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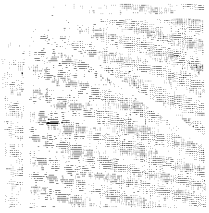

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CONVENTION MINUTES

by Lisa Van Koevering

Minutes of the 46th Annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention, held at Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, July 28 - Aug. 1.

Host: South Holland Young People's Society.

Theme: Being Reformed in 1986: Heritage and Calling. II Thes. 2:15

Speech Topics:

I. In Truth

II. In Godliness

III. In Comfort

Monday, July 28

Registration was held from 12:00 - 4:00 pm at South Holland Church. From there, the young people were taken to homes of people from South Holland Church. I particularly liked this because we were able to get to know other families in our denomination.

The first lecture was held at South Holland Church. Rev. Kamps spoke from the aspect of being reformed "In Truth." Family and friends also came to the lecture.

After the lecture, the older young people (high school grads & older) went to Chicago for a boat ride and a tour of the Sears Tower. The other group of young people went rollerskating. Buses then returned to South Holland Church and we were taken back to our respective places.

Tuesday, July 29

The day began with a pancake breakfast at Veteran's Park in South Holland. After breakfast Rev. R. Van Overloop introduced the topic "The Calling of Protestant Reformed youth to Learn the Heritage of the Reformed Truth." We were divided into groups for discussion.

Buses came to the park and we then boarded to leave for Valparaiso University. After arriving there, we signed up for our rooms, received our keys, unpacked & settled in.

Following lunch, the convention picture was taken. We then were divided into 20 groups and had what were called "Olympics." It proved to be a fun and tiring afternoon.

At 5:30 we gathered for devotions and ate supper.

The second lecture was held in the "Great Hall." Rev. B. Gritters spoke on being reformed "In Godliness." Again family and friends attended the lecture.

At night, we were able to use the gym facilities and go swimming.

Wednesday, July 30

At 7:15 we gathered for devotions with our chaperones. Discussion groups followed breakfast. Rev. D. Engelsma introduced the topic "As to a Reformed use of and Enjoyment of Music", after which we had discussion groups.

The younger group and some of the older ones went to Schaeffer Lake, which is an amusement park by the lake. The remaining older ones spent the day at the beach. The weather was nice for the beach. This was the first time in the past 2 years that we were able to go to the beach as planned. We otherwise were rained out on the day we were supposed to go to the beach. Valparaiso supplied us with lunch on the outing.

At 5:00 we returned to Valparaiso and ate supper.

Volleyball tournaments were played between churches. Naturally, South Holland Young Peoples' took the championship. The young people of First Church of Grand Rapids and Holland came in second.

A bonfire with singing followed volleyball. The rest of the night was free time and a busy night for Domino's Pizza.

Thursday, July 31

While some of us slept the previous night, others had the great idea of "making a night of it." At breakfast, this was clearly visible on the haggard faces of chaps and the young people that did make a night of it.

Rev. R. Van Overloop introduced the topic of "The Comfort of Friendship among Young People in the Church." Afterward we broke up into groups for discussion.

The Delegate Board meeting began at 11:00 and went as follows:

Art. 1 Dirk Westra read from Psalm 46 and opened the meeting with prayer.

Art. 2 Roll was taken.

Art. 3 Scholarship recipients for 1986 were announced.

Art. 4 The Financial Report of the Federation Board was read by Dave Ondersma. The balance on hand as of April 30, 1986 is $14,907.71. The floor was opened for discussion.

Art. 5 A motion was made, supported, and passed to accept the Financial Report.

Art. 6 It was announced that dues will remain the same, as follows: $6.00 to Convention, $4.00 to Scholarship Committee, $2.00 to Beacon Lights.

Art. 7 Nominees for Federation Board officers were announced.

Art. 8 Delegates voted on the nominees.

A West-East softball game followed lunch.

We then got ready for the banquet. The punch bowl started at 5:15 with supper at 5:30. Kristin Engelsma and Sherry Holleman played a flute and piano duet. Winners of the Volleyball Tournaments and also of the Olympics were given T-shirts. The South Holland Young People's Society also gave a great special number. They gathered on stage and took their proper places in a rhythm band. They weren't even through the first song and I think the whole audience was in stitches. They played 3 songs for us.

Rev. Slopsema gave the final lecture "In Comfort." The new Federation Board officers were announced as follows: Vice Pres.: Bryan Van Baren, Vice Sec.: Robin Kuiper, Vice Treas.: Steve Lotterman, Youth Coordinator: Hank Vander Waal, Spiritual Advisor East: Rev. Gritters.

After the speech, rollerskates could be rented to bomb around campus, or the gym and pool could be used. Still others did some "moonlighting."

Friday, August 1

We had devotions and ate breakfast.

We then returned to our dorm rooms to clean and pack up.

At 10:00 buses were boarded for South Holland Church.

Thanks go to South Holland Young People's for a well organized and fun-filled convention. May also our covenant God be thanked for our time of fellowship and may He bless the discussions and lectures unto our hearts that they not be forgotten.

Theme: **Being Reformed in 1986 Heritage and Calling**

Convention speech: **IN TRUTH**

by Rev. M. Kamps

Let me express my joy to you about two realities this evening. Of course, there are many things about which I could be happy in regard to our convention. We have a large audience. Besides the audience is not composed of old people who have lived their lives, but of young people who have yet to develop spiritually and to influence another generation for good.

But in particular, I am thankful for two specific realities. In the first place, I am thrilled with your convention theme: **Being Reformed in 1986: Heritage and Calling**. Note carefully that the theme of our convention is not **Being Biblical in 1986**. Many would consider that theme to be very appropriate. But it would not satisfy me for it is too general and vague. Your convention theme is specific. I am thrilled with your theme because it expresses that the Reformed Faith is the only Biblical faith. Your theme expresses the confidence with which we hold the Reformed Faith. In addition I am happy with your theme because it speaks of **Being** Reformed. The word "Being" in your theme points to the idea of active obedience to the Word of God. Moreover the order of the various sub-divisions of your theme also speak well of your understanding of the Christian faith; the first subdivision is "In Truth", the second and the third are "In Godliness", and "In Comfort." This order calls our attention to the spiritual fact of life that godliness and comfort have as their foundation the truth believed and confessed.

The second reality of tonight's meeting for which I am happy is that I may be privileged to speak to you on this blessed theme.

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The Reformed Faith is the truth of God's Word. The Reformed Faith is the gospel of Christ Jesus. This we believe with all our hearts. But the question arises, where do we have a brief, yet complete statement of the Reformed Faith? You probably would answer, the Bible is the statement of the Reformed Faith. Yes, but the problem is that the Baptist and the Roman Catholic and all others make the same claim. Mutually exclusive confessions both would make appeal to God's Word. We have to be therefore more specific.

The statement of the Reformed Faith is to be found in our Reformed Creeds, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht. We do not deny that there are other faithful expressions of the Reformed Faith such as the Westminster Creeds. But for us the Reformed Faith is expressed in our Three Forms

of Unity.

We should make mention of the specific content of the Reformed Faith. Negatively, we should understand that not all that Reformed preachers and theologians have said or written is necessarily correct and biblical. Of course not! The Creeds express the Reformed Faith for us. The main elements of the Reformed Faith are the doctrine of the covenant of God with His people in Christ Jesus, the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God over all His creatures, and the so-called TULIP doctrines; Total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the preservation of the saints. These doctrines, and other doctrines held in common with all saints, are the Reformed Faith.

Our young people should clearly understand that the Protestant Reformed Churches are, therefore, confessionally Reformed. What does it mean to be "confessionally" Reformed? It means that we receive the Creeds as binding and limiting documents. The public writing and preaching of our ministers must conform to the Creeds. Every officebearer must sign the Formula of Subscription promising, thereby, to defend and maintain the Reformed Faith over against every heresy. To be confessionally Reformed implies, moreover, that those in our Churches who oppose the Reformed Faith must be charged with sin and brought to repentance. If after having been rebuked for their error and their continued impenitence, they are to be excommunicated from the Kingdom of Heaven. Those in Reformed Fellowships who oppose the Reformed Faith often portray a facade of gentleness, love and kindness to deceive God's people. To be confessionally Reformed as Churches, as we are, means that a man is held responsible for his opposition to the Reformed Faith, even though in other ways he may be a very nice congenial man.

Our history as Churches is marked by two outstanding events that demonstrate the commitment of our people to being Reformed according to the Scripture and as it is interpreted in our Creeds. In 1924 our fathers and grandfathers were expelled from the Christian Reformed Church, because they held to the conviction, no matter what the cost, that the theory of common grace is contrary to the teaching of the Creeds and of Scripture. Our fathers for the sake of being Reformed accepted the hardships of being small, weak, and scorned. Again in 1953 your parents and grandparents were called upon to pay the price of discipleship. We were confronted with our calling to require repentance of unfaithful men who were attempting to introduce into our churches doctrines contrary to the Creeds and Scripture. Rather than repent; they left our fellowship. Whole congregations were uprooted. Have you heard of Oskaloosa, Iowa; Rock Valley, Iowa; Manhatten, Montana; Sioux Center, Iowa; Bellflower, California? We had congregations in these communities. These congregations have been scattered to the winds. Churches destroyed by men unfaithful to their heritage. Elsewhere, little flocks of five and ten families had to reorganize and start anew. Your parents paid the cost of discipleship. They who would be confessionally Reformed must know that the cost is high. Mis-representation, ostracism, and ridicule will be your lot in life. We have been and desire ever to be confessionally Reformed. Young Peo-

ple, Being Reformed in 1986, must be your desire without regard to the cost.

We must point out that the Reformed Faith is the truth of Scripture. In 1986 most people by Church affiliation Reformed, would not dare be so bold. It is our position that the Reformed Faith alone is the truth of Scripture. It is not **a** truth; one among many. But the Reformed Faith is **The** Truth. Our claim is exclusive.

Most so-called Reformed people today resent the distinctive preaching of the Reformed Faith. The doctrine of the sovereign predestination, that is, both unconditional election and unconditional reprobation are hated doctrines in many "Reformed" congregations. The truth of total depravity of the fallen sinner is openly denied. Even the blessed truth of the infallibility of Scripture is ever under attack in the Reformed community of churches in our day. In 1986 people clamor for broadmindedness and flexibility. They want preaching that is vague and general. Biblical preaching they desire without being thoroughly and specifically Reformed. This cry for broadmindedness in regard to doctrine and our Creeds is justified in the name of brotherliness and love. Let me say frankly that it is a vile love; for it is a love of man at the expense of the love of the truth of God's Word. The plea for broadmindedness and flexibility is a sell-out of the Reformed faith. In 1986 and in the years to come, you and I must be on our guard and speak out against this evil spirit, which in deference to men would rob God of His great glory and honor.

We should clearly understand what it means to confess the truth. In that regard, how do we explain the possibility of creedal expressions of God's Word? The answer is that the confession of the Church of Christ is the reflection of the Bible as it lives in the hearts of God's people. The Word of God is written upon the hearts of God's people by the Spirit of Christ and is reflected again in the Church's Creeds. This reflection is the fruit of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in us. The Holy Spirit having sealed the Word of God upon the heart causes the Church to confess the truth of Scripture. The Creeds systematically present the truth of God's Word. In order to be Reformed in 1986, you will have to lay hold on this understanding of our Creeds.

The Reformed Faith creedally expressed is your heritage. You were not born to pagan parents. Nor were you reared in modernism with its denial of the eternal divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. The errors of humanism did not constitute your training. Nor were you raised by Roman Catholic or Arminian parents. Many thousands and even millions of children are born and reared in spiritual darkness. But God in His sovereign grace and blessed wisdom gave to you and me Reformed parents. All your catechism training has been given by Protestant Reformed ministers of the Word; you were educated in our own schools and reared in the homes of dedicated Reformed people. This is of God's grace to us in Christ Jesus. Do not be apathetic and unthankful to God in regard to this most singular blessing.

The Reformed Faith is our heritage. It has been handed down to us from generation to generation from the 16th century to today. Reformed believers have always been careful to teach the truth to the generation that followed them. Remember too that this

heritage is ours at the ultimate price of the blood of the martyrs. Be mindful of the name Guido De Bres, the author of the Belgic Confession. Because he refused to abandon the truth of God's Word, his blood was shed.

One of the greatest dangers to our heritage is our **forgetfulness**. The danger ever exists that we forget the great price paid by our fathers. Let us ever remind one another and be instructed in not only the objective truths of Scripture but also in the price Reformed saints have had to pay in order to hand down this truth to us.

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The Reformed Faith is a most glorious truth. It does not always appear that it is to us. In 1986 our preaching upon the mission field is of very meager fruit. Where is the positive fruit on our labors in northwest Chicago, or in Modesto, California, or in Norristown, Pennsylvania? There is very little if any growth. In addition, our churches remain small and unattractive to others. Most of our literature lies moribund on the religious book market. Consequently, we may be inclined to ask, where is the great glory of the Reformed Faith? Where is its power? Has it no charm? Why is it that the Reformed Faith is being abandoned well-nigh everywhere? Further, some may not be content merely to ask the above questions, but may be tempted to change or compromise the Reformed Faith, thereby, to make it and our Churches more attractive to others. We desire popularity and growth. Some may even say that the Reformed Faith is going nowhere in 1986!

Let me, however, sound a warning for you and myself. The fruit of the preaching of the truth of Scripture is two-fold. It, on the one hand, exposes the sinner and hardens the impenitent unto the realization of God's decree of reprobation. On the other hand, the preaching convicts of sin and brings one to repentance and faith in Christ Jesus unto the realization of God's decree of election. We must submit to whatever God is pleased to accomplish by the preaching of the gospel. It is carnal on our part that we demand the kind of fruit upon the preaching that allows for human pride and boasting. We must remind ourselves that the Church is always victorious but in the way of apparent defeat. Christ Jesus was victorious in death. So it is for His people in the world.

Indeed, the Reformed Faith is glorious. It is beautiful and grand for many reasons. It is glorious, first of all, because it alone is the truth of Scripture. Secondly, the Reformed Faith is most beautiful because it exalts God as God alone. Thirdly, the Reformed Faith is praise worthy for it teaches us that Jesus Christ alone is our righteousness before God. Fourthly, the Reformed Faith is glorious because it instructs us to seek our life "outside of ourselves in Christ Jesus." The Reformed Faith is glorious and grand exactly because it is the gospel of God.

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Our heritage and our desire to be Reformed in 1986 and until our Lord returns upon the clouds of heaven implies a most serious calling. You are the young people. Now is the time of preparation for life. You are now to be prepared to rear the next generation. Your calling, therefore, is to learn the Creeds. Your calling is to study the Reformed Faith in your society meetings. Do not let your society meetings degenerate into a mere social hour.

Moreover, your calling is not only

to learn but **to love** the Reformed Faith. It is not enough merely to learn and know the Reformed Faith. Many who have are in hell. Others will join them there. Your calling is to love the Reformed Faith. Let me call attention to the context of your convention theme text. We read in I Thessalonians 2:10-12 ". . .because they received not the love of the truth. . . .'And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth. . . ." Note well, it is not our calling merely to know, but to love the Reformed Faith.

This is a most serious calling. There is no room for apathy and indifference to the truth. We have the responsibility to "stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught," (I Thessalonians 2:15) This is God's command to His people. Though the love of many shall wax cold toward God and His Truth, let us pray God for grace abounding to stand for the truth of the Reformed Faith.

Let us ever praise and glorify Jehovah's name for this rich blessing of the truth of Scripture as our rich heritage. Jesus, the Christ, is glorified when His Father's Word is known and loved. And your salvation is had only in the way of love and obedience to the truth.

CONVENTION IMPRESSIONS

by Rick Gritters
Redlands YPS

The 46th annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention sponsored by our South Holland church in Illinois was one with many good and lasting memories. It's always hard to say good-bye to friends, new and old, who live thousands of miles away, but when I think back upon the good times we had and the things we did together, I only look forward more to the next convention.

The college at which it took place, Valparaiso University, had a nice campus with many facilities - a swimming pool, basketball and volleyball courts, racquetball courts, a recreation room and overall a big campus with lots of room. The dorms were also nice with big rooms.

The things I missed most from last year's convention were the times spent with the chaperones and the interesting discussion groups. The topic of this convention "Being Reformed in 1986: Heritage and Calling" was a good subject, but the discussion groups I was in were not as interesting and easy to communicate in as last year. One reason could be that the young people were not mentally able to discuss the subject because they had not prepared ahead of time. They probably did not know enough about the subject. A good way to prepare is by reading the Beacon Lights which speak of the convention and what the topics are about.

I especially enjoyed the three speeches during the week. The ministers were well-prepared and very easy to understand.

I think the South Holland Young

People's Society and church did a very good job in planning this convention. It was a good experience for young people to come to a convention and be with others of the same faith. It also gives us the opportunity to grow spiritually in the grace and knowledge of God.

I would like to thank the societies of South Holland, and most of all, God for giving us the opportunity for this week of fellowship.

A CONVENTIONAL EXPERIENCE

by Carolyn G. Hudnut

Knowing that you were about to spend a week with hundreds of people you did not even know, might have discouraged you from coming to this year's Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention. But that did not discourage me. I was coming from the mission in Pennsylvania (which has only two people in its "Young People's Society"), and I was looking forward to meeting some other Protestant Reformed young people and finding out what a convention is like.

The most important events of the convention were the speeches. Although the speech topics that were chosen were very good - in terms of conveying the theme of the convention - I have to be honest and say that the speeches were not quite what I expected them to be. For one thing, they were not as long as I thought they would be. And secondly, they seemed to be very general - only covering the main ideas on each topic.

However, having the discussion groups really helped to cover the details of each topic. I found the discussion about music to be especially interesting. The group I was in had a very informative discussion about the Psalms.

Speaking of music - I really enjoyed the singing before and after each speech. It sounded great! The real high point was after the last speech on Thursday night when we sang the convention theme song a cappella. The acoustics in the chapel may not have been quite right for listening to a speech, but the slight reverberations really added to the singing.

Except for the late start of the speech on Thursday, we managed to stay on schedule for all of the activities. The schedule was planned out very well, having scheduled free time and a certain degree of variety to the major activities.

The most exciting activity was the trip to Chicago. I wish we could have spent more time there. It was neat to be in the city at night - lights sparkled everywhere and it seemed fairly quiet and peaceful. We saw two excellent views of Chicago; one from the boat in Lake Michigan, and the other from the 103rd floor Skydeck of the Sears Tower.

The banquet on Thursday was an extremely nice occasion. It was fun to see all of the different colors, lengths and styles of dresses that the girls wore. And the guys looked so spiffy in their suits and ties. The punch served before the banquet was delicious, but I am still wondering what combination of ingredients gave it such a pretty pink color. The dinner was very good and

the South Holland young people profided some fine entertainment for us.

By the end of the convention, I had been introduced to many different people and had just begun to get to know a select few pretty well. I enjoyed the good, in-depth conversations that I had with a couple of people. It made me feel good when people told me that they had heard about the Pennsylvania mission. Sometimes we feel kind of isolated in Pennsylvania, so it was encouraging to attend a large church like South Holland and meet so many people from the churches in other states.

Convention Speech: IN GODLINESS

by Rev. Barry Gritters

I'm very pleased that I have the opportunity to speak with you at this 1986 convention. I like conventions. I think they are one of the greatest opportunities that our young people can take advantage of. I've always said that if one young man and young girl of the same faith meet at a convention to establish a life long friendship, the convention has been worthwhile. But I guess I'm biased, because I met my wife at a convention.

While I was thinking about this speech, and going back to the conventions I attended, it struck me for the first time that the very first and the very last conventions that I attended were conventions sponsored by the South Holland Congregation. I believe the first one was in about '70, and all the young people stayed in homes the entire convention. The last was in '77 or '78 when we stayed at Camp Geneva, Wisconsin.

Conventions always have been good memories for me. Probably the most memorable event, though not the best memory, was at that first South Holland convention, after the banquet and probably quite late, when I headed back to the tent in the dark back yard of the Al Buiter place, only to find that my sleeping bag had been filled to the top with rocks of all sizes. And I doubt if they were wishing me the sweet dreams of Jacob and His ladder.

So I'm sorry that circumstances don't let me stay any longer with you at this convention. Not to get my bag filled with rocks again, but to share some of the fun times that conventioneers always have together - and by the sounds of it, will have again.

But we need to get down to business and talk about our reformed heritage. One of the reasons you are here is that it is not easy to be a Christian young man or woman today. It's not easy to be a Reformed, Christian young man or woman today. It's even more difficult being a Protestant Reformed young person today. I refrain from offering you proof that I know that by experience - and I'm sure that all of your pastors know that by experience from their youth. But believe me. I sympathize with you. And the further this world progresses toward the return of Christ, the more difficult it will be to remain a

Protestant Reformed young person, **to maintain our reformed heritage in godliness.**

SON TO FATHER: "Dad, the Jr/Sr banquet is coming up in a couple of weeks, and I know you are going to hear what is going on there. So I thought I'd just let you know about it now so that you won't come at me with it after I come home. There's going to be a dance after dinner. Now please wait and hear me out. They say it's not going to be a heavy rock band, and most of them will probably be slow dances that aren't so bad anyway - at least they don't have all the . . . well, you know what I mean. . . ."

FATHER: "Sorry, son, but you know our stand on dancing. You know that we don't dance and never did. And you know that the church's position on dancing has always been to prohibit it. You better just forget about going to the banquet, and find something else to do with your date some other night that week."

THE NEXT YEAR: "Dad, mom, did you know that we are planning to go to San Diego for two days for our Senior class trip? We hope to spend the first day at the zoo, at night see a movie, and the next day be at the beach before going out to dinner at night and then heading home again. Doesn't that sound fun? I've never been to San Diego before. . . ."

FATHER: "You know our thinking about movies, don't you?"

SON: "But dad and mom, its going to be alright. They say it's going to be something really innocent like Mary Poppins *or the* Fiddler on the Roof, *or some Wali Disney thing - nothing "R" or "X" rated or anything like that. And besides, do you realize what everyone is going to think about that stupid PR when I tell them that I can't go on the class trip because* we don't believe in movies? *Or can you imagine me staying in the bus while everyone else is watching the movie? They're going to think I'm nuts!!"*

DAD: "Son, we're not trying to be hard-headed, or difficult to get along with, but don't you realize what you're asking? You're asking us to allow you to do what we never allowed your older brothers and sisters to do. You're asking us to allow you to go where the church has always preached against going. And you're asking us to do that because other people are going to think you are old fashioned. Just think about your reasoning."

SON, TO HIMSELF: "I can't believe it. They never understand what I'm up against. They don't understand the pressures I face. They don't even seem to see that what everyone else thinks about me is important. And they're always talking about what the church says and about what the church has always done. Who cares about what the church has always done? We're living in 1986, not 1949.

"But I guess I can believe it. They're probably right. But I sure don't understand it."

"And now what do I do? More problems. Tom and John asked if I wanted to go with them to the beach tonight after church and have some beer and maybe get that new stuff that the kids at

school were talking about. I don't feel right about it, but I'm sure not going to be the dud and stay home when everyone is cruising town or going to the beach on Sunday night. . . .''

It's not easy being a Protestant Reformed Christian in 1986.

Being Reformed in Godliness
I. The Basic Idea
II. The Particular Walk
III. The Urgency of That Walk

I. THE BASIC IDEA

Tradition, according to the dictionary, and according to Scripture, is what has been handed down from parents to children, from generation to generation. We speak of traditional things in many different ways. Traditional thanksgiving dinner; styles, that is, styles that have been around a long time; traditional furniture that looks the same as it did years ago; traditional weddings, with no frills and fancy additions. Your tradition at home might be to read the Bible after dinner each meal, end the reading with some questions, sing some Psalms, and then close with prayer. And maybe you do that because it has become a tradition for you.

Often, when we speak of Biblical tradition, we mean what the **church** has done and believed for many, many years, the teachings and practices that have been handed down from generation to generation. Biblical tradition, as we speak of it now, is the passing down from father to son, from mother to daughter, from grandparents to grandchildren, from church generation to church generation, the truths and practices that THEY have learned.

There are two extremes when we speak of traditions. On the one hand, there are those who follow nothing but tradition. The Roman Catholics pride themselves on tradition. There are certain dogmas that have been handed down from the church fathers that the RCC holds to tenaciously. The RCC teaches as tradition that Mary was immaculately conceived; born without sin; therefore, must be prayed to and worshipped. And these doctrines and practices have been handed down for centuries, from parents to children, from pope to pope, in basically their same form today as they did 1000 years ago.

It was the Reformers who did away with all that extraneous baggage. God raised up men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and others, to see that the traditions of the church in which they lived needed to be done away with. No longer should they go along with the tradition of worshipping Mary; no longer ought they teach the people that they could buy their way, or the way of their friends, out of purgatory - even that there was such a thing - or into heaven.

On the other hand, others want nothing to do with tradition. This is the way of the current church world. You don't have to read much today to know that the traditions of the church are being thrown out the window as fast as possible. If you read the church magazines today, you will read statements like this: ''we ought to get rid of that hideous acronym 'TULIP';'' ''we need to throw out the Reformed doctrines that have become so old and stale, and replace them with new, current, progressive doctrines that keep up with the times.'' There is a sentiment today to brush aside, with one mighty sweep, all that the church

has built up through the ages, and replace it with doctrines and practices of today's theologians (who are so much more learned than the ancients). Nothing is respected anymore; nothing is held favorable; all is thrown out. If the reformers could do it, we also ought to get rid of the baggage that is holding us back from uniting all the churches today under one roof."

We need to hear what Scripture says about traditions. There are two different kinds of traditions mentioned in the Bible. In Matt. 15:2, 3, 6, we read of the kind of tradition that the Christian ought to get rid of. The Lord there was approached by the Pharisees who asked why His disciples did not wash their hands before eating. The Lord responded with a question to them, "Why do you transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" The Pharisees had **added** to the commandments of the Lord with their own teachings and, in fact, contradicted them. Those were traditions that needed to be thrown out. In Colossians 2:8 the traditions of men are called "philosophy and vain deceit" and "the rudiments of this world." So there are some traditions of which the Bible does not approve.

But there are other texts, such as ours, which tell us that we must hold fast to the traditions. In I Cor. 11:2 the apostle Paul admonishes the saints to hold to the **ordinances** which he delivered to them; in the original, "traditions." And in the chapter following our text (3:6), the apostle again tells us to withdraw from those who do not hold the tradition which we received from him.

There are, therefore, traditions we must get rid of, and traditions we must cling to. The ones we must rid ourselves of are those that hinder us from worshipping the Lord in spirit and in truth, those contrary to the commandments of God. The ones we must hold to with all our might and main are those after the teachings of the Lord and the apostles - those delivered to you by word or by epistle.

We, as Protestant Reformed, have traditions. Our traditions are not first of all the teachings and practices of Danhof, Hoeksema, Ophoff, Vos, and others. They are not even the teachings and practices of Calvin and Luther and Ursinus, Oliveanus, and Guido De Bres. But our traditions are the truths of Scripture, the doctrines and way of life, taught in the Word of God, and transmitted **through the ages** from generation to generation, down to the present.

Thus, our traditions are not merely the Bible itself. Now, right away we have to be careful how we say that. Everyone has the Bible. Antichrist will claim to teach what the Bible teaches, but obviously will be a heretic of the first order. Our traditions are what we have in the Bible interpreted by the fathers in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dordt. These are traditions we hold because they are the fruit of the Spirit of Christ in the church - the Spirit promised to the disciples to lead them into the truths of the word, the truths of Scripture itself! These confessions are what the Spirit has taught the Scripture to mean, over against the heresies of doctrine and practice that were taught in the church at the time they were written.

II. THE PARTICULAR WALK IN GODLINESS

Now, we are talking not about

traditions in doctrine, but traditions in how we live and walk in this world.

Basically, the reformed tradition is a godly, biblical walk. That is simple. Our calling is to hold to the walk presented in the Bible. We walk as commanded in the 10 commandments of the Lord. But the matter is not that simple. Just as in matters of doctrine, everyone holds to the Bible and says, "What we believe is what the Bible teaches. . ." so also in matters of walk, everyone says what he practices is what the Bible teaches. Just one example is that problem of dance. Those who promote dance as a legitimate practice for Christians base their position on the Bible.

So we need the Bible, but the Bible **as it has been interpreted for us by the spirit of truth in the church of the past.**

More specifically, then, the Reformed tradition is the **antithetical** walk and life. At the risk of being too simple, you can put it this way. The antithesis does not mean that we run from the world. It does not mean that we have nothing to do with the world. It does not mean that we have to live all by ourselves in a little corner of the city or country. It means that we live in the world. It means that we use the good things God gave us in the world. But in the world, we fight against all that opposes God, and promote all that promotes and glorifies God. To put it very simply, the antithesis means saying "NNNOOOO" to everything evil. And saying "YYEESSS" to everything good and upright.

To use an example, look in your Bibles to Genesis 2:15-17. God created the Christian life - the antithetical life - already in the garden of Eden. God commanded Adam and Eve: Say "NOOOOO" to the tree of knowledge. Say "YESSSS" to the tree of life. And that command to live the antithesis remains with us today. There is in our lives, in the lives of Reformed - that is, Biblical Christians - a sharp line of distinction. We live on a battle field. We say "NO" to the lie. We say "YES" to the truth.

Some of you young people from Redlands know Mr. Thys Feenstra. There is one things that he taught us that sticks in my mind from all the years he taught us Sunday School. He taught us our reformed heritage **in the antithesis**. And in his old Dutch brogue he would say, "and don't forget the **"antitaysis."**

We reformed, and Protestant Reformed Christians, say "no" to dancing, say "no" to movie attendance, say "no" to doing our own pleasure on the Lord's Day, say "no" to gambling, say "no" to drunkenness, "no" to drugs that warp the mind. That is our heritage in godliness.

It is quite significant that the convention schedule does not say (as it could) "Tuesday night, showing of **TOP GUN** - the current top box office hit." It's significant that the program does not announce, "Bingo to be played after the morning discussion groups." It's significant that the program does not say "Immediately after the banquet speech there will be a farewell dance for all conventioneers and their dates."

Why not? Because that's our heritage! And that ought to be a pretty strong reason why not. The second answer is: Because that's Biblical.

We say no to dancing. Why?

First, because it is usually done in a bad environment, with bad companions, and with bad, bad music. I don't need to demonstrate that to you. To

argue that would be the obvious. "But," you say, "what if we did it with **good** companions, and in a **good** environment, and with **good** music?"

Then the second reason why dancing has always been against reformed tradition must be sounded. This is fundamental. Dancing is a violation of the 7th commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Simply speaking, when we dance the way 99% of people dance in this country, we commit adultery in our heart. And the catechism interprets the 7th commandment for us as meaning that God prohibits everything that can entice you and me to impure actions as well as thoughts.

You say, "I can dance without commiting adultery"? Then I would like to read to you this statement one man wrote: "The man who says that dance does not stir his lower passions is either telling a lie or is physically abnormal and unfit." You take sex out of dancing, and no one wants to dance.

We say, "No" to movie attendance. Why?

First, because 95% of the movies today are nothing but trash, immoral, ungodly, filthy, cesspools of dung. Even the psychologists of the world are crying out against all the trash on television and at the box office, showing conclusively that it is worse than worthless. And we, in our foolishness sometimes, try to convince ourselves what even worldly men say is bad is not bad.

But there is a reason why the church has always condemned movie attendance, and why movies have always been the foul medium that they are: acting out the life of another is not a proper form of entertainment for the child of God. Why not? First, because God made us as individuals, each person a distinct personality, and calls us to develop that personality, not that of another. God created Barry Gritters and called him to develop as Barry Gritters. Second, when you think of what we are, and what we should be, then you will understand that life is too serious than to take on and play the part of another person. We are called to be imitators of God. We are called to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. And third, sin is too serious for a child of God than to act out the sins of another person. No child of God may imitate another sinning. No child of God may play murder, or imitate adultery, or swearing, or taking God's name in vain. And how can one act without acting sin: Life is too serious for that kind of playing.

I have written for my catechism students a one page paper in outline form on movie attendance, giving in more detail the reasons given above. If anyone would like a copy of it for study or discussion, I would be glad to send them one.)

These are the historical positions of the church, of the reformed churches.

I wish I had the time to read to you the quotations from writers, both reformed and non-reformed, about this subject. I refer you to a book written by Rev. William Masselink called **I and the Children Thou Hast Given Me** (not a very valuable book, really, except for the quotations in it). Written by a minister of the CRC and based on his sermons preached before 1931, it shows that both Christians and non-Christians stood aghast at the corruption of, and the powerful influence that drama exercised over those who watched it. And it shows from history

that not only Christian Reformed, but the Presbyterians - English, Scotch, Irish, and others - Methodists, Baptists and more, all outrightly condemned dancing and drama as improper methods of entertainemnt for the Christian.

The Synod of the CRC in 1928 did this too. In the strongest possible language, it pleaded with elders and ministers, professors and Bible teachers, to warn the young people about the dangers of movie attendance, and dancing, and even advised consistories to refuse the confession of faith of those young people who continued in this kind of walk.

Now, you ask: "Why is there such change???" Is it because the church has become more mature and spiritual? Is it because the church has gained better understanding of the Biblical teaching about these matters and the Biblical principles behind them? Or because better exegesis has been done? Don't believe it, friends. Look at the text you've chosen for a theme. It's because the day of Christ is at hand (vs 2), there is a falling away from the faith (vs 3), the mystery of iniquity is already working (vs 7), and because they would rather have pleasure in unrighteousness than believe the truth (vs 12). That explains the change today in **much** of the church world.

They laugh and jeer at us because we are oddballs, narrow-minded as could be? Yet little do they realize (or do they?) that less than 20 years ago it was the official stand of the church that these things were prohibited. We haven't changed in our stance, they have. We haven't become oddballs. Others have taken a different stand for the life of the Christian.

It was important for me to know, when I was your age - not too long ago - that when I had to tell my friends that I couldn't dance, that I didn't attend shows, that I ought not gamble, (and I wasn't perfect in these things) that this was the position that the church had always taken; that we weren't oddballs, strange religious fanatics that were so radically straight, but were simply following our reformed heritage in godliness.

We also have the calling to a positive, godly walk, full of good works.

I'm glad to see our conventions emphasizing the positive. Conventions nurture godliness—reformed godliness. Godly entertainment, good Christian fellowship, healthy discussions. That's important.

This is the life of a godly, Protestant Reformed Christian: We say "yes" to a good game of ball to get some exercise, say "yes" to devotions early in the morning, say "yes" to Young People's attendance, "yes" to faithful attending of God's Word. And when we get home, it's the same: Walk with the saints; help the poor and the weak; be examples to the young. You see, when you do these things, the Lord gives strength to fight against the temptations to dance, to drink, to take drugs, to walk a sinful life.

III. THE URGENCY

There is a great temptation to conform to the walk and life of the world. There is temptation because of peer pressure—all my friends want me to do it; a temptation because my own sinful flesh that I have to live with lures me and drags me along.

There is a great danger in conforming to the walk and life of the world. That danger is brought out in your theme text. The end draws near and times will become worse. The

general context of the book is describing what things will be like when the end draws near. In his last epistle to them, the apostle had told the saints at Thessalonica about the return of Christ. And the response to that was an unreasonable fear. They were shaken in mind and spirit, fearful, terrified. Some of them were so sure that Christ was going to return any day that they refused to work and merely sat down on the mountain tops, waiting for the final coming. They made themselves bothers to those who would work.

In this letter, the apostle corrects their foolish thinking. "Don't forget," he says, "that before that day comes, certain things must happen." There will be a great falling away from the faith, a terrible apostacy such as you never would have believed possible. The wicked one, the son of perdition, the antichrist is going to be established. He will oppose and exalt himself against all that is called God. He will sit in the temple of God, and call himself God. His coming is after the working of Satan. There will be all power and signs and miracles and lying wonders, deceiving with unrighteousness. And you, believers, will have to live through that!!

Therefore, stand fast, hold the tradition. Hang on to them with all your might, because the evil one comes who will try to take them away from you. Hold fast, because the mystery of iniquity is already working, and the antichristian principles are now established in part. Hold to them, because there will be a great falling away, and the temptation will be to go along with those who get rid of tradition.

You are going to be alone in this world. The rest of the church world is going to be calling you a fool, an old fashioned ninny because you hang on with dear life to those antiquated doctrines and practices of the reformation. So, hold fast that no man take your crown!

But why is it **so** urgent? It is in the second place because it has to do with our salvation. You will notice that the theme text of the convention begins with the word, "therefore." The apostle says, I have just told you something which gives weight to this command. So you better stand fast and hold the traditions you have been taught. And what is it that makes it important to hold them? Your very salvation itself. God saves us. But he saves us THROUGH two things. Faith and Sanctification. Believing truth and walking truth. Orthodoxy (straight doctrine) and orthopraxy (straight practice). Paul says not, "God has chosen us to salvation, therefore, sit back and be lazy." But he says, "God has chosen us to salvation through sanctification and belief in the truth. Therefore, stand fast in that sanctification and faith. Work!!"

God brings us to the end of our election in the way of godliness and belief of the truth. And where do Protestant Reformed young people know the guidelines for both? OUR REFORMED TRADITION!!

"Sorry, Dad and Mom, that I didn't like to hear about what the church of the past did, that I didn't appreciate the guidance of the Spirit in the church. Sorry, that I didn't appreciate your instruction.

"Thanks, Dad and Mom. Thanks, young people's leaders. Thanks, pastors. Thanks for teaching us the reformed heritage, not only in truth, but also in godliness.

"Thanks, Lord, for the Re-

formed Heritage that we have. Preserve it in us, and through us. And if we are preserved that we can have children someday, help us maintain that heritage with our children."

CONVENTION THOUGHTS

by Dorothy Doezema

When asked to write about whether or not I thought it was a good idea for the 1986 Convention to have separate activities for the older young people, I wasn't so sure I was the person to ask. Yes, I agreed to go to the Convention, but, to be honest with you, I didn't have a very positive attitude towards the whole thing. I really wasn't that enthused about going because it had been about five or six years since I had last attended a convention. But, since I agreed to write about it, I will try to portray some of my impressions of this first ever convention to separate the older young people from the younger ones.

First of all, one positive aspect of this convention was that the different activities made it possible for one to meet more people his own age. Even though these activities were few in number, they definitely encouraged us to feel more united as a group. In past conventions, it was so easy just to say an occasional "Hi" and then continue on in our own separate ways. These special activities of this convention definitely helped us become more group conscious and encouraged friendliness among each other.

Another positive aspect was that the discussion groups were also separated into the two age groups. By doing this, participation was enhanced among us, as older young people, because we felt more free to talk and express our own feelings and thoughts. It was easy to relate to each other and to talk about ways in which we, as older young adults, could improve our participation in our own church activities, whether they be spiritual or just fun related ones. Furthermore, a more enthusiastic discussion could take place in the younger group. Since they could not depend on the older ones to do all the talking, they, personally, could become more involved in their discussions and grow more and more in the understanding of their faith.

Lastly, a possible negative aspect of the separate age groups could be that the younger group might feel deprived of the more mature opinions of the older people in the discussion groups. And, to this, my reply is that there were many capable leaders at each of the discussion groups to help give them proper guidance. Also, there were plenty of times and circumstances, outside of the planned special activities for each group, where we could be together as a whole convention group. And so, in looking back at the 1986 convention, I was favorably impressed with all the efforts put forth to encourage more of the older young people to attend our conventions.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

by Allen J. Brummel

The topic of friendship was introduced by Rev. Van Overloop in the 3rd discussion group of the 1986 Convention. He used David and Jonathan as examples of an ideal relationship. In I Sam. 20:16ff we read of the covenant of friendship that was established between them, and later in the same chapter, verses 41 & 42 we read of the final meeting of these two friends.

God created man after his own image, therefore man is a social being who is able to have communion with others. Through the covenant a relationship of friendship is established between God and us. Rev. Van Overloop stressed the importance of this relation being based on friendship. If we have a relationship of friendship with God, we will also have this same relationship with each other. Because of this we should be the most friendly people around. It is our duty to reflect this relationship of God, therefore we must communicate with those who we can see are lonely, and be friends with them just as God was pleased to accept us as his friendservants.

We also discussed the value of close friendships of the same sex. We must be friends with all believers, but some people are closer to us than others because we have more in common with them. Everyone needs a friend with whom they can discuss their problems and also their joys. To establish this type of friendship you need to know a lot about each other, which takes time. Also it is imperative that we all be friendly if we desire to gain this type of friend, or any friends at all as Proverbs 18:24 teaches.

The possibility of establishing close friendships with ungodly people was also brought up. Based on Amos 3:3, "can two walk together, except they be agreed?" we decided that we can not be close friends but still must be friendly to the ungodly.

Everyone can experience loneliness, even those with many friends, but we must see how much better we have it than the wicked, because we always have God as our friend; and he is a better friend than any person could ever be.

THOUGHT FOR CONTEMPLATION

". . . these are the main factors which have led to the present state of confused doctrine. Expository preaching has so declined over the past 150 years as to be almost extinct in so-called Evangelicalism, and if one begins to speak of Systematic Theology most Christians today look blank. History alone will prove the point that when the Scriptures are expounded in all their fulness the Church is strong. . .but when the ministry becomes weak and patchy, and large sections of the Word of God are never studied, and doctrine is abandoned, then will the people of God become stunted, deficient and weak: prone to any and every error, with consequent confusion."

-W. H. Molland in **The Link**, a magazine from England.

Convention Speech:
IN COMFORT

by Rev. James Slopsema

OUR NEED FOR COMFORT

Tonight we will speak about comfort. You may ask, "Why speak about comfort at a Young People's Convention?" When we think of those who need to be comforted we usually think of old people who are feeble, sickly, suffering pain and perhaps facing death. We think of families who have lost a loved one in death. We think of the poor who are starving. These things, however, are quite far removed from most young people today. Why then speak about comfort at a Young People's Convention?

Perhaps we ought to understand what is meant by comfort. To comfort means to give strength, courage and hope to someone who is experiencing problems in his life. It presupposes that things are not going well. Circumstances have arisen that are causing frustration, misery, fear, depression, perhaps even despair. In this situation someone is comforted when he is given courage to face the present and hope for the future so that he is able to find peace and contentment in the face of his problems.

If we understand comfort in that sense, it certainly can be said that young people need comfort. It's not so easy today being a teenager. Young people face many problems in life which cause a great deal of anxiety, depression and even suicide. Suicide among teens in our country has risen to an alarming rate. All this tells us very clearly that especially young people need to be comforted.

Let's talk about some of the difficulties young people in our Protestant Reformed Churches face today and for which they need to find comfort.

Young people often have difficulties with their parents. Young people frequently disagree with their parents on what they may do, where they may go, the responsibilities they must shoulder at home, who and when they may date, whether there will be a curfew and so on. With these and other matters it seems so often to young people that their parents are really out of touch with reality. Their parents just don't understand how it is anymore. Besides that, young people often come to the conclusion that their parents are unreasonable, don't trust them and really don't even care for them. But the trouble is that the word of the parents is law. The 5th commandment even requires that children honor their parents. And so young people often feel trapped. They don't know where to turn. Sometimes they even feel desparate. And it doesn't help one bit when they are told that their parents are wiser and more experienced than they and that one day they too will see the wisdom of all that their parents say and require.

Dating and finding a marriage partner can also create great anxiety for young people. Almost every young person desires to date and eventually to marry. This however is often a very difficult and painful process. There are girls, for example, who want to date and find a marriage partner, but no one ever asks them. And there are boys who desire the same thing but don't have the courage to ask a girl. For those who are dating there are also many problems. Dating can often be an up and down sort of thing. Young men and women soon find that there are a host of things that can threaten a relationship they have cultivated with someone of the opposite sex. And this causes a great deal of anxiety. And then there is the shattering experience of breaking up with someone whom you have dated for some time.

For many young people there is also the problem of finding work. Work is very difficult to find in small town America. To find work many young people have been required to leave their family and friends behind and move to a larger city where work is available. This isn't very pleasant and often filled with anxious moments. In turn, many young people feel it necessary to continue their schooling past high school to find a job that will support them and their family in the future. As anyone who has attended college knows, there are many pressures for young people as they pursue this advanced training.

All young people find it very difficult to live a godly life in our society. A godly life requires a great deal of sacrifice. Every young person knows from bitter experience that if he will walk according to all the commandments of God, there are many who will mock him and avoid him. These may include those with whom he works. They may be his classmates at school. They may even be those who go to church with him. But the simple fact of the matter is that the young person who lives according to the will of God will find he has only a small circle of friends. The vast majority of his peers will reject him. And that's often devastating, especially for young people.

All these and many other things bring a great deal of anxiety and distress to young people, also to covenant young people of the Protestant Reformed Churches in 1986, so that they need to be comforted.

THE REFORMED VIEW OF COMFORT

The theme of the convention indicates that when we need to be comforted we ought to turn to those things that our Reformed fathers turned in time of need to find their comfort. Our convention theme is "Being Reformed in 1986: Heritage and Calling". The term "heritage" refers to something of value that is passed down from generation to generation. The very theme of this convention, therefore, requires that at this point we go back to the Reformed fathers to see what they had to say about comfort and how they found comfort in the time of need.

We will find what the Reformed fathers had to say about comfort in the Heidelberg Catechism. Certainly the Heidelberg Catechism is part of our heritage. It was written during the Reformation to teach the Reformed faith to those who lived in Germany. With the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dordt, the Catechism has become a creed of the Reformed

tradition.

The theme of the Heidelberg Catechism is the Christian's comfort. This is evident from the first Lord's Day of the Catechism which asks, "What is thy only comfort in life and death?" The Catechism develops the whole of the truth of God's Word from the viewpoint of the comfort it provides the Christian. And it's rather striking that the original purpose of the Catechism was to instruct the youth in the Reformed faith and provided them with comfort. If, therefore, we will find what our Reformed fathers said about comfort and what they instructed the young people of their own day about comfort, we must turn to the Heidelberg Catechism.

The Catechism teaches that the Christian's comfort is that we are not our own but belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

The knowledge that we belong to Jesus Christ is of great comfort for especially three reasons.

First, if we know that we belong to Jesus, then we also know that one day Jesus will bring us to eternal life in heaven. The Bible speaks a great deal of the life eternal that is coming for the Christian. We are told, for example, that in this future life there will be no suffering and no tears. None of the sufferings and disappointments of our present life will be found in this future life. What a tremendous source of comfort that is! For this means that the sufferings of this present life will not last forever. There is an end to our sufferings. And if we compare the few years of our life on earth with the endless ages of eternity, then the time of our suffering is only a very small part of our total existence. We will suffer for only a short time, and then we will be delivered eternally to a new life.

But, secondly, the Heidelberg Catechism points out from Scripture that this future life that Jesus will provide is so wonderful that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared to it (Romans 8:18). This future life will be a life of blissful fellowship with the living God such as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive. When we who belong to Jesus open our eyes in heaven we will proclaim that the sufferings of this present time were certainly worth all the sufferings necessary to attain heaven's glory.

Finally, the Catechism points out from the Scriptures that Christ makes all the sufferings of this present life to work for this future glory. It's not true that Christ somehow brings us to heaven in spite of the difficulties with which we struggle here on earth. It's not true, for example, that somehow Christ brings us to heaven's glory in spite of the friction young people have with parents, in spite of the anxiety of dating, in spite of the reproach suffered for Christ's sake. No! Christ brings us to glory not in spite of all these, but exactly through them. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God . . . ." (Romans 8:28) The viewpoint of the Bible and the Catechism is that our earthly life is merely a preparation for future glory. In this life we are being prepared by Christ for our future life in heaven. And Christ even uses the sufferings of this present life to prepare us for this heavenly life. What a comfort that is when we face problems in life!

This is the heritage we have received from our Reformed fathers as

they searched the Scriptures to find comfort in the time of need.

OUR CALLING TO SEEK THIS COMFORT

It is the calling of God's people, also as young people, to find their comfort in the fact that they belong to Jesus.

This will become clear if we consider the alternative. In finding comfort there are basically only two alternatives. The first alternative is the viewpoint of the Heidelberg Catechism, which is to take a heavenly minded approach. We find our comfort in the fact that a better life awaits us in heaven and that all tings, even the sufferings of this life, work together to bring us to that future glory. The other alternative is to take an earthly minded approach. Then we are comforted by the fact that in spite of our present problems we still can or soon will enjoy the things of this present life.

Let's consider for a few minutes this earthly minded approach to finding comfort.

Those taking the earthly minded approach find comfort, for example, in the fact that in spite of the things they suffered, there are still many things in life that they can really enjoy. Yes, it's true that things are bad at home. And, yes, I've lost my girlfriend. And school isn't going so well. But it's not all bad. There are many things that I still have and can enjoy. I have a good job. And I have a new car and lots of friends. I guess life isn't so bad. Let's look on the bright side of things. That will help me get through the problems I face.

Those taking the earthly minded approach also find comfort in the fact that life is bound to get better. Yes, things aren't going well at home with my parents: but in a couple of years I'll be able to move out and be on my own. Then I'll be able to do what I want. And, yes, I lost my girlfriend; but she isn't the only fish in the pond. I'll find someone else. If I just keep these things in mind, it sure helps to get through the day. Things are definitely going to get better.

Closely connected to this is to find one's comfort by escaping the problems of life. Almost everything a person enjoys can be used as an escape from the problems of life. Rather than face up to their problems many simply run from their problems by turning to the things they enjoy in life. As long as they are enjoying their pastimes they can enter a world where they are free from problems. When faced with problems they are comforted by the fact that they have this escape and soon will be able to leave their problems behind for a few hours. People use sports for this purpose. They also use music, often ungodly music which arouses evil thoughts and passions. They use partying and dancing. And perhaps the most devastating of all escapes are alcohol and drugs.

There is something drastically wrong with this approach to things.

Certainly we don't need to point out the wrong of finding one's comfort in the pleasures of sin — in drugs and alcohol, in ungodly music and wild parties. These things are clearly forbidden by God. We may not engage in these sorts of things; nor may we find our comfort in the prospect of enjoying them.

But apart from the matter of enjoying the pleasures of sin, there is the problem of earthly mindedness in the approach we have just described. We must understand that even though the things of this earth are not sinful as

such, it certainly is sinful to set our heart on them, to make earthly things the all important things in life. We are told in Colossians 3:1&2, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth". This Word of God and others like it are simply ignored by the person who finds his comfort in the fact that in spite of the problems of life he still can or soon will enjoy the things of this present life. The person who takes this approach has sinfully made the things of this earth all important. The things of this earth are even more important to him than the things above in heaven.

In harmony with the requirement of Scripture that heavenly and spiritual things must be first in our lives, we must find our comfort in the fact that we belong to Jesus Who makes all the problems in life work for our spiritual welfare and eternal glory in heaven. If this is our approach then when there is friction at home with our parents, our comfort will be that our faithful Savior Jesus Christ, Who is all-wise, has given us our parents and is even using what appears to us to be utter folly on their part to prepare us for a life of service in this life and eternal glory in heaven. And when we face disappointments in dating and courtship our comfort will be that Jesus, our faithful Savior, has determined whether we will marry or remain single. But in either instance He will give us a life of joy in the service of His name. And if it is the Lord's will that we marry, He will give us the right mate in His own time so that all things work together for our eternal good. And when we lose friends because of a godly walk, our comfort will be that Jesus, our faithful Savior, has promised to reward us a hundredfold for all that we have sacrificed to serve Him.

This is being Reformed in 1986!

In seeking comfort as young people, this is the heritage our Reformed fathers have given to us.

It is our calling before God to take hold of this heritage so that we find our comfort in the fact that we belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

Doing this we will find peace and joy throughout our entire life here below. And we will be well pleasing to our Father in heaven Who has saved us through Jesus, His Son.

Grant Almighty God, that as Thou deignest so far to condescend as to sustain the care of this life, and to supply us with whatever is needful for our pilgrimage, — O grant that we may learn also to rely on Thee and so trust to Thy blessing as to abstain not only from all plunder and all other evil deeds, but also from every unlawful coveting; and to continue in Thy fear, and so to learn also to bear our poverty on the earth, that being content with those spiritual riches, which Thou revealest to us in Thy Gospel, and of which Thou makest us now partakers, we may ever cheerfully aspire after that fullness of all blessings, which we shall enjoy when at length we shall reach the celestial kingdom and be perfectly united to Thee through Christ our Lord. Amen.

John Calvin

Convention Speech Synopsis

by Cheryl Bleyenberg

To be Reformed means that we have to live our faith in truth and godliness. A person can not have the comfort of the Gospel unless he has the truth.

What is Reformed faith? The Reformed faith is expressed in our Reformed creeds which are the three forms of unity, The Heidelberg Catechism, The Belgic Confession, and The Canons of Dordt. These creeds express to us what our Reformed faith is.

What is the specific content of the Reformed faith and creeds? It is the doctrine of the covenant which is a bond of friendship with believers and their children which is passed down from generation to generation. God has chosen in the beginning of time those whom He has loved, those whom He has hated, those whom He has saved, and those whom He has reprobated unto damnation because of their sin.

What does it mean to be confessionally Reformed? It means that we receive the creeds as a binding statement of the truth and the preaching of the word. If we want to be Reformed then we have to fight for the truth. Many of our fathers and grandfathers in 1924 were knocked out of the Christian Reformed Church because of their faith. Also there were many congregations that left us in 1953 because of the false doctrine and heresy they wanted to bring into the church. Many of these men wanted to bring into the church that which was not Biblical or creedal so instead of forgiving their sins they left the church. This is the price that was paid.

The Reformed faith is that truth of Scripture. Today very few people in the Reformed churches will dare to say that the Reformed faith is the truth of Scripture.

To be Reformed in 1986 is very bold because we don't want to be anything else. We believe that God requires of us to be Reformed. The Reformed faith is the only Biblical faith. Many men today do not want to say that the Bible is infallible.

We want to make sure that we do not betray the truth of Scripture and the Reformed faith. We must be thankful for having been baptized in the church, trained in our own schools, and born in Reformed homes. Many of us take this for granted instead of being thankful for this. All of us are totally undeserving of these blessings, but God has with His grace blessed us with these homes.

A heritage is the truth that is handed down from generation to generation with great care and concern. Our heritage is bought with the price of blood. Many Reformed fathers suffered their lives for the sake of the truth. Many of us may forget the price that our Reformed fathers paid, and if we do then we won't count dear what they died for and also lived for. Many congregations had to start from the beginning because they paid the price.

In 1986 we look for fruits in the mission fields. Many of the people do not like us. We remain small in number and unnoticed. But the Lord will bring

those whom He has chosen to the truth.

We must also remember that the church is always victorious no matter what happens. The Reformed faith is glorious because it alone is Scriptural. It gives all the honor and glory to God and also because it teaches us that our righteousness is in Christ alone and it gives God's people comfort. The Reformed faith tells us that we must find our salvation in Christ alone and that He is our righteousness. The glory in the Reformed faith is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our calling is to learn the Reformed faith and to know it so that we might be willing and able to pay the price. This is our calling.

Our calling is to love the truth and also to learn and know the truth. We must do this in praise and thankfulness to God.

We confess with the church of all ages;
The Lord is my refuge and stay.
He shall cover us with His feathers
To keep us in all our way.

Jehovah, our God, has provided
An infinite measure of grace
To sustain in this time of trial,
As we prayerfully seek His face.

But even more does He give us
Through the believers' hands and hearts.
Your care and concern deeply touch us.
Our Thanks we gratefully impart.

Through your loving gifts and donations
We experience communion of saints.
Overwhelmed by God's lovingkindness
We have no want or complaint.

The John Kalsbeek Family

Love in the creature ever presupposeth some good, true or apparent in the thing loved, by which the affection of union is drawn. But the love of God on the contrary, causeth all good to be produced in the creature. He first loveth us in the free purpose of His Will, and thence worketh good for us and in us. And hence come the unchangeableness of God's love towards us, because it is founded in Himself, and in the stableness of the good pleasure of His own Will. And although we may be comforted as we observe our love to Him; yet it is far greater comfort drawn from the consideration of His love to us; as being not only the ground of the other, but in Him also infinite, and unchangeable. And, hereupon, it was that the sisters of Lazarus seeking help for their sick brother sent Christ word, not that he, who loved Him, but that "he whom He loved, was sick."

John Robinson