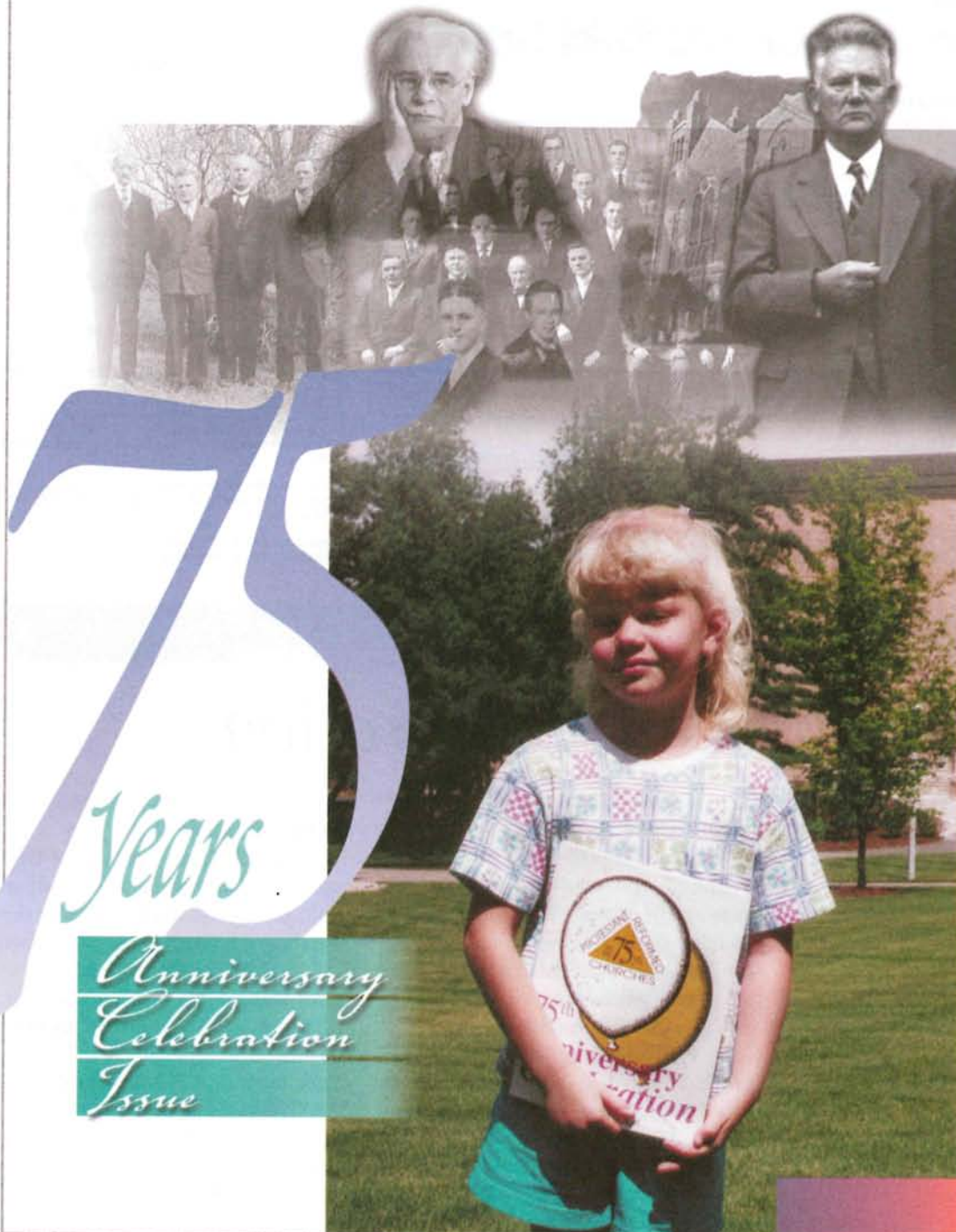


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*The Protestant Reformed Churches*

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## Editorial

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# Remembering Our Celebration

**T**he report in the Grand Rapids Press of the Protestant Reformed Churches celebration of their 75th anniversary began like this:

They don't sing flashy songs during their services and they pride themselves on being traditional and orderly. But that doesn't mean members of the Protestant Reformed Church don't know how to celebrate.

Solomon would have said, They laughed, and they danced.

The theme of the four-night, three-day celebration was Living

Out of Our Heritage, based on Psalm 16:5, 6.


Between 2,000 and 2,500 people thronged the auditorium for the evening meetings. We sang (mostly the Psalms), heard the Word, enjoyed some special musical numbers, and had sweet fellowship.

Leaving the auditorium after the first evening meeting, someone (mightily moved) was overheard to say, I would not miss this for the world. He spoke for us all.

For the benefit of those who could not attend, for the sake of posterity, and to bring back good memories to those who were there, we de-

vote this issue of the *Standard Bearer* to the celebration.

Included are the text of the four speeches (somewhat abridged); an article giving the impressions of the celebration of one of those who attended (MaryBeth Lubbers); pictures (by Don Doezeema); and a review of one of the books written in observation of the anniversary (*For Thy Truth's Sake*, by Prof. Herman Hanko).

The Lord is our inheritance. The lines have fallen to us in pleasant places. Truly, our heritage is beautiful to us. 

DJE

# Our Heritage of Bones and Stones

(Do) you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in the Old and New Testament, and in the articles of the Christian faith, and which is taught here in this Christian church to be the true and perfect (complete) doctrine of salvation?

In 1927 a 38-year-old Byron Center muck farmer and his 39-year-old wife could not answer yes to that question when it was time to have their infant daughter baptized in the Christian Reformed Church. The Lord used this stand for the truth by my grandparents to bring my family out of the Christian Reformed Church and into the Protestant Reformed Churches. Most of you here tonight could relate similar examples from your own family histories, no doubt.

This 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of our churches certainly lends itself to looking back to key events like that in our spiritual roots. And when we do, mainly two things come to mind: first, the actions of the people of God involved, our forbears, and, second, the truth that motivated them to such bold action. That, brothers and sisters and friends of the PRC, directly connects us to the general theme for this week's celebration: "Living Out of Our Heritage."

As you well know, that heritage has much to do with the covenant. In fact, if we were to iden-

tify the one thing that is most distinctive about the PRC, it would be our understanding of the truth of the covenant. When we think of the covenant, we think of our children. I believe it is fitting, therefore, that our covenant children speak tonight concerning what they have learned about our heritage from their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents. Listen, then, to our baptized children as they address us concerning the theme: "Our Heritage of Bones and Stones."

## Remembering the Bones

First of all we are here tonight to remember our heritage of bones! The bones we are to remember are the people God used to lead our churches and our families throughout the 75 years of our history. To *remember* those bones means that we do what Israel did as they carried the old bones of Joseph along with them through the wilderness, namely, they considered the faithfulness of God (who had delivered them from Egypt) and the means God used to accomplish that deliverance.

Tonight let's call to remembrance, through the lips of our children, those bones, and how the Lord used them to lead our families into the PRC and to serve the cause of the PRC these past 75 years.

\* An 11<sup>th</sup> grade student from First PRC in Grand Rapids:

While living in Washington my parents started hearing the broadcast of the Lynden PRC on the radio. This broadcast led them to our church there.

\* A 7<sup>th</sup> grader from Loveland Protestant Reformed Church:

My dad's parents were kicked out of their church in Sutton, Nebraska. As a result they moved to Loveland, Colorado, where my dad was born. Rev. Lubbers was working as a missionary there. Eventually Loveland PRC was formed from people who moved from Sutton, Nebraska to Loveland.

\* A high school junior from First PRC of Holland, Michigan:

My great great grandfather was one of three people to voice a complaint against Rev. H. Hoeksema's preaching, resulting in Rev. Hoeksema's expulsion from the CRC. His son, my grandfather, did not agree with his father, so he changed his membership to the PRC.

\* A high school junior from Georgetown PRC:

In 1928 my great grandparents, along with ten other families, organized the PRC in Holland, Michigan.

\* An 11<sup>th</sup> grader from Hudsonville PRC:

Dad discovered books in the library at Grace Bible Institute in Omaha, Nebraska marked as "dangerous books." Among them he found a book written by Herman Hoeksema, and that was the beginning of our acquaintance with the PRC.

While we are remembering the bones tonight, let's also briefly consider a few of their unique experiences, some of which are related in the book, *God's Covenant Faithfulness*, which was written to commemorate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary:

\* Hudsonville, Michigan: They needed a meeting place in their

own community, and at first Spoelman's barn was the best they could get. They tried one service a week, then two, and then knew they wanted to organize as a Protestant Reformed Church. And on July 16, 1926, the organizational meeting was held right in the barn.

\* South Holland, Illinois: Since they had decided to do janitor work by turns, those who lived in Lansing, seven or eight miles away, had a frigid five o'clock walk on winter mornings to start the stove in order to have the auditorium comfortable for the nine o'clock service.

\* Pella, Iowa: During those early years, the hardy farmers came by sleigh in the heavy Iowa snows, some as far as twelve miles. They took their dinner with them, and stayed at church to eat it, and then waited for the afternoon service. Afterward, through fading daylight, they skimmed the snow to their waiting chores.

\* Doon, Iowa: In the long, lean years of the depression, many in the congregation became discouraged. When they held a meeting to determine whether or not to continue as a congregation, it took a woman ... to say, in her Dutch accent, "Qvit? Qvit? Vat's de matter mit you?" They did not quit, thanks to that mother in Israel.

\* Redlands, California: Forty families left the Christian Reformed Church in the year 1932. They had left the CRC because they were placed under censure, accused of organized rebellion.

### Clinging to the Stones

With a degree of nostalgia we remember those bones; but our presence here tonight goes deeper, much deeper, than the bones. In fact, if the existence of the Protestant Reformed Churches were dependent upon those bones, then our accusers would have been right when they boldly said that our churches would survive only as long as our original leaders, Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Ophoff. Many of those old bones, like those of Joseph, have returned to the dust

from whence they came; but that which the bones were carrying along with them and passed on to the following generations is another story: the stones.

And what mean we by the stones? The second question of our baptism form explains: "(Do) you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in the Old and New Testament...?" That question identifies the substance, the stones, if you will, upon which the Protestant Reformed Churches stand, namely the truths or doctrines which we affirm each time a child is baptized in our midst. Those truths the bones carried with them. In fact, it's those very truths that motivated the bones to persevere even in the most trying of times. Like those bones of the past we also cling to the stones, for they are our life.

But this is nothing new, of course. The church has a history of carrying stones. Israel, the Old Testament church, literally carried the two tables of stone with them in their wanderings through the wilderness. Also, in Joshua 4 we read of the monument of stones Israel was commanded to set up upon entering the land of Canaan.

Essentially, the stones to which we cling are just like that, for they too serve as a memorial of God's everlasting faithfulness to His church as that is expressed in the truth of the Scriptures and which He by His Spirit has led His church to set forth in her creeds. The Lord in His mercy has even privileged us as Protestant Reformed Churches to develop the church's understanding of those stones, especially in the areas of God's particular grace, the doctrine of the covenant, and marriage. But there are others! Obtain and read, if you have not already done so, a copy of the latest RFPA publication, *For Thy Truth's Sake*, and consider the Lord's goodness in preserving and revealing His truth to our churches throughout the 75 years of our history.

Do we need encouragement to-

night from generations past to cling to those stones? Listen, then, and be encouraged as our baptized children lead us to see the *impact* those doctrines have had on the bones which have held those truths dear.

\* A Grandville PRC student:

My grandpa was rejected by his family, but he told them, it's a closed book, I love my wife, and the *truth* more.

\* An 8<sup>th</sup> grader from Randolph PRC, who quotes a grandparent:

The doctrine of common grace was not taught in the Protestant Reformed Churches, and a great emphasis was put upon "saved by grace alone" in the preaching. The PRC also sang only out of the Psalter.

A Church History student's answer to this test question, "Why did the people of the Secession of 1834 leave the State Church in the Netherlands?" Her answer started this way, "We seceded because..." That "we" jumps off the page at us. Here an 11<sup>th</sup> grader identifies herself with the church of the nineteenth century. No doubt keeping our promise to instruct our children "in the aforesaid doctrine" bears fruit.

This student also serves to remind us during our celebration this week that we must not be so near-sighted as to forget the broader picture, namely, the church catholic. After all, we are but a branch, and a tiny one at that, of that catholic church, other branches of which are represented in our midst here tonight. Who could have imagined 75, or even 50, years ago such a gathering of saints from around the world as we see here tonight?

Be encouraged tonight to cling to the stones out of gratitude, and not to view them as a hindrance or as burdens. The truth of the matter is this: Those doctrines make our burden in this life light. That's because our real burden is sin, and the stones we cling to bring to remembrance our complete deliverance by means of our covenant

God's sovereign, irresistible, particular grace.

### Results of Remembering Bones and Clinging to Stones

Although those doctrines should not be viewed as burdens, it is nevertheless true that the clinging to the stones and the remembering of the bones have consequences. Consider the third question of our baptism form and you will see what I mean:

"(Do) you promise and intend to see these children, when come to years of discretion, instructed...?"

When the church of Jesus Christ faithfully keeps that promise by teaching that truth to her children and by walking in accordance to the "aforesaid doctrine" she pays a price, a significant price! Our history of the past 75 years proves it. Listen once more to our children, this time concerning the price our forbears had to pay for keeping that promise:

\* A Byron Center student:

My grandparents were not allowed to partake of communion."

\* A student from First PRC in Grand Rapids:

Hardest of all was the fact that none of our extended family understood or appreciated why my parents had joined what they thought was a cult.

\* A Hull student says about his parents:

They had to move away from their home, church, parents, relatives, and friends. Also they were called radicals.

Recently two of my Church History students spoke of that price with some dismay from their own experiences. One told me that she was explaining to a fellow worker why we have our own schools, after which, she said, "He just laughed at me." The other told of someone she knew who had been warned to stay away from her because "she belongs to a cult."

Sounds familiar doesn't it?

Faithfulness to the promise to teach our children the truth and standing for it ourselves have resulted in 75 years of the same false restraints! You've heard them: The PRC thrives on controversy! The PRC is just a sect! You think you're the only ones going to heaven! You're always pointing the finger at others! Rationalists! Anabaptists! Hyper-Calvinists! So it goes. And so it will continue to go!

However, we ought not be surprised by those epithets, for what did the Lord say? The Lord said, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake" (Matt. 10:32). When the Lord's body, the church, battles for the truth, she will be hated even as the Lord was hated. The fact of the matter is, if we follow the apostle Paul's instruction in Colossians 1:24, we will rejoice in these sufferings, for we are privileged to "... fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." Imagine that, the Lord has graciously left some of His afflictions for us to bear!

Still, it hurts! It does! If it were not for the fact that the blessings far outweigh the afflictions, we would despair. Our baptized children have captured some of those blessings too. Listen one final time to our children and give thanks:

\* A Hudsonville student, quoting her grandmother:

Our entire family is Protestant Reformed. There is family unity. We have not had to live through any divorce and remarriage. It is a wonder in itself that we have five living generations of Protestant Reformed covenant children of God.

\* A Randolph student, quoting his grandmother, who in turn speaks for others of us here tonight: I have great contentment and peace in knowing that my church is adhering to the truths set forth in Scripture. My children and grandchildren have grown up in this church and have shown them-

selves to be children of the covenant.

\* A Loveland student, presenting her own thoughts but also the thoughts of all of us here tonight:

We have been blessed by this congregation by the way that God has shown mercy to us. He has given us these people to fellowship with, and to study God's Word and to sing His praises with.

Time does not permit us to elaborate on these and countless other blessings we experience as a result of the Lord's faithfulness to us over these past 75 years. But let's pause, if it be just in passing, to consider the unity that we experience as a denomination because of the fact that we all use the same Psalter, the same Bible version, the same elements of worship, the same creeds, and the same catechism materials for the instruction of our children. And further, consider the unifying result as expressed in the words of a high school junior from our Southeast Church, "Our ancestors went through a lot of trials and difficulties in striving for the true preaching of the Word in order that we today can still go to church and hear the same preaching every Sunday that they heard 75 years ago." A blessing indeed!

This is reason to celebrate tonight! This is reason to celebrate the rest of this week! This is reason to celebrate until the Lord returns! It is *not* a reason to boast. Any tendency to boast is silenced by Deuteronomy 7:7, 8, where the Lord speaks to us as He did to Israel of old:


The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers....

Though that passage should keep us from unwarranted boast-

ing, God's promise referred to there provides us with the motivation we need to "Live Out of Our Heritage" out of sincere gratitude for His faithfulness to us these past 75 years. Fifty years ago Rev. Herman Hoeksema waxed prophetic when he said at our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, "We must not expect to become great in number. But rather we must insist on the maintenance of the truth which God has entrusted to our care." Today, as back then, the bones will fail us, but our faithful heavenly Father never has and never will. Instead

let us cling to the stones, no matter the cost.

We began 75 years ago with those frail bones consisting of three congregations. Throughout the years since, numerous individuals functioning in the office of believer either organized Protestant Reformed Churches or joined existing ones. Now, 75 years later, we consist of 27 Protestant Reformed Churches, members of which here tonight comprise what I'm quite sure is the largest number of Protestant Reformed people ever to gather under one roof. Members

of these churches, like my grandparents in 1927, are faced with this question each time a child is baptized: "(Do) you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in the Old and New Testament, and in the articles of the Christian faith, and which is taught here in this Christian church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation?" Thanks be to our covenant God that for 75 years we have been able to answer *yes* to that question in the Protestant Reformed Churches in America! God grant that it may continue to be so! 

Rev. Jason Kortering

## A Beautiful Heritage

**T**he message that we bring tonight is not one of information but of celebration. We come together to celebrate what God has done for us as Protestant Reformed Churches these past seventy-five years. Since this is God's work, we must turn to Him and learn from Him how we can celebrate together tonight. This we do by turning to Psalm 16:5,6: "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

By way of introduction, we ask four questions.

First, what is the content of our heritage? This passage tells us in verse 5, "Jehovah is the portion of mine inheritance." We celebrate

who God is! From this context we learn that Jehovah is the sovereign God, He is our Covenant Friend, He is jealous in His holiness, hence the God of the antithesis, and He is faithful to His promise. Over our seventy-five years of existence as Protestant Reformed Churches, we have confessed these truths about God.

Second, we ask, what do we mean by heritage? It is a body of truth handed down to us from the past. These truths about God have been transmitted to us in three ways. God has revealed Himself to us in His holy and inspired Word. We have not invented these truths. Rather, God has told us that this is the kind of God He is. Still more, the church in the past had opportunity to articulate these truths when they were attacked or denied by others. The result of such conflict produced the creeds of the church. This is true both as to the ecumenical creeds of the early church and later as relates to the distinctive Reformed faith as expressed in the Three Forms of

Unity and the Westminster Standards. Our forefathers taught these truths about God both in their preaching and writing.

Third, how was this possible that over all the years, especially during the seventy-five years of our churches' existence, these truths about God were defined, defended, and developed? We must say from the very outset that this is due to God's faithfulness to us. This passage uses the imagery of Israel's receiving the land of Canaan as an inheritance. Reference is therefore made to "my portion," which was determined by the casting of the lot. This in turn was carried out by measuring with a rope — hence, "lines." One thing we learn from this history is that Israel received the land of Canaan as their inheritance only because God was gracious in giving it to them. This is true for us as churches as well. We are faithful to the truth about God today, even after seventy-five years of existence, only because God has kept us spiritually fit to confess this.

*Rev. Kortering is a Protestant Reformed minister-on-loan to Singapore.*

Finally, we must ask, what is a proper response to God for such benefits? This passage answers this for us as well. We must confess together, "The lines are fallen unto me in *pleasant places*, yea, I have a *goodly heritage*." We are greatly blessed by God and we tell Him that we judge our heritage to be goodly and pleasant.

This we desire to do tonight. Let's take a look at all four of these wonderful truths about God. As we do this, let us take note that this has been handed down to us as our heritage. This relates both to the truths about God and to the practical implications they have both in our personal and in our congregational lives. We can then respond that our heritage is indeed pleasant and goodly, and we can do this by singing an appropriate psalm as our celebration before God.

### God is God

When we turn to the passage before us, verse 5 tells us, "The LORD (Jehovah) is the portion of mine inheritance." The first thing we learn about Jehovah is that He is the *only* God. This is indicated to us in verse 4, where a contrast is indicated: "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god." In the day of David, there were the idol gods of Baal, Ashtaroath, Molech, and such like. These were false gods, which deceived the people. Today we encounter gods such as Buddha, Allah, Siva, and a host of Hindu deities. We confess on the basis of God's Word that these are *no* gods. Jehovah is not the best god, the strongest god — He is the *only* God.

Being the only God, He is sovereign. This also is indicated here. The Holy Spirit led David to use names of God that express this. In verse 1, "Preserve me, O God (*El*, the Mighty One)." In verse 2, "O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD (Jehovah), Thou art my Lord (*Adonai*, the Majestic God, worthy of worship)." In verse 5 He also uses the name *Jehovah* (the great I

am that I am, the unchangeable God). You may have noted that by the use of these names He refers to the works of God: "Preserve me, O God." God is the great preserver because He is the creator God.

We conclude from this that God is sovereign. His will prevails from eternity to eternity. As creator, He has the absolute right to do with the creature whatever He pleases. Standing over fallen man, He has the absolute right to save whomsoever He wills. He has the power to realize whatever He wants. He is *God!*

This is our heritage as churches. With delight we read the much-quoted Romans 9 passage: "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but God that showeth mercy." How our hearts are blessed with the words of Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him." The Canons of Dordt express this truth of God's Word, "Election is the unchangeable purpose of God whereby, before the foundation of the world, He hath out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of His own will, chosen, from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault from their primitive state of rectitude into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom He from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect, and the foundation of salvation" (Head I, Article 7). It is interesting to note how frequently the clause "God is God" is used in the *Standard Bearer*. Throughout all 75 volumes it is used at least 330

times, including recent issues. In one of the earliest issues, Herman Hoeksema wrote an article on the challenging subject of God and sin, in which he maintained that God is sovereign but not the author of sin. He continued, "On the other hand, we equally abhor any presentation of the relation between God and sin that is an encroachment upon the fundamental truth that God is God, that He is God alone, that there is no God besides Him, and that therefore He continually fulfills all His counsel. God is God alone, for who is God, save the Lord, and who is a Rock, save our God, Psalm 18:31. Any dualistic conception (God and Man) is an infringement of God's unique divinity and absolute sovereignty." Why do we reject the error of common grace and the well-meant offer of the gospel? The answer is, because God is God. Why did we endure a heart-rending split in our churches over the error of conditions in the covenant? The answer is, because we took and take seriously the truth that God is God!

This correct emphasis on God's sovereignty had a profound effect upon the life of our churches. Because God is sovereign, He indicates to us *how* He is to be worshiped. Our churches have emphasized the centrality of the preaching of the gospel. In our preaching, the sovereign God speaks through Jesus Christ. It is authoritative and effective. This applies to mission work as well. Our churches see the need for missions because the sovereign God gathers His church by means of the preaching of the gospel. The message of who God is must be brought to the nations, that He alone is able to save. We thank God that He not only wills to save His own, but also effectively calls them unto salvation.

Because such preaching is so rare, and few there be that preach it, much less teach men how to preach this gospel, our forefathers

saw the need to establish our own theological school to train men for this ministry. This has contributed much to the unity of our churches, as our ministers preach the same truth they have been taught from generation to generation.

This is a goodly heritage, and the lines are pleasant. By emphasizing the sovereignty of God, we trust in God for the results both in the local church and in missions. We shout with Paul, "for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever" (Rom. 11:36). In this God we are able to commend the keeping of our souls, for He who hath begun the good work will also finish it in Christ Jesus. He is sure and steadfast.

### God Is Our Covenant Friend

Turning to this passage once more, we learn that the inspired David rejoiced in Jehovah as His covenant God. This is seen in that he uses the name Jehovah in verses 2 and 5. That name was rich in history, for it was first given to Moses at the burning bush. Though Israel was burning in the furnace of Egypt, they were not consumed, because Jesus was promised to them and He would burn in the fire of God's wrath on the cross and not be consumed. God is their God in the way of mercy satisfying justice. This is described here as God giving to His people the land of Canaan. That land was a type of heaven. God's blessing was upon them as a covenant people, for the land flowed with milk and honey. Verse 5 mentions the "cup" or the produce of the land. We all know that Israel was able to receive this land only because the temple was in Jerusalem. The heart of the temple was the most holy place, which contained the Ark of the Covenant, with the blood of Jesus sprinkled on it on the great Day of Atonement. David sings prophetically in verse 10, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suf-

fer thine Holy One to see corruption." As we mentioned earlier, this inheritance was God's great gift to His people. It was an inheritance not merited by works, but graciously received from their covenant Friend.

This is our inheritance, our heritage, which has been handed down to us from the past. The Bible emphasizes throughout that the sovereign God is our covenant Friend. We have rejected the idea of a covenant of works for Adam, emphasizing that by reason of creation God made Adam and Eve their friend. When Adam and Eve sinned against God, they fell into the arms of Jesus (Gen. 3:15). In Christ Jesus, both Enoch and Noah "walked with God." Abraham was called "friend of God." There is only one covenant people, consisting of believing Jews and Gentiles brought together in Jesus Christ. Jesus does not have two brides. He has only one bride, the church of all ages. This has been summarized so beautifully in Lord's Day One of our Heidelberg Catechism: "That I with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ...." From many points of view, the truth of God's covenant has been preserved and advanced in our churches. No one articulated Christ in the Old Testament more than George Ophoff. Listen to him as he writes in one of the early editions of the *Standard Bearer* in an article entitled, "Christ and Grace." As he drew a contrast between the mountains of Sinai and Zion, he wrote,

Sinai then was a mountain with a most terrible aspect. By its blackness, darkness, and tempest, the emblems of the avenging justice of God, it was fitted to keep at a distance the assembly at its base. Mount Zion, on the other hand, is seen to radiate, so to speak, the good will of God. It is a mountain therefore fitted by its inviting aspect to encourage those who come to it to petition the living

God for the grace merited by the Mediator, whose residence this region became. However, He seated upon the throne of the former was seen to frown upon those assembled at His feet. From the throne of the latter, on the other hand, proceedeth a pure river of life. For it is the throne of God and of the Lamb.

The great truth that the sovereign God is also covenant friend had a practical effect upon the life of our churches. It has contributed more than anything else to our faithful defense and promotion of Christian marriage. In the very beginning, God created male and female for marriage, a marriage that reflected their relationship to Him as their creator. After the fall, God directed that His marriage to them was in Christ His Son. In the old covenant He could say to them, I am your husband! This was sealed in the marriage of His own Son to the church He loved (Eph. 5). This marriage is the great model for human marriage. This marriage is an unbreakable union and, as much as possible, human marriage must reflect this. Hence, as churches we have emphasized that marriage is for life, and only death ends it. Even adultery does not terminate it, though a faithful spouse need not live with an adulterous spouse. Because of this covenant, children born to such a marriage are children of the covenant. God is a covenant friend of believers and their children. We value very highly our children and youth. This has led us to establish Christian day schools for the instruction of our children.

This entire heritage is goodly, and the lines are pleasant. With this truth of the covenant, the sovereign God is not one to be feared, but one who takes us into His bosom and calls us wonderfully, "My people!" What a joy to know that this applies to our children as well. Stretching over the past seventy-five years is a beautiful bond between the church, home, and

school, which has joined the past with the future.

### God Is the God of the Antithesis

Once more we learn from Psalm 16 that the sovereign, covenant God is also the God who is jealous in His holiness. We learn this from verse 4, where the psalmist refers to the heathen who follow after other gods. "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips." These sorrows come upon them because the jealous God afflicts them in His wrath. Because of this, David says that there is spiritual separation between him and them. He will not participate in their idolatrous rituals. In contrast to this we read in verses 2 and 3, "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." His relationship with God is an honest one. He does not claim that God would consider his goodness (David's good works) as contributing to his being accepted by God. But the same does not relate to his fellow saints. They delight in one another's holiness. This is a clear reference to the antithesis. God's holiness requires our humility and confession of sin before Him, and we cannot be friends with God's enemies, but rather with our fellow saints.

This is our heritage handed down through the ages to us. Our children learn from catechism the classic texts from the Bible, "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just" (Prov. 3:33). "Can two walk together except they be agreed" (Amos 3:3). Our Canons of Dordt express it this way, "As all men have sinned in Adam, lie under the curse, and are deserving of eternal death, God would have done no injustice by leaving them all to perish, and de-

livering them over to condemnation on account of their sin" (Head I, Art. 1). Gerrit Vos writes of this in Volume 7 of the *Standard Bearer* in an article entitled, "A Reverie." After he exposed the error of Abraham Kuiper regarding common grace, he continued, "For since then lesser luminaries on the heavens of the church emitted their *ignis fatuus*, their will of the wisps, their Jack o'lanterns, their fatal light. The waves of worship of natural man increased, caused by a positive decrease of the knowledge of God, bringing in their wake love of the world and subsequent apostasy from the faith of the fathers."

This emphasis on the antithesis produced a positive effect upon the life of the church. It laid the foundation for a healthy apologetics, a firm warning concerning error, and a clear defense of the faith in light of the Scriptures. Because we could not expect God's favor on sinful living, the churches not only faithfully warned but also acted in Christian discipline upon those who did not repent of sin. Wonderfully, holy living was emphasized, not in a legalistic way to obtain favor, but rather as an expression of thankfulness to a God who saved us by sovereign and free grace.

This is a goodly heritage and constitutes pleasant lines. Mercifully God spares us from the terrible consequences of sin. Sin always carries a high price. By emphasizing the antithesis, we avoid these pitfalls and enjoy God's blessings upon obedience.

### God Is Faithful to His Covenant

Finally, we also learn from Psalm 16 that God is faithful to His church. This is seen in verse 5: "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance." Inheritance is future. It is a reference to Israel's receiving Canaan. Such is also our future hope. Canaan is a picture of heaven. In this regard, we learn, "thou maintainest my lot." Just as

Israel received Canaan because God was faithful to His promise, so we receive heaven because of God's faithfulness to us.

This too is our heritage and our pleasant lines. God's covenant is unconditional and unilateral. Thus it was with Abraham when God conferred it upon him; for while he slept, the firebrand went between the cut pieces (Gen. 15). Peter expresses it this way, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope ... to an inheritance incorruptible ... reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." My favorite quote is from the Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 54, "What believest thou concerning the holy catholic church of Christ? That the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to Himself, by His Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith, and that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member thereof." Herman Veldman wrote in Volume 40 of the *Standard Bearer*. "In the day of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall see the mercy and love and righteousness of our God upon the background of all our sins and trespasses. In that day we shall behold the faithfulness of our God upon the background of the struggle of the church of all ages, from its very inception." This we can do now even better than when Rev. Veldman wrote it some 35 years ago.

This too has practical implications for our church life. This truth of God's preservation has instilled in us a healthy appreciation for the church. We do not say, "My church is always right." No, we know the church struggles to be faithful. But because God saves His people through the means of grace imparted to the church, we are deeply thankful for the church

He has given to us. Because this church is so important to us, we know we must do our part to be faithful in it.

Such lines are indeed pleasant. We do not exalt ourselves in pride before God tonight. No, we know that what we are is because of God, not because of us. Then, too, we can appreciate that the psalmist makes a commitment in this passage. "Preserve me, O God, for in


thee do I put my trust." Our anniversary text is a personal confession: "The Lord is the portion of *mine* inheritance ... the lines are fallen unto *me* in pleasant places; yea, *I* have a goodly heritage." In the way of our making this personal confession, we speak unitedly as a church which looks to the future.

Let's celebrate this wonderful truth by meditating on Psalter # 352, stanzas 1 and 4:

Had not the Lord been Israel's help when angry foes assailed,

Had not the Lord been on our side, our righteous cause had failed.

Our help is in the glorious Name, the Name of matchless worth,

Of Him to Whom all power belongs, the Lord of heaven and earth. 

Prof. David Engelsma

# Living Out of Our Heritage: A Present Necessity

(or, "Come to the Kingdom for Such a Time as This")

**T**he Lord God Himself is the heritage—the rich, precious inheritance—of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC). So we confess in the theme-text of our celebration, Psalm 16:5, 6: "The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance."

The form in which He has given Himself to us is the crucified and risen Jesus Christ as revealed in Holy Scripture, that is, the truth. Since the truth is faithfully set forth in the ecumenical and Reformed confessions, the Lord God is our heritage in the Reformed faith, or doctrine. In addition, since the distinctive teachings of the PRC are either faithful expressions or genuine development of the confessions, *on fundamental aspects of God's revelation of Himself*, God is our heritage in the truth of the Reformed faith *as confessed by the PRC*. This is the specific reference of "our heritage" in the theme of our celebration.

Our heritage is not a general evangelical religion that teaches a triune God all right, but a God dependent upon the free will of the sinner; that teaches the blood of Jesus all right, but a Jesus who died for every human without effectually redeeming any; and that teaches salvation from sin all right, but in an individualistic way so that it denies the covenant of God with the children of believers as sealed by infant baptism.

Nor is our heritage a vague "Calvinism" that is very vocal about God's love for every human, with appeal to John 3:16, and quite quiet about election and reprobation; that is insistent on God's covenant being with all the children of believers alike, regardless that this implies the failure of the God of the covenant in the case of all the children who perish in unbelief; and that urges the churches to learn from, and cooperate with, the world of the ungodly, in order to bring about a good culture, even

the kingdom of Christ, on the basis of a grace that God is supposed to show to the unregenerated, even though the result of this learning and cooperation is that Calvinistic men, women, young people, and children, indeed entire Reformed denominations, are swallowed up by the depraved world.

This is *not* our heritage!

Our heritage is the Reformed faith of the confessions as rightly explained and genuinely developed by the PRC over the past 75 years, *particularly in the way of the great controversies that these churches have fought*. We must not ignore these royal battles at our anniversary celebration. We must not regret them. We must not be embarrassed by them. Truth always maintains itself, and develops, by means of battles—doctrinal battles. I may say that the Lord God has given Himself to us as our heritage by means of those battles.

Sharpened and developed among us by conflict, our heritage

is the Reformed faith of one grace of God in Jesus Christ for the elect church out of all nations, and for her and her members only; the Reformed faith of a covenant of grace, of which Jesus Christ is head, with elect believers and their elect children only; and the Reformed faith of a covenant with this elect church that is the utterly gracious taking of the church into the fellowship of God by the Spirit of Christ.

Our heritage is *this body of sacred truth*. It is doctrine, with the godly life that this doctrine produces and calls for.

But in this body of truth, it is God Himself who is our heritage.

What an inheritance has been given to the PRC! What an inheritance is enjoyed by believers and their children in the PRC! All that God is, all that God possesses, He promises us, yes, and already begins to give us, so that we enjoy the inheritance, by means of the preaching and sacraments.

Out of this inheritance, now, the PRC must live.

### Maintaining the Heritage

If the PRC are to live out of our heritage at the present time, we must maintain the heritage. We cannot live out of it, if we deny it, or even ignore it. But it is a real danger that after a few years a denomination of churches comes to despise its heritage, thus assuring its falling away from the truth. Church history teaches the sobering lesson that churches have not been able to maintain the gospel of grace very long.

The Bible gives us the warning. Judges 2:10 instructs us from the history of Old Testament Israel: "There arose another generation ... which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel." II Thessalonians 2:3 warns the New Testament church that before the day of Christ's return, there will be a "falling away"—an apostasy—from the truth. This prophecy is being fulfilled all around us as we celebrate our 75<sup>th</sup>

anniversary.

Our solemn calling from God is to maintain what our fathers and mothers in the faith have fought for, sacrificed for, and stood for.

We may compromise *nothing* of our heritage. Not for size! Not for the approval of other churches! Not for the sake of missions! Not in the interests of church unity and ecumenicity!

If we do give up our heritage, or any part of it, we are foolish. The truth has made us what we are. The truth has kept us as true churches of Christ in the midst of the dreadful, well-nigh universal apostasy of our time. The truth makes us savory salt to the taste of God; the PRC may be confident that, at this hour, they are God's inheritance (not, of course, exclusively), as God is theirs. The truth also makes us useful to the universal church.

If we give up our heritage, we are wicked. This would be betrayal of our spiritual (and physical) fathers and mothers, who struggled and suffered and worked as they did exactly in order to hand down this heritage to us. It would be an act of selling out our own children and grandchildren. We would be guilty of the very worst sin that a church can commit: departure from God. And in an amazingly short time, the PRC would become one of the most "liberal" churches in the world.

Compromise and apostasy are not inevitable. The same text that declares our inheritance promises that the Lord maintains our inheritance: "thou maintainest my lot" (Ps. 16:5). Now, this promise is to the elect believer personally. There is no absolute promise to any particular denomination that it will be preserved. Nevertheless, this promise gives hope to a denomination of churches that is holding fast to the heritage by the work of the Spirit.

### Valuing the Heritage

But then we will value our

heritage. If we are to maintain the heritage, we must value it, value it at its true worth. This too is implied by our living out of our heritage.

How highly are we to value our heritage?

As infinitely precious, for the heritage is the truth in which God gives us Himself. The heritage, remember, is God Himself. Therefore, the heritage is worth every sacrifice, the bitterest struggle, the loss of all. It is of such worth that though a person lack everything earthly and material, including family, health, and finally life itself, he is, and counts himself, fabulously rich, because he possesses the inheritance.

This personal, experiential valuation of the heritage is indicated in Psalm 16:5, 6: "yea! I have a goodly heritage." Literally, the Hebrew says, "truly, the inheritance is beautiful to me."

Is our heritage precious to us?

It is possible that someone fails rightly to value an inheritance that is, in fact, priceless. In everyday life, it happens that an heir contemptuously throws away an old painting that turns out to be a Vermeer or a Rembrandt. In the history of the covenant, Esau despised the birthright—sold it for a mess of pottage. It is the folly of Reformed churches today that they are despising and abandoning their heritage—in doctrine; in worship; in singing at church; in church polity; in the life of the people.

God must give a denomination of churches the proper valuation of the heritage of the truth. II Thessalonians 2:10 calls this the "love of the truth." God does this by the work of the Spirit in the hearts of the officebearers, in the hearts of the adult members, and in the hearts of the children. But He works this esteem for the heritage by the preaching of the ministers. The members of the PRC love their heritage because the ministers present the Reformed faith, particularly the distinctive doctrines

held by the PRC, as exceedingly valuable. If the ministers refuse or neglect to do this, it is all over, not as regards the heritage but as regards the PRC.

### **A "Goodly Heritage" in the Eyes of Our Children**

Also, God works this valuing of our heritage in the PRC by means of the instruction of their children by the parents. I am deeply conscious of the presence on this occasion of many Protestant Reformed young people from all over North America, inasmuch as the celebration of the anniversary is combined with the Young People's Convention. By this time, the annual Young People's Convention has a long, honorable tradition of its own. The year 2000 is the 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Young People's Convention. The first convention was held in 1939 in South Holland, Illinois. At that convention, the form was basically set, including the closing hymn, "God be with you till we meet again."

If the churches will value their heritage, you young people must esteem it highly. For this, God uses the instruction of us parents. We teach the heritage at home and in our good Protestant Reformed Christian schools. We make plain to our children that we regard our heritage as dear. Some of our children may despise it, but not because we left the impression that the Rembrandt was merely a Wal-Mart special. If parents themselves have little appreciation for our heritage, belittle and criticize it, and show warm feelings for teachings and practices that oppose our heritage, they must not be surprised that the children have no use for our heritage whatever. Should enough parents share this low evaluation of our heritage, time will be short for the PRC.

### **"Come to the Kingdom for Such a Time as This"**

We value the heritage, so as to maintain it, and we do this in or-

der that we may live out of it.

Living out of the heritage is *using* the inheritance, *working* with it, and *enjoying* it. An inheritance has been given us, but with a purpose. We must not squander it as fools blow their inheritance on the lottery or at Vegas. We may not merely put it in a vault, where it will be safe and whence we may fetch it occasionally, to show it off. But we are called and privileged to do something with it: use it! enjoy it! live from it!

Living out of our heritage is a necessity at present. Of course, it has always been necessary that the church live from her heritage. When you remember that the heritage is God Himself as made known in the gospel of grace, it is plain why it is always necessary to live from the heritage of the truth.

But my topic has something more specific in view. There is something about the temptations, the challenges, and the opportunities, in short, the calling, of the churches at the beginning of the third millennium A. D. that makes it specially necessary that the PRC live from this, our unique heritage. I refer to the instituted churches, to the denomination.

On the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the PRC, Herman Hoeksema wrote: "In spite of all the unrighteousness that accompanied our expulsion from the fellowship of the Christian Reformed Church, this expulsion was nevertheless the work of the Lord our God." God had a good purpose with the evil act of putting us out, just as Joseph said of the sin of his brothers in selling him, in Genesis 50:20: "ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." What Mordecai said to Esther concerning her duty to save the Jews may be said to the PRC: "who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (4:14)

How, concretely, are the PRC to live out of their heritage at the beginning of the new millennium,

and what makes it urgent, indeed necessary, that we do so?

### **A God-centered Church-Life**

The PRC are solemnly called by God to live a God-centered church-life. They must be God-centered in their doctrine, especially the doctrine that is the content of their sermons and catechism lessons. They must be God-centered in their public worship, which means that their worship continues to be governed by the will of God set forth in Holy Scripture. They must be God-centered in the discipline of impenitent sinners. They must be God-centered also in their missions. God sends the churches out in missions; we have open doors. The message on the mission field is to be the same gospel of a miserable sinner and of a gloriously gracious God that is sounded in the congregations. This will mean that the missionaries use the "Declaration of Principles" in organizing new churches, so that every new church is one with us in the confession of particular grace and the unconditional covenant with the elect children of believers.

God-centered we must be in all our church-life and activity at a time when many churches either have become, or are becoming, man-centered: in their doctrine! in their progressive, seeker-friendly worship! in their lack of discipline of even the grossest of public transgressors! in their missions!

Surely, the PRC are come to the kingdom for such a time as this.

Living a God-centered church-life implies that the churches live from principle, not by pragmatic considerations. The question governing all of our church-life must be this: What is right? What follows from the truths of the Reformed faith that we espouse? What is the will of God?

I mention two instances. We must live from principle in our ecumenical relations. The issue that alone decides alliances with other churches is our oneness in the truth

that makes up our heritage. The issue may not be greater effectiveness in missions or superior force in fighting the culture wars.

The second instance of living from principle is that we promote our good Protestant Reformed Christian schools. Although the churches do not establish them, the churches must call the members to establish them, and then to support and use them. This is a demand of the covenant.

We must live from principle at a time when many churches allow practical considerations to determine their life: Will it work? Is it convenient? What will the outcome be? Will it help the congregation to grow? What pleases the world around us?

Surely, the PRC are come to the kingdom for such a time as this.

### **Proclaiming the Sovereign God**

The PRC are solemnly called by God to proclaim and confess Him as sovereign. Living out of our heritage will mean that we “let God be God”—above all, that we “let God be God.” All of Western civilization now deifies man. The great, burning question everywhere today is this: Who is God—man, or the God of the Christian faith? This question confronts us in the moral issues of the day: divorce and remarriage; abortion; and homosexuality. It confronts us also in the great philosophical and political issues. Is truth something objective, that is, reality based on divine revelation, or is it whatever man wants it to be? And is justice in the courts judgment according to fixed law, or is it whatever a majority of nine men and women on the Supreme Court decide on the basis of the prevailing opinion in society?

The question, “Who is God?” confronts us in the teaching and practice of many of the churches around us. Not the Father of Jesus Christ, but man himself is the savior of the human race: by works of the law; by free will; or by the

improvement of society. Make no mistake: if man saves himself, man is God. Not the God revealed in creation and in Holy Scripture, but man himself is lord of man’s life. Man is lord of his own life *in the churches*. Man determines that men and women may freely divorce for every reason and as freely remarry. Man determines that sexual couplings of males with males and of females with females are lawful, indeed “holy unions.”

Living out of our heritage, we proclaim a sovereign God in His creation of the world in six days by almighty “let there be!”; we proclaim a sovereign God in providence—governing the evil as well as the good; we proclaim a sovereign God in the salvation of sinners, by faith alone, according to grace alone, on the basis of the cross of Christ alone, and proceeding from election alone; and we proclaim a sovereign God in the lives of His people in that *He* rules our lives according to the standard of His law, regardless of public opinion, the craven concessions to corrupt culture by the churches, or our own keen desires.

Surely, at a time when so-called “conservative” Reformed and Presbyterian churches are unable to confess that Genesis 1 and 2 are history and that the days of Genesis 1 are actual days of 24 hours; dare not teach that God rules the evil of the unbelief of some who hear the gospel by hardening them according to His decree of eternal reprobation; and are even ashamed to take a stand for that institution that is fundamental in state and church: marriage—surely, the PRC are come to the kingdom for such a time as this.

### **Out of Our Heritage, and Against the World**

The PRC are solemnly called by God to teach and practice the antithesis, the radical, absolute, spiritual separation of the church from the world of the ungodly and all their antichristian works and ways.

This separation looms large in Psalm 16:5, 6 for the immediately preceding verse cries out, “Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.” To have the Lord as our heritage is to hate and separate from the other gods and their worshipers. The only way to have the Lord as our inheritance is the way of the antithesis.

Surely, at this hour, when churches and their people are swallowed up by the world; when many do not even observe the Lord’s Day; when ecumenical relations are forged by ignoring and even denying sound doctrine; when ministers refuse to expose and condemn error—refuse to utter the thunderous “no” of the prophets, apostles, and creeds—surely, the PRC are come to the kingdom for such a time as this.

At the same time (in fear and trembling and with humility, let us acknowledge it), we ourselves are seriously threatened by conformity to the world. Especially in the West is the raging idolatry of the love of money, the pursuit of earthly riches, setting the heart on possessions, and the greedy craving for pleasures. Also, a mighty instrument to deprave the entire culture is the drama of the theater, television, and video. In their zeal for the antithesis the fathers of the PRC condemned drama when the programming was comparatively decent. We, in contrast, have hard going to condemn and abstain from drama in the filthiest, most violent, openly antichristian forms.

Back to our roots! We may not live *along with the world*, but must live *out of our heritage*. Our fathers rejected common grace because that heresy pronounces the world good and teaches Zion the ways of the Canaanites. Seventy-five years later, we can see the destruction that Abraham Kuyper’s common grace has worked on the best of churches both in the Netherlands

and in North America. Let us treasure this aspect of our inheritance—the antithesis—and live it.

### Living with God and His Family

The PRC are gloriously privileged by God to live with, and enjoy, Him. Living with God is the cause and the purpose of all the rest of our calling to live out of our heritage. Living with God is the main thing. If one has an inheritance, he enjoys it.

In our worship services, by means of the preaching of sound doctrine and the administration of the sacraments and through the faith worked by the Holy Ghost, the PRC enjoy fellowship with God. This is the highest good; this is eternal life; this is bliss.


And this is, in fact, the living out of our heritage, for central to

all the truth that the PRC have received and fought for, from the very beginning, is the covenant as life with God—lively, inner, experienced, loving life with God by the Spirit of Christ.

Where communion with God is, there will and must also be peace with each other—peace in our marriage, peace in our family, peace among the members of the church, peace in the relations of the congregations. Do not ignore or underestimate this! Do not ignore this as an essential aspect of living out of our heritage! Living in peace with each other is at least as important an aspect of living with God in the covenant as is fighting God's enemies.

Surely, in our day, when rank individualism prevails; when everyone, from the president in the White House to the illegal immi-

grant in the inner city, seeks himself at the expense of the others; when marriages and homes violently break up, because even husbands, wives, parents, and children will not do their duty, and refuse to sacrifice for each other—surely, the PRC are come to the kingdom for such a time as this, to show before the world, and enjoy ourselves, peace in the family and household of God.

Although the concern of this article is the privilege and calling of the churches, the personal element is implied and necessary. Oh, that each one can say on the occasion of this 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary: "The Lord is my inheritance in what we have in the PRC; in these churches, the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; truly, the inheritance of our knowledge of God is beautiful to me." 

Rev. Carl Haak

## A Sure Light for the Future

**B**rothers and sisters of the Protestant Reformed denomination, friends, and young people:

We are what we are by the grace of God alone. For seventy-five years God has preserved us in His truth, not because of anything we are or have done, but "for my holy name's sake" (Ezek. 36:22), and because "the LORD loved you and would keep his oath to you" (Deut. 7:8).

Tonight we seek to be renewed in our commitment and conviction in the only thing that counts,

namely, God's truth as expressed in the Reformed biblical faith, the truth which declares: "GOD is GOD!"

We look to the future. We do not do so from a detached point of view. We love the church, we love the cause of God in the Protestant Reformed Churches, and we love you young people in the Lord. Neither do we look to the future in morbid fear — not, that is, if we look in the light of our heritage. For in the light of our heritage there is one thing that can be said with absolute certainty concerning the future: *God's truth shall endure on earth.* Come abounding wickedness, come woeful apostasy, come the Antichrist himself, "God's word shall surely stand, His name through every land shall be adored." We have God's word for

it: "A remnant shall come to Zion" (Is. 35), "I will not alter the thing that is gone out of my lips" (Ps. 89), "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11).

The question of the hour is not: Will the truth endure? But the question is: Are you and I standing in the truth? Standing in first love? I do not ask: *Will* you stand? But *are* you standing in the truth out of the conviction of your soul? Is this the testimony of your life? Then tonight we have confidence in the future, we have "a hope that shall never be put to shame."

I wish to speak especially to you as young people, for you are the future. Yours is a great blessing and sacred calling. You have been given the heritage of those

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who fear His name, a heritage of the *truth*. Your calling is to live in, love, expand, and witness to your heritage in the truth. Scripture compares the truth confessed by the church to a battle flag (Ps. 60:4), a glorious banner. Old hands pass that banner to you, hands which have staked all on the truth. We believe that you carry that banner into the last battle of the church militant.

There is a principle for you to follow as you go forward. The past is the key to the future. People of the world are forever reacting against their past. They overthrow one landmark after another. In areas of education and morals they are always discarding the ways of the past for their present enlightened opinions. Much of the church joins them and scorns the doctrines and practices of God's people in the past.

Because the heritage given to you is the truth, live out of the past! I do not say live *in* the past. No, you must confront what is before you in your day. In the words of the apostle, bring "every imagination and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God ... into captivity ... to the obedience of Christ."

Live out of the truth that always was, is, and shall be! GOD is GOD!

To do so will require at least three commitments of faith.

### **Be Committed to God-centered Preaching**

The gospel of grace revealed in Holy Scripture is God-centered. Turn, in the Bible, wherever you will, it is the same. "I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another" (Is. 42:8). "All things are of God" (II Cor. 5:18). "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus" (I Cor. 1:30). This is Paul's summary of the doctrinal portion of the book of Romans: "For of him (God is the source), through him (God is the power), and to him (God is the goal) are all things, to

whom be glory forever, AMEN" (Rom. 11:36).

We are told that man was created for God. Man must glorify Him either as a monument to His grace in heaven, or a monument to His justice in hell. We are told of God's purposes, will, and good pleasure. The Bible tells us that God's glory is the one reality of time and eternity.

Nothing less than a Copernican revolution is needed today. Before Copernicus, men believed that the earth was the center of the solar system. An entire reshaping of how men thought was needed when through Copernicus it was understood that we have a heliocentric solar system, the earth revolves around the sun. So today there is needed a revolutionary reshaping of the approach many take towards God's Word. God's truth is not first of all about you. It does not revolve around man's happiness, man's rights, man's satisfaction. The message of God is not first of all: "God has a wonderful plan for your life." Many come to the Bible that way. "What is there in it for me? What is there in it about my feelings? I think God is like...." In the name of God we condemn that approach as twisted, out of line with reality. The truth of Holy Scripture is this: you must know, obey, love, and serve the living, true God! Nothing can be right with you, all is terribly wrong with you, unless you are brought to bow before God. Man's need is that his rebellious heart be smashed, his heart of stone be crushed, and he be brought by grace to bow before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:14).

God does not have a place in man's life by the grace of man; but man has a place in God's purposes by the grace of God. At the very doorstep we are told, "God is everything, man is nothing." If our egotistical age has so shaped our thinking that we perceive this as cold and something to be rejected, then we must hear in our hearts

the truth: "The lovingkindness of my God is more than life to me" (Ps. 63). Having God as God is enough for me, it is more than enough.

Nothing is more important in any generation than to maintain the gospel of the glory of God. And nothing is so crucial for any age than that there be preachers who always say God, not man.

This God-centered gospel is not our slant on things. It is not a minor chord on which we are stuck. It is the gospel! Do not our hearts burn within us when we see how the apostle in Romans 3 and Ephesians 2 sets for the gospel? In both passages the apostle, having declared the truth about man, of ourselves as fallen in Adam, lost, guilty, children of wrath, mouth shut before God, then breaks forth with the gospel in the words, "But God!" That's it! But God! That is the truth you must listen for in the preaching!

Today the gospel is considered to be like silly putty. It is said that, so long as the gospel contains something of Christ, of forgiveness, of joy, we are free to shape it in terms of the social climate and thought of our day. We are told that men no longer think in terms of absolutes, of authority, accountability, the judgment of God, law, sin, guilt. If you preach like that you are simply out of touch with present reality. Our generation, we are told, is horizontal. Relationships between men, women, nations are the concern. People want to know how to cope with AIDS, drugs, child abuse. If you want the gospel to be heard you must make adjustments.

Dear youth, we are not out of touch. Reality is the God who is! The sin that is! The gospel God has given is not first of all horizontal. It is not "Christ has come to help you get a life." The gospel is "Be ye reconciled to God!" (II Cor. 5:19). The one question that must be answered is this: How shall I dwell with everlasting light?

To one who is given to know the reality of his sin, the gospel is glorious good news. Christ has brought me to God!

This is the truth that must be preached! God has not only set the content of the gospel, He has also given the means by which it is to be brought. It is through the preaching of the Word! Today there is the rejection of preaching. There are gospel rock groups, gospel dance groups, gospel clowns. This always follows hard on the heels of the denial of the infallibility and authority of the Holy Scriptures. Whenever inspiration is questioned, preaching is lost. The church on earth is witness. We do not pretend to know anything of ourselves. When a church denies that the Bible is word for word the Word of God, she has no message. At best she joins the babel of the world. You recall from catechism that one of the great passages teaching the inspiration of the Bible is II Timothy 3:16. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." Do you know what follows in chapter 4? "I charge thee therefore..., Preach the word!"

What is the sure light for the future? God-centered preaching. Preaching which leaves no doubt that the Bible is God's own Word in its entirety. Preaching by men who bow unreservedly before the LORD. Expository preaching which opens the Scriptures to our understanding. Unashamed, doctrinal preaching which brings the light of God's Being to shine upon our souls, teaching us how to live before Him. Preaching which is warmly pastoral, applying the Word to our needs and calling in this world.

You say, "But what does all of this have to do with me?" Are there young men here tonight who feel the call of God to be a preacher of the gospel? Does God work in you the conviction of Amos, "The lion hath roared, ... who can but prophesy?"

May our churches and con-

sistories be committed to the primacy of preaching! If we excel in nothing else, may it be this: God-centered and thus vibrant, convicting preaching! May God raise up among us preachers. If God gives us great thinkers who place thought on paper, good and well. But we pray, "Lord of the harvest, give us preachers who are willing to be spent for the gospel. Give us consistories who see to it that men mount the pulpit with the Word of God!"


You still ask, "What does this have to do with me?" Do you know that the Scriptures have tied the presence and faithfulness of preaching in the church to prayer? Count how many times the apostle Paul requests prayer for himself so that he might preach. Ministers cannot preach without your prayers.

Do you love the Holy Scrip-

tures? Do you love the truth: God is God? Must you hear it? You cannot exist without it. Pray!

Beloved, this is our heritage! Hoeksema, Ophoff, Vos, Hanko, Veldman, Schipper, Heys, Lubbers, and many more came preaching! Tonight God has given us men committed to the truth. There is no division among them, no jostling for influence and leadership in the churches. Not one of them is the perfect preacher to serve as clone for all the rest. Various gifts are given. But by God's grace they are as one in the truth! No greater treasure could be given to us.

For all our children and for all the days ahead let us fervently pray tonight, "Lord of the church, whatever comes in the future to the Protestant Reformed Churches, give us God-centered preaching!"

to be continued ... 

### *Letter of Greeting from the British Reformed Fellowship*

To the officers and people of the PRC in America

**G**reetings to you, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, from the Chairman, committee, and membership of the British Reformed Fellowship, on the occasion of your 75th anniversary as a denomination. To the One God in the Blessed Trinity of His Sacred Persons be all the glory.

Dear friends in the gospel, remembering your self-sacrificing labours of love for Christ especially amongst us of the British Isles, it seems most appropriate to us that we should return to you our heartfelt thanks for all the encouragement, effort, and help you have so willingly sent to our aid in these islands for many years now.

We rejoice to tell you that the seed you have sown so patiently over these years bears fruit unto the Lord. We thank God for your stand made so valiantly in 1924 and continued ever since.

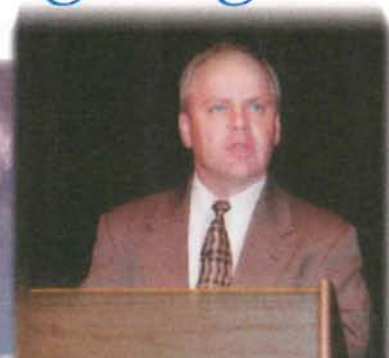
We rejoice with you on this happy occasion, and pray that God will enable you to continue holding fast to the Reformed, biblical truths that Herman Hoeksema and his colleagues upheld at such personal cost, for all the years that are yet to come, till Christ Jesus comes on that Great Day to take us all to Himself.

The grace of our Sovereign God and Saviour be with you, and bless you abundantly,

Yours in our Redeemer's service,  
Brian Harris,  
Chairman, BRF, June 2000



# Evening Programs



27

God the Highest Good

PSALM 116 C.M.

St. Peter

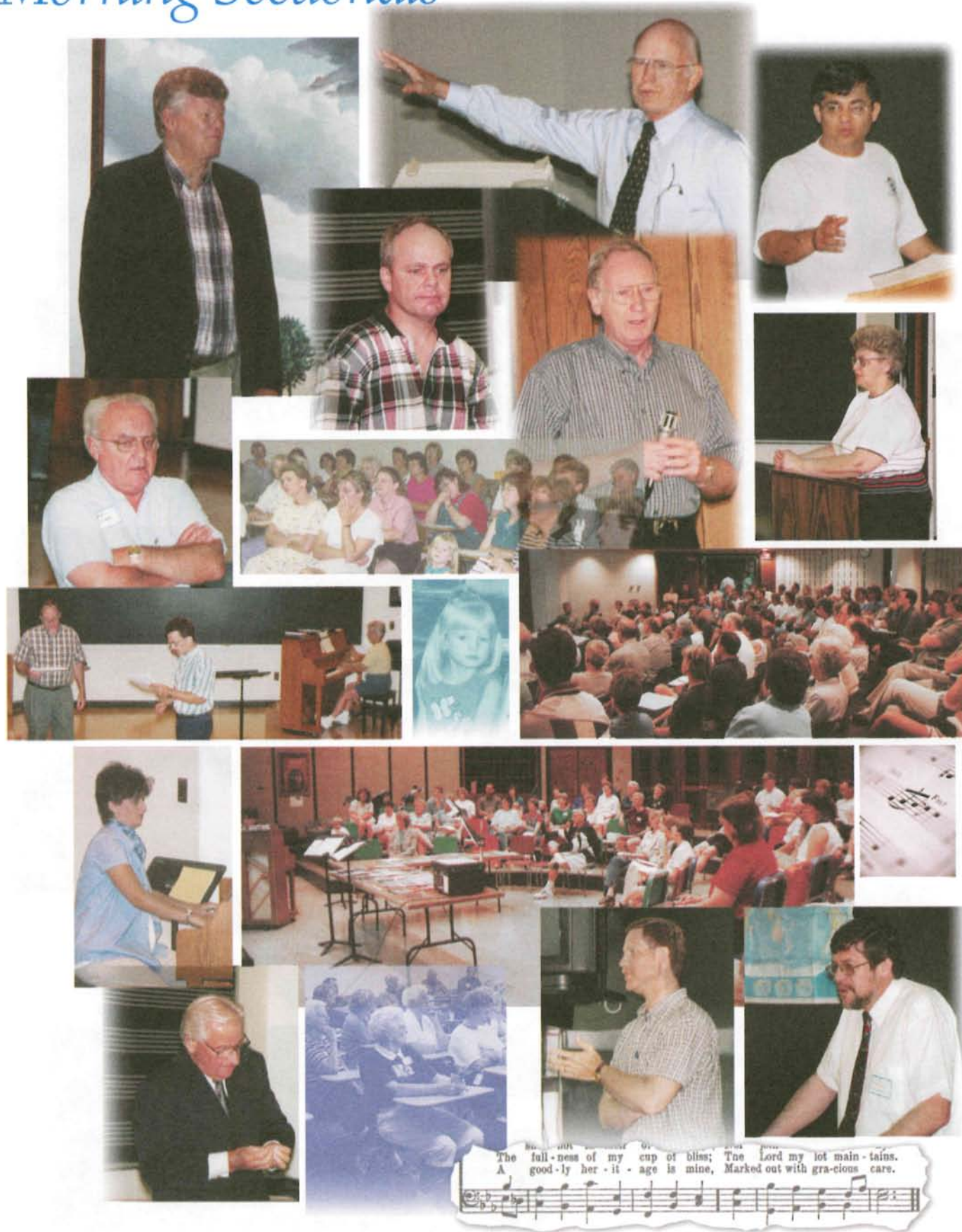
Alexander R. Reuniger



1. O God, pre-serve me, for in Thee A - lone my trust has stood;  
2. I love Thy salo, who fear Thy Name And walk as in Thy 'sigh'



## Morning Sectionals



# Family Fun Day

## Daily Schedule:

### A Family Celebration

We believe this 75th Anniversary Celebration will be something your family will enjoy reminiscing about for many years. We also pray that God will use this to strengthen each of us in our faith and encourage us for His work in the future.

#### MONDAY

Noon to 4 P.M. Registration and check-in  
5:00-6:00 P.M. Dinner  
7:30-9:00 P.M. Evening Program, Keynote Address and Historical Video  
9:00-11:00 P.M. Time for Fellowship

#### TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY

7:00 A.M. Morning Devotions  
7:30-8:30 A.M. Breakfast  
9:00-11:00 A.M. Children's Bible School and Adult Sectionals  
11:30A.M.-12:30 P.M. Lunch  
1:00-4:30 Field Day or Leisure Activities  
5:00-6:00 p.m. Dinner  
7:30-9:00 p.m. Evening Program and Speeches  
9:00 P.M.-11:00 P.M. Time for fellowship

#### THURSDAY

Activities/Times are like Tuesday and Wednesday except that  
1:00-4:30 P.M. Is Family Fun Day  
And the  
8:00-9:30 P.M. Evening Program and Speech is later to accommodate the Young People's Banquet

#### FRIDAY

7:00 A.M. Morning Devotions  
7:30-8:30 A.M. Breakfast  
9:00-11:00 A.M. Pack up and say good-bye to old and new friends.





75th Anniversary  
Steering Committee  
Couples are:  
Dave and Nancy Ondersma,  
Greg and Vicki VanOverloop,  
Hank and Deb VanderWaal,  
Ken and Michelle Elzinga,  
and Sid and Lisa Miedema.



# The 75th Anniversary Celebration of the PRC

**H**aving been blessed by attending both the previous anniversary celebrations of the PR Churches, in 1950 and 1975, my husband and I anticipated the commemoration of its 75-year existence with a week-long celebration in tandem with the 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the PRYPC. The three-fold cord of love, loyalty, and nostalgia for our churches provided a nearly irresistible tug towards the greater Grand Rapids environs during the week of June 19-23.

Many families made an effort to attend. Some traveled long distances. Some camped their way across the U.S. with small children to join the celebration. For the 2,000 plus people in attendance who availed themselves of all or parts of the celebration, the week was as satisfying as fresh-baked bread. Charter members (see *Our Goodly Heritage Preserved* for a list of these stalwarts), large and not so large families, grandparents, singles, teenagers, and many beautiful children immersed themselves in the events available to them.

Adults took advantage of the sectionals each day ranging in interest from an anecdotal church history to musical concerts to mission overviews. Several history buffs toured the old First Church on the corner of Fuller and Franklin Streets. High in the bell tower, Rev. VanOverloop uncovered a banner, caked with decades of dust and grime, from the 1960 PRYPC.

I have it on good authority that the frayed old rope tolled the bell (dated 1926) long and loud for this little band of adventurers. Others on the self-guided tour were intrigued with the pulpit and the old consistory-room furniture still in place from the days of H.H.

For the young people separated on the northern end of the campus enjoying their own convention-type events, days were saturated with many and varied activities such as swimming at lake Michigan, open-skating and broom ball on two international-sized rinks, and the ever-interesting meeting of new people.

School-aged children had little occasion for boredom. Mornings were structured around Bible school, where children learned through explanation, singing, and crafts, about the Armor of God. Afternoons were filled with kickball and soccer while younger children and toddlers enjoyed story time and singing with Autoharp accompaniment, simple games, and art activities. The grand finale family Fun Day featured a vertical rock climb, pony rides, and a giant slide. Each afternoon the pool at Calvin College was open for swimming. There were those who observed that one could not see the water for the children.

Many of the children, too young to be left unattended, were taken by their parents to the adult sectionals. It was not an uncommon sight to see grandparents (how young many of them looked!) helping their children wrestle strollers up and down steps and

staircases. In one sectional which I attended, there was a little boy maybe 2 or 3 years old who colored for over an hour on his knees by a metal chair while his parents handed the baby back and forth to each other. Nobody wanted to miss anything!

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Protestant Reformed Churches was a delightful combination of all that's best of an old-fashioned church picnic and a sophisticated dinner party. It made use of the oldest of games — just a stout rope and a tugging contest between East and West (the West won the Tug-o'-War) — and the very latest in technology — instant communication by pager and cell phone. The uplifting and informative sectionals were transmitted in the oldest way possible — a man (or woman) behind a podium talking — and with an amplified computer screen illustrating the latest techniques in using the Internet. And just as in the old days, the parents and grandparents carried the infants, took the toddlers by the hand, and brought the many, many children to the daytime sectionals and the evening speeches.

The gently sloping lawns and elegant buildings of Calvin College provided the gracious backdrop for these festivities. We thank you, Calvin College, for the unhindered use of your lovely campus. We trust that the make-your-own ice cream machine in the cafeteria is still working; it put out a great deal more than its quota of cones that week, most by unskilled hands.

When I inquired of certain

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*Mrs. Lubbers is a wife and mother in the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois.*

people what stood out in their memories about the anniversary celebration, they replied: "The accessibility of all the ministers." "The excellent food which I didn't have to prepare for a whole week. Even waiting in long lines for the meals provided opportunity to meet and talk with new people." "If you didn't object to getting up early in the morning, the 7:00 devotions were inspirational." "The singing of Psalter numbers by over 2,000 people." "Our theme song, Psalter number 27, will always hold a special place in my heart." "The open patios in front of the dorms and the adjoining foyers between them where one could talk in intimate settings or larger groups with fellow saints from around the world into the wee hours of the morning." Nor can one leave out those friendly drivers of the golf carts; they were everywhere, always warmly offering a ride to the elderly, handicapped, or just plain weary celebrators. All concurred that the evening meetings at Sunshine Community Church were sterling. Powerful messages by the four speakers and full-throated singing of the psalms by the celebrants combined to make these evenings soul satisfying. To see almost 400 young people take their places each evening in the front rows of this mega church, and to witness almost 500 children mount the platform on that final night to sing the same songs that have been sung in our churches for almost 100 years was in itself thrilling!

A simple "thanks" to the committee who planned and implemented such a fine celebration

hardly seems adequate. Perhaps you will content yourselves with knowing that to a large extent you are to be credited for the many happy faces, the warm expressions of care for one another, and the wonderful time which each and every attendee enjoyed. Certainly you, too, delighted in noticing the easy camaraderie of people from all backgrounds, all parts of the country, and all ages, but all one in the Reformed faith. As Mr. Herm Ophoff stated as an aside in his emotion-packed sectional: "It makes no difference which PR church you visit, you will hear the same doctrines preached. It doesn't matter whom you talk to here, we are all one in the same faith." You gave of your time and yourself to provide such unity. That was a good thing.


One of the lasting benefits of the 75<sup>th</sup> celebration will be the two books which it produced. Prof. Hanko's *For Thy Truth's Sake* is a volume of substance, integral to every Reformed home. *A Goodly Heritage Preserved* is an attractive soft-covered book, easy to read, filled with interesting facts and figures on each church, school, and PR institution.

For me, the unforgettable memory of the celebration was the many children. The strollers (although, secretly, I'm thankful I no longer had to push one), the little children with their scrubbed faces and brand new sandals purchased for this special occasion made a lasting impression on me. Why? Because all those children, carried, pushed in strollers, or in any other way commandeered by their par-

ents, signal bright hope for the future of the PR Churches. If the doctrine especially defined by the PR Churches is the doctrine of the covenant, as Rev. Hoeksema wrote that it was in his editorial, "Protestant Reformed," March, 1950 *Standard Bearer*, then we saw with our own eyes that doctrine in all its tangible proof.

Necessarily, the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration came to a close. It was 11:00 P.M. before the cars and busloads of people arrived back at campus on Thursday evening. The little ones were being tucked into bed on that last night while several adults began to gather outside the Timmer-Heyns dorm. Not wanting such a beautiful night to end, they began, all unrehearsed, to sing a Psalter number. Hearing that Psalter number, a few more people began to join the little group. Listening to the full, harmonious singing outside their windows, more and more men and women were lured to the spontaneous sing-along. Some, already in bed, quickly dressed and joined the swelling throng. A few had Psalters. Most did not. They sang from memory and from the heart. For a long, long time the hauntingly beautiful melodies of David were sung by a large circle of devotees to the traditional songs of the PR Churches. In the moonlight, under the stars, on the lawn of Calvin College, these songs drifted up to the children in their beds. And so, 75 years later, my grandchildren fell asleep to the same songs that stirred our worthy forefathers in 1925.

It was a very good day.

It was a grand celebration. 

## Book Review

*For Thy Truth's Sake*, Herman C. Hanko, Grandville, MI: RFP, 2000. 541 pages. \$39.95 (hard-cover). [Reviewed by Rev. Charles Terpstra.]

With a great deal of excitement we heartily welcome and recommend to our readers a beautiful new volume, *For Thy Truth's Sake*, published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association. Written by Prof. Herman Hanko, the resident historian from the

Protestant Reformed Seminary, this book was commissioned for the 75th anniversary of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America (PRC) in this year of our Lord 2000. The book records and celebrates the mighty work of Jehovah God in giving, preserving, de-

veloping, and proclaiming the truth of His absolute sovereignty and particular grace in Jesus Christ. Sounded throughout the book is this theme: "God alone is worthy to be thanked and praised for all that the PRC are and have"!

*For Thy Truth's Sake* is a significant book. It covers the seventy-five years of PRC history from a doctrinal perspective. The focus is on the two major controversies in her history, the first of which led to her origin (the common grace controversy of 1924), the second to her further distinctiveness in the Reformed church world (the conditional covenant controversy of the 1950s). Special attention is given to the major doctrines inherited and developed by the PRC — especially sovereign, particular grace and the unconditional covenant of grace — as God used her to contribute to the richness and strengthening of the Reformed faith. Along the way the joys and the sorrows, the temptations and the triumphs, the struggles and the sins are revealed with simple forthrightness.

In many areas the book breaks new ground. This is especially true of the mid-section of the book (Part Three). It brings together material previously scattered throughout other PRC sources (e.g., the doctrine of the antithesis). It introduces doctrines heretofore not treated systematically (e.g., the doctrine of miracles and the organic conception in PR doctrine). Besides, the book goes

into historical detail not found elsewhere in PRC literature. All of this makes the book itself historic — and invaluable.

The author is well qualified to write such a doctrinal history of the PRC. Not only has he taught the history of dogma in the PRC Seminary, but he has also lived through and been a part of much of PRC history. He was born and raised Protestant Reformed. He was catechized in the truths of which he writes. He lived through the controversy of 1953. He has witnessed the churches' development in the truth of God's Word. He has taught these doctrines in the seminary and preached them in the churches. He has defended the truths of sovereign grace personally. These truths have been the "air" he has "breathed" and the "food" he has "digested." The faith once delivered to the saints which he presents is his faith.

This also means the author is "biased" in favor of the history and doctrines of which he writes. Prof. Hanko writes with a sympathetic pen. That will be evident to all who read this volume. He writes with genuine love for the PRC and with fervor for the doctrines she holds dear. He believes these truths with all his heart and has zeal for their defense and preservation. It is his conviction that the history of the PRC is part of the great history of God's truth throughout the ages. At the same time he has a passion to see these truths

acknowledged and accepted by all who read this book. These things too are portrayed in this work of history.

With these things in mind, it should also be evident that this volume ought not be of interest only to PRC members. In recording this history the author also pays tribute to the work of God through His church in the past. The truths the PRC hold dear are shown to be those of the great fathers of previous ages of church history. All who love the truths of sovereign grace will have an interest in this history.

The reader therefore is urged to give this book his careful attention. It is not an "easy" read as books go today. You will have to put your "thinking cap" on, as Herman Hoeksema used to say. But if you read it in humble faith, desiring to be reminded of God's amazing grace and covenant faithfulness, longing to grow in the knowledge of church history and of the truth, you will be richly rewarded. Let PRC members read it and grow in appreciation for their denomination and her doctrines. Let non-PRC readers give this book a fair hearing, evaluating it in the light of the history, and, of course, Scripture and the confessions.

May the Lord of the church be pleased to use this writing for the humble and thankful celebration of the PRC. And may He be pleased to bless it for the continued maintaining, developing, and promoting of the truth of His sovereign, particular grace.

## News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

### Denomination Activities

In June our churches celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a denomination with a week-long celebration at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI. For five days members of various of our churches in North America, as well as sister churches and friends from various mission fields, were able to enjoy each other's company, and fellowship centered in God's Word.

*Mr. Wigger is a member of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.*

Neither my managing editor, Don Doezema, nor space, allow me to give a detailed review of that week (that appears elsewhere in this issue); but having spent the week at Calvin, I have a few observations to make about it all.

First, if you know any of those who served on any committee that had anything to do with the anniversary celebration and you have not thanked them for their efforts, it is not too late to do so. They all deserve our thanks. Although I am sure they would probably disagree, really what would you want to change about that week? It all

seemed perfect to me.

Second, each day was filled with a nice balance of spiritual and physical activities for young and old alike. Devotions each morning in the chapel were really appreciated. The sectionals were wide ranging in scope, with many wondering how they could squeeze all 15 sectionals into just three mornings. The Bible School was a tremendous idea, with over 500 students, including those entering preschool through the 8th grade, in attendance. Bible lessons were from Ephesians, under the theme "The Armor of God," with 31 teachers

and 40 helpers giving God-centered instruction through teaching, singing, and crafts that carried through the theme.

The Historical Church Bus Tour was much appreciated, especially the visit to old First Church in Grand Rapids. Having grown up in First Church, I can say personally, it was like we were there just last Sunday. Nothing seemed to have changed, except that we were both a little older and in need of some minor repairs.

Each afternoon was also filled with a wide range of family activities. Children, their parents, and grandparents could be as busy as they wanted or they could find a convenient shade tree and visit with old and new friends alike.

Some activities that stand out in my mind have to be the "Anniversary Riddle." Each morning during the week a different Scripture verse was posted. Adults had to try to figure out just where on campus the verses were pointing them. Each day they got a little closer, till at last a copy of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary June issue of this magazine was found in a planter near the chapel.

Another was the Creepy Crawler Contest. Imagine about 200 children swarming over the Calvin campus

around 10:30 at night with flashlights and containers hoping to find the biggest, ugliest, scariest, and most colorful bug. Prizes were awarded after the judges, Revs. Bruinsma and Haak, made their somewhat questionable selections.


You might also be interested to know that one couple became engaged at the anniversary. They might sometime forget the date of their anniversary, but they will never forget when and where they became engaged.

And finally, the programs each night at Sunshine Community Church were a tremendous blessing. Words cannot express what it was like to sit under one roof with 2500 like-minded saints and sing praises to our God, or have the theme of our celebration, "Living Out of Our Heritage," as based on Psalm 16, explained to us, or see the 500 children from Bible School sing for us, or hear the gasps in the audience when an old banner entitled "Faithful Today," from a 1960 Young People's Convention, which was found in the bell tower at First Church that week, brought out on the stage.

Truly it was a week that will not soon be forgotten. May the Lord use

such a celebration as this for the unification and edification of the saints who were there and for the church universal.

On Friday, June 23, the last day of the celebration, everyone was invited to enjoy an evening of musical praise with certain PR musical groups. The Hope Heralds, the Instruments of Praise, Make a Joyful Noise, One in Him, and the Voices of Victory, performed for a full house at Grace Community Church in Hudsonville, MI.

In connection with that concert, you might be interested to know that the Instruments of Praise is a group of about twenty musicians, mostly from our churches. They have a good selection of instruments ranging from trumpet to bassoon, to provide a full sound. Their goal is to praise God with the God-given talent of music. They would like to share this music with you, so they have produced a CD/tape recording of 24 selections, 20 of which are the beloved Psalms and 4 are well-known hymns. Interested? Contact Paul Hoekstra, 1475 Riley St., Hudsonville, MI 49426; (616) 896-8681, e-mail [hoekstrp@river.it.gvsu.edu](mailto:hoekstrp@river.it.gvsu.edu). The cost is \$12 per CD, \$6 per tape. Make checks payable to "Instruments of Praise." 

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### NOTICE!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will be hosted by the Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin on Wednesday, September 6, 2000 at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. All material for the classical agenda is to be in the hands of the Stated Clerk by Monday, August 7, thirty days before Classis convenes. All delegates or visitors in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify Randolph's clerk, Mr. Gary Buteyn, N11143 Wiersma Rd., Randolph, WI 53956. Phone: (920) 326-5666. Rev. Steven Key, Stated Clerk

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

August 14, 2000 is the 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary for our parents,

**PETER and DOROTHY VAN DER SCHAAF.**

We, their children, thank the Lord for the many years He has given them together, for the precious instruction we have received, and godly example that they have been to us. We rejoice with them and pray that God will continue to bless and guide their marriage in the future.

Psalm 128:5, "The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life."

☉ Jessica and Eric VanDyke  
Aaron and Reece

☉ Dee, Katie, Dowie, Audrey, Susan, Sara,  
Thomas  
Jenison, Michigan

### NOTICE!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, September 13, 2000 at the Faith Protestant Reformed Church, Jenison, MI. Material for this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than August 14, 2000.

Jon J. Huiskens  
Stated Clerk

### 75th Anniversary Tapes

Audio tapes of the four evening speeches are available for purchase. The cost is \$10.00 for a set of 2 tapes, payable to 1st PRC (GR). This price includes postage. Order (before August 30) from Vance Hayes, 1545 Sherin Dr., Grand Rapids, MI 49525, (616) 361-5716.