

The British Reformed Fellowship: A Memorable and Joyous Event

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Every two years, the British Reformed Fellowship (BRF) hosts a family conference somewhere in the British Isles. This year the conference was held at Hebron Hall in Cardiff, Wales. Our family had been talking about going for a while, and finally, our hopes became a reality. We, along with our grandparents, Ken and Mary Velthouse, and uncle and aunt, Stefan and Kris Engelsma, were ready to make the trip. When the day finally came on Friday, July 20, we began our long journey from Grand Rapids, with stops in Detroit and Amsterdam, and finally arrived in Cardiff early Saturday morning. We did not know what to expect when we arrived, but we were eager to begin the week.

This year there were over 120 attendees from 11 countries and six states. Many of these people were new to the faith and had come in contact with the BRF while they were searching for the truth online. Some had not yet even met anyone from the BRF and could barely speak English, but they came with hopes of learning more about the Word of God and to meet others who believe the same as they do. It was very eye opening to be able to see how God truly uses his means to draw people into the church from all different backgrounds and cultures.

The theme this year was “The Reformed Family—According to the Word of God.” The main speakers were Rev. Andrew Lanning and Prof. David Engelsma. On Sunday our group was able to worship twice, with sermons given by Rev. Lanning and Rev. Angus Stewart (from Covenant PRC in Ballymena, Northern Ireland). It was one of the greatest Lord’s Days we have experienced because of the fellowship and gathering of so many people from around the world to worship in one place, including people from Hungary, Brazil, Italy, Germany, and Singapore among others. Throughout the week, there were eight other speeches, all based on the family and marriage. These powerful speeches were very moving and helped us strengthen our hearts and minds as we learned more about how the word of God instructs us regarding the family, marriage, and relationships. No matter what the speech topic was, the main point in each one was that the truths of the family and marriage have its foundations in the word of God and that all these relationships are based on the marriage of Christ and his church.

But, the conference wasn’t all about the speeches. We took two-day trips with the group to explore Raglan Castle (built in 1435) and Gloucester, England (founded by the Romans in 1155), and also to visit St. Fagan’s Wales National Museum of History (which also included a zip line/obstacle course that we did!). We also had free time to take small trips with our family to beautiful Cardiff Bay and also take a train ride to the city of Bath, England (a former Roman colony city in England, in which are the famous Roman baths, constructed in the year 76 AD). Beautiful cities! Also, during our free times, we were able to sit down and have fellowship with others and get to know one another. It was amazing to see how everyone had their own life stories.

This experience is one we will never forget. This conference brought us closer together not only because of the genuine love everyone had for us, but by everyone being there for us and

trying to get to know us better. We know that we are all from the same family, Christ's family and that there are Christians from all over the world; not only in Grand Rapids, Michigan, or wherever you are.

We are hoping that we can go back in two years. This conference is for everyone of all ages, not just grandparents and parents. There were over 30 single young people and young adults there! It was a great experience, and we would like to encourage more people to come in two years. The next conference will be held in Northern Ireland.

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