

THE 1969 P. R. YOUNG PEOPLES CONVENTION

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Plans for the 1969 Protestant Reformed Young People's convention started almost before the 1968 convention ended. Our people in Redlands started working right away. Soon the other churches started raising money for part of the conventioners' expenses. The pre-convention projects themselves set up an atmosphere of togetherness and promoted unity among us young people. Although the anticipation was great, the actual event was greater.

For many of us, the "event" started early Wednesday morning, on the thirteenth of August. We were driven to Chicago's O'Hare Airport by parents or friends. At about 11:00 AM, we boarded the chartered plane, a Boeing 707 jet. About half an hour later we took off, accompanied by the prayers of our relatives and friends.

En route we were served a delicious meal while we enjoyed the scenery. Flying over the states took a good three hours and twenty minutes. We were welcomed in Ontario International Airport by members of the Redlands society and other conventioners who had driven to California. Indeed, the welcome was warm in more ways than one, but the 116 degree heat wasn't foremost in our minds as we waited for our luggage.

After placing our luggage near the waiting campers, we boarded busses for the ride to Redlands. Once in Redlands, we rode to Sylvan Park, where we registered and received lodging assignments. (I don't know how the lady in charge of lodging got us all situated so fast!) After punch and cookies, we left for our new homes.

Late in the afternoon we conventioners were brought to Hidden Valley, a small resort with a very cooling lake.

The next morning we went to Redlands Protestant Reformed Church for a business meeting. At this meeting, dues were again set at ten dollars per member. The *Beacon Lights* staff was given a set quorum and the Hudsonville society was split into Junior and Senior societies. At that time, a lot of the P.R.Y.P. Federation's constitution was revised for the sake of better wording.

A new federation board office was created, that of "Youth Coordinator". He is a lay member of one of our churches who works with the young people more closely than our advisors have time for. However, we still do have advisors and their role isn't decreased.

The suggested rearrangement of the finance section brought the most fireworks on the convention floor. The wording is now changed to be very precise about expenses of the board, particularly about convention traveling expenses.

I suspect that now the individual societies will take a more active interest in federation affairs. Maybe now we'll all realize that this is our federation. It can't exist without us, and we do have a voice in its activities. Unfortunately, "the voices" meet only once a year, so if your society feels that something should be done, the business meeting is the time to air your thoughts. Please remember that the executive board would like to know of any business you have by June, so that it can be printed on the agenda for the next convention. However, business meetings are opened to new business every now and then during the meetings.

Anyway, after our first business meeting adjourned, we walked to Sylvan Park for lunch, games and discussion groups. The main topic of discussion was "The Christian and Politics". Some subtopics were: A possible Christian Party, Women Voting and Conscientious Objectors.

After a supper at our respective homes, the theme of the convention, "The Greatest of These" (I Corinthians 13), began to take shape. Reverend Heys spoke at the first mass meeting

on the topic of "Love, The Greatest Virtue." He explained various aspects of love, but still left plenty of room for the other speakers. His speech is printed in this issue.

The next day, Friday, we rode busses to Jenx Lake, which is about six miles above sea level in the mountains just outside of Redlands. After lunch we again split up into discussion groups. This time the general topic was "Dating". We shared our ideas on such things as double dating, going steady, petting, mixed marriages and more related subjects.

That night we had our convention picture taken and went to another mass meeting. Reverend Decker spoke to us on the topic of "Love, The Strongest Bond". This speech is also printed in this issue.

Then came Saturday, the day about which we had been warned. Saturday was the day to visit the Pacific (so named on account of its peaceful waters?). The number one thing to beware of was the sun. We were told to have plenty of suntan lotion and to cover up every now and then. The second item, just as important as the first, was to beware of the rip-tides. I never found out for sure what a rip-tide was, but I did keep an eye out for extra-huge waves. One unscheduled event kept us occupied there at Huntington City Park. That was a group of hippies gathered to give their personal testimonies of their new lives in Christ to anyone who would listen. They wouldn't let any of us conventioners tell them of our religion. They just talked about theirs and wouldn't let us get a word in edgewise. Apparently we shouldn't have tried, because even our ministers stayed out of any prospective discussions.

Sunday morning services were held in the University of Redlands' chapel. Reverend Decker spoke to us about witnessing. That afternoon the P.R.Y.P. gathered at the chapel again for a panel-audience discussion about witnessing and missions. The topic of the hippies on the beach was brought up. Do we or should we testify of our faith as they did theirs? The possibility of Protestant Reformed Young People working in Jamaica was also brought up for discussion. Sunday night services were conducted by Rev. Heys, who spoke on the faith of the Syro-Phoenician woman. After church we had a hymn sing.

Monday morning started out with the traditional pancake breakfast, held at the university cafeteria. A business meeting followed, in which election of officers was held. Then we had lunch in Sylvan Park. In the annual ball games, the gals and guys of the East beat those of the West.

The banquet that night was held in the Casa Loma Room of the University under the theme "California Dreaming". Reverend Lanting spoke to us about "Love, The Highest Calling". It seemed reassuring to find that born-again Christians don't always know exactly what to do in all earthly situations. We should be concerned about our role in politics, in dating and in witnessing. His speech will be printed in our November issue, D.V.

The new officers were presented: Randy Meyer as president, Ken Kuiper as vice president, Jim VanOverloop as treasurer, Dave Lanting as vice treasurer, Linda Ekema as secretary, Rev. Kortering as advisor and Mr. Nort Brower as youth coordinator. With the singing of "God Be With You", the formal convention came to a close.

Tuesday, the nineteenth, was a "free" day. Most of the conventioners chose to visit Disneyland. We spent about eight hours in the "magic kingdom", taking various rides and buying souvenirs. After a two hour ride back to Redlands, a lot of weary conventioners stumbled back to their homes or dorm rooms.

The twentieth of August was a sad day for us. We had made a lot of friends among the Redlands people and didn't really want to leave our hosts. I'd like to thank them once again now, particularly Reverend Hanko, who tried awfully hard and made his own dream come true.

But, most of all, though, we should thank God for making this past convention a spiritual success, for we know that without Him, we can do nothing.

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