

Editor's Note

Dewey Engelsma

This month's issue contains the three speeches given at this year's Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention. The convention was held at the Lake Geneva Christian Center in Alexandria, Minnesota from August 13–17. The theme of the convention was *Guided by God*, and the three keynote addresses were delivered by Revs. Brummel, Engelsma, and Griess. According to a reputable source (my daughter), the weather was delightful, the speeches were inspiring, and the companionship was warm and engaging. As is the case with most fathers of teenage girls, I have tremendous gifts of insight since I can read all of that into the answer I received when I asked to hear how the convention went, and got this in return—"Good." Effusive praise indeed!

The editorial addresses an ecclesiastical event that received almost universal support from the churches in Grand Rapids, Michigan and the surrounding area. Church after church had *CityFest 2018: Luis & Andrew Palau* signs in the front of their church for months in advance of the event. Luis Palau is, according to his website, an international Christian evangelist who has spoken to more than 30 million people in 75 countries. In addition, his radio broadcasts are heard by millions.

What is CityFest? Why did it come to Grand Rapids? Although Protestant Reformed people attended the event, why did the event not have official PRC support? Should it have?

Because so many churches were involved—many of them Reformed churches—and because I felt that it would be tempting for our own young people to attend (the BMX competitions, popular music acts, and carnival atmosphere would see to that) I was convicted that I needed to write about the event. Convinced that I could not do justice to a review from afar, I attended on Saturday, September 8.

The Luis Palau Association (LPA) was accommodating and allowed me to interview Levi Park, the Festival Director for the Luis Palau Association, and they gave me a media pass for the event itself.

My bitter disappointment is not with the Luis Palau Association, although I decry the "gospel" message that they bring. It is not the gospel taught by Paul in Romans 9:16, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." However, they make no secret of what they do and how they do it.

My bitter disappointment is with the Reformed churches that supported CityFest 2018. My question for them is this, "How can you say you are in the line of churches going back to the Synod of Dordt and bring in a man to preach to your people whose theology that Synod condemned?" The incongruity of bringing in Luis Palau and celebrating the Synod of Dordt within weeks of each other struck me as bizarre. What was the Synod of Dordt for if not to condemn the theology of Arminius and the Remonstrants, which is the theology of Luis Palau?

The question needs to be asked of our own churches as well. Were we warned off the pulpit and elsewhere about the dangers of CityFest 2018? The message brought is attractive and enticing. Enjoy the music, enjoy the festivities, bring a friend or neighbor! You want them to know Christ, don't you? It will be a fun and harmless way to introduce them to Jesus. This way you don't scare them off with your old-fashioned and intimidating church worship service.

Our young people were there that night. We fool ourselves if we think that gospel message cannot find its way into our self-seeking and proud hearts. How badly man wants to play *some* role in *some* aspect in his salvation!

Enjoy the rides! Face painting? Right over here! Now enjoy this world-famous musical act! It's all free! All you have to do "is make a decision for Christ."

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