probably sitting in the front rows), with the congregation being privileged to "listen in."

I humbly submit these bits and pieces praying that they will encourage and bless the Cadets, build up the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and bring glory to our Triune God -- Rev. Ted S. Bootsma (ret'd); member of Bethel CRC, Waterdown, Ontario.

So here are the suggested **"Bits and Pieces"** for you to play with:

This theme, "God Is in Control", is quite different in character from many of the previous themes such as: "Get in the Game", "Be a Blessing", "Hi God, It's Me", and "Dive into the Word." In these previous themes, the Cadets would be encouraged to initiate certain actions, and good things would come from that.

Not so with this year's theme. This theme intends to foster trust in the Cadets -- trust that God really is in control; always. How do you do *that*? What does a Cadet do to experience that? There is no "How to Trust God in Three Easy Steps" manual.

In the NIV (2011) the words "then you will know" appears 36 times. The phrase "and you will know" appears another 11 times. Often these words are followed by "that I am the Lord." The situations in which these words are spoken are often about coming judgment, or promised deliverance/salvation. In each case, the acknowledgement that God is Lord, that God is in control, comes *after* certain foretold events take place. And in each case the promised events do happen. Living into these events helps grow a sense of trust in us; trust that God really is in control.

Trust goes beyond rational acknowledgement.

The story of famous tightrope walker Charles Blondin illustrates this well:

On July 15, 1859, Blondin walked backward across a tightrope over Niagara Falls to Canada, while blindfolded, and returned pushing a wheelbarrow. It was after pushing a wheelbarrow across while blindfolded that Blondin asked for some audience participation. The crowds had watched and "oooohed" and "aaaahed". He had proven that he could do it; there was no doubt. But now he was asking for a volunteer to get in the wheelbarrow and take a ride across the Falls. It is said that he asked his audience, "Do you believe I can carry a person across in this wheelbarrow?" Of course the crowd shouted that Yes! They believed! It was then that Blondin posed the question: "Who will get in the wheelbarrow?" Of course, none did.

This story illustrates the difference between rational acknowledgement and deep heart-felt Spirit-inspired knowing. That kind of knowing is hard to come by for Cadets whose lives seem to indicate anything but that God is in control. They need to be encouraged by stories from their counsellors' lives, or even their fellow cadets' lives, to help them trust God that He will see them through; that He really is in control; that "He's got this." Use stories from your own life in your sermon too. After all, with this COVID pandemic still going strong, all of our lives have in some way been turned upside down. How will *you* testify that God is still in control? In a testimony the Cadets can relate to?

And when Cadets are going through dark times of loneliness, perhaps abuse, shunning by classmates, they need to know that others too have gone through that. Maybe their counselors, or one of their friends; even some "heroes" of the Bible. Take David's agonizing questions of Psalm 13, or his final thought in Psalm 88. But he is the same David who wrote Ps. 23, and who, in God's name took on a giant and won.

Of course, there are stories in the Bible that encourage us to trust God. He said he would deliver Israel from Egypt, and he did. He said he would help them conquer the land of Canaan, and he did. He said he would bless them if they were obedient, and he did. He said he would bring them back from captivity, and he did. He said he would send Jesus to save us, and he did. He said he would never leave us or forsake us, and he won't. You know the stories. And stories, well-told, are powerful.

I would also encourage you to read the Fall 2021 issue of *Cadeting Today*. In it, Counselor Steve, the Executive Director of the Calvinist Cadet Corps, writes clearly about the difficulty in making this year's theme real in both the introductory article and in the concluding "From the Director's Desk."

Amid all these bits and pieces, I hope you find some that spark an idea which you can develop into a message the Cadets can relate to.

God bless.



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“God’s in control.”

This is a tremendous reassurance for us at any time, but even more so as we travel through a world turned sideways because of viruses, divisive politics, and violent protests.

Over the last several years our Cadet themes have been closely connected to a boy’s walk with Christ. We made sure the boys felt loved and chosen by God with “God Seeking Us”, followed by encouraging a response with the theme, “Be a Blessing”. We encouraged the boys to pray under the theme of “Hi God, It’s Me” and to read the Bible with “Dive Into the

Word.” This year we build on these themes, understanding how we are following a year in which everything in the boys’ lives seems to have been turned upside down – church, school, Cadets, sports, etc.

Our theme is based on Joshua 1:9. “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

God’s promise to Joshua, and His promise to us, is that He will be with us through all situations. He did not promise it would be easy. He did not

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LOOKING AHEAD



Camporee 2023

For over 55 years there has been work progressing on at least one Cadet International Camporee. From the first camporee held in 1966, to the first camporee not held in 2020 and 2021, the Cadet Corps is grateful for the work of local men spent preparing a place for these events.

While 2023 sounds like the distant future, work has been going on for three years already in preparation of an International Camporee to be held in Southern Ontario. Thank you to the dedication of the men who have been spending some of their Saturdays in the woods. We look forward to the day when the site is filled with boys and men and the sounds of memories being made.

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say, “kick back and relax, watch what I’m about to do.” No, He knew we would be afraid, He knew discouragement lay ahead, and He knew we were going to need strength and courage to get through what was to come.

This year the Cadets are looking at how a number of Biblical characters needed to rely on the fact God was in control of their situation. Together, counselors and cadets will learn to lean on the words of Christ, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27)

As cadets deal with the difficulties life gives them in their future, we will give them the foundation that allows them to say, “It’s okay, I know God’s got this, He’s in control.”



COVID Changes Work for Good

This past spring, the Cadet club at Princeton CRC in Kentwood, MI was looking at how they could host their derby car races, while still maintaining social distancing, and knowing many of their families may not be able to attend. The boys had put work into making their cars, there needed to be some way to show them off.

In January 2020 the church had removed the pews and replaced them with movable chairs. During COVID, they had started live-streaming their services. Why not take advantage of these changes and have their car races? That’s what they did.

With movable chairs, individual families could sit apart from others while watching their Cadets and GEMS race their cars. With streaming, grand-parents and family friends were able to watch in real time.

As race day approached, the plans proved beneficial as several Cadet and GEMS families were in quarantine for being close contacts of a person who tested positive for COVID. Cohen, whose car was judged Best of Show, was able to watch from home.

Musk-O-Tawa Field Day



Having taken a few years off, the Musk-O-Tawa Council kicked off a new year with our annual field day at Weesie Brothers farm in Montague, Michigan. We did things a little differently in hopes of keeping everyone safe. Normally we would arrive on a Friday night and enjoy an evening getting to know the new boys that have decided to come and learn more about Jesus. This year we decided to just meet on Saturday morning for the first time in our fifty-plus years of having field day. The weather was beautiful as we gathered at the Weesies Brothers garden center.

The Weesies Brothers have been involved with our council since the early 1980's. We've held many of our field days on their property in New Era, Michigan. This was our first time at their garden center which hosts a "Spookley the Square Pumpkin" town every year as part of their fall festivities. The town has several activities for kids of all ages

including a corn maze, rides to a pumpkin patch, mini golf, a playground and several other activities for kids.

Our field day included several activities that engaged all the kids in physical exercise. This year we had an obstacle course, a ring toss, a culvert tube roll, a basketball shootout, and a shot putt. This series of events earned the winner the golden moccasins, a trophy passed down for over fifty years. All the kids competed within their age groups to get the highest score.

The LORD was with us, blessing our day with wonderful weather, a beautiful location, serving counselors and fathers, and grateful fellowship had by everyone. Thank you to all of our Musk-O-Tawa north church counselors for all of their hard work to make this a success in our first activity since the shutdown.

- Josh Dood, Counselor, Fruitport, MI

Keeping Connected

The Cadet ministry is based on relationships – between the cadets and counselors, between the boys and the church, between different clubs. Blue Mountain Council, in southern Ontario decided they needed to do something to let the boys know they were still being thought of, prayed for, and that they were an important part of the Cadet community.

Each of the five clubs was responsible for choosing a simple activity/craft/project, and obtaining sufficient materials for each of the Cadets in the council. One counselor compiled everything, creating enough packages of supplies for every boy in the council to receive one. Head counselors picked up packages for their club, and delivered summer activity bundles to each boy. The boys received a bookmark, science experiment ideas, project/craft materials and an accompanying card, held together in a reusable Cadet-branded bag.



In Memoriam: Bert Bakhuyzen

Certain roles in the Cadet organization often go unrecognized. The Independent Club Consultant is one of those roles. Acting as a support person for Cadet clubs not part of a regional council, the ICC is constantly sending emails and making phone calls, reminding counselors to submit their registrations and ensure their offerings have been received.



There's not a lot of glamor for this role, yet Bert Bakhuyzen gladly took on the task.

Bert became the ICC in early 2003. He built relationships with head counselors from Florida to California to Nova Scotia and British Columbia. He encouraged the head counselors of clubs in Uganda and the Ukraine.

When these international clubs needed some assistance, Bert was known to reach into his own wallet to make things possible.

Bert was called home to be with his Savior on October 16, after a brief battle with cancer. Bert's cheerful heart and passion for Cadets will be missed, but we are glad he gets to now sing in the presence of his heavenly Father.



God's Got This?

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." These words from the first chapter of the book of Joshua are often used to give us encouragement. On an average day, when things are normal, we read these words and realize, yes, God is always with me; it's easy for us to recite this year's Cadet theme, God's In Control.

But what about when things aren't normal? When things aren't going our way and we don't see how anything around us could possibly be part of God's plan, do we still read these words in the same manner? It is very easy to see this verse and be filled with skepticism. Really, I'm not supposed to be discouraged? How can I not be afraid of what lies ahead?

Many of you, as you read this, are thinking of a time when you needed to be reminded of God's promise to be with

From the Director's Desk

you. You may be nodding your head in agreement, recognizing how God did, indeed, have everything under control. But that's the thing. It's often much easier to see how God was in control looking back. Hindsight is, as they say, 20/20.

Seven years ago, the Cadet organization offered me the position of Executive Director. It took almost 15 months for the immigration process to be completed, during which I spent many hours arguing with God. Why can't you just let the paperwork be approved? Why are you taking so long? God, I'm following your leading, why don't you make this work out? God, I really don't like being homeless and separated from my family, do something about it! If I were to say our theme, there would be a question mark at the end. God's In Control?

Looking back at those months of struggle, I see how God's control was there all the time. God's timing, as opposed to mine, allowed Cadet clubs to be formed in Uganda. God's plans allowed my wife and me to buy a house which now allows us to host a college and careers group weekly for a meal. God being in control, and me recognizing this afterwards, gives me opportunity to relate to those going through hard

times currently. I don't need the question mark anymore. God's got this!

How do the cadets read this verse? Some of the boys who attend a Cadet club have grown up in the church, possibly go to Christian school, and have been taught about God's omnipotence. They see the words and think, I know, God's in control of everything. He's always there to help me. Others, however, may be unsure. They don't have hindsight to show them it all works out according to God's plans. They don't have a long-lasting relationship with God, to know He will always be there with them.

For all the boys, and their counselors, my prayer is that throughout this Cadet season, they grow to learn and are able to read this verse with confidence. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Steve Bootsma