

# My Convention Impressions

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The 1982 Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention is now history, and in the few weeks that have followed it I have spent much time recalling the good times and cultivating my impressions. Now I'm faced with writing those impressions for you.

This convention was the 42nd Annual PRYP Convention, which itself should impress us. With the exception of one year since 1939, God in His faithful grace has provided our young people with this tool. That is exactly what a convention is; a tool which provides for our spiritual growth, an opportunity for fellowship with other young people, a means to maintain the concerns of our federation, and a time for relaxation and recreation.

The Convention Theme, as you know, was "Our Changeless Calling in a Changing World." That we and the world about us are changing needs no further investigation than a look at our conventions themselves. We have seen many changes since 1939 - changes in attendance, location, types of lodging, cost, and length of duration. But none of these changes has been made at the expense of our calling. Our priorities and reasons to convene have remained the same.

The theme was developed in three inspirational lectures, which are recorded in this issue for the benefit of our readers. We also enjoyed discussions on such practical issues as "Personal Devotions", "Modern Forms of Idolatry", and "Confession of Faith". And how fitting a way to end each day's activities with evening group devotional periods. Through these means the ultimate purpose of the convention was achieved: we were all able to grow spiritually together.

The convention was also a time for fellowship. Every year we are excited about friendships we make, and heartbroken at the week's end when we part. These friendships, although temporal, are important to us because they are based on a common bond of faith. The Heidelberg Catechism tells us that the communion of saints consists of being common partakers of Christ, His riches and gifts. It also shows us our duty to employ our gifts to the advantage and salvation of other members of Christ. I trust that you, young people, as I, experienced this true fellowship, although we did not always take full advantage of our opportunity. Were we always prepared? Did we always listen? Learn? Participate? We need not have conventions that cultivate any other fellowship than this.

I think the older young people (especially confessing members) recognize this aspect of the convention more than the younger element. The thing I remember most about my early conventions is how the older young people (most of them parents now) guided us younger kids. Their willingness to discuss and participate, and their comments and leadership at business meetings were good examples to me and others my age. They knew their duty as discussed in Lord's Day XXI. It is sad today that most of our 17-21 year old confessing members cannot be asked if they were good examples at the convention, without our first asking if they were even there!

I'm not going to miss the opportunity to discuss one other aspect of the convention with you. The 1939 Convention was not sponsored by a Federation Board, nor was it sponsored by a Federation of Societies. It couldn't be; neither of these existed. Rather, the 1939 Convention was called to organize the Federation and its Executive Board. And each subsequent convention has been called to maintain this organization, through business meetings. I found it amusing, but typical, when one first-time conventioneer told me that he didn't expect to have much free time

at the convention because he was a delegate. Being a delegate seems to have lost any glamour it may have once had. Many delegates skip their meetings, but even more discouraging is the fact that some societies no longer even elect delegates. I admonish any society which feels that the changing world has affected this calling.

Getting back to our young delegate friend, I'm happy to note that he spent less than 90 minutes of his week in Delegate Board Meetings. Our relatively simple agenda was prepared well by the Federation Board, and the Chairman kept the meetings flowing smoothly. Does the fact that our agenda was simple make it unimportant? Only as unimportant as this very magazine is controlled by our Federation. Only as unimportant as the help we give to future teachers and ministers through the efforts of the Scholarship Fund Committee, controlled by the Federation. Only as unimportant as the convention we attended, conducted under the authority of the Federation Board, controlled by the Federation. These Delegate Board Meetings were only that important.

I said earlier that conventions are a time for relaxation and recreation. My thanks to the activities committee, which succeeded in providing so much recreation, there was little, if any, time for relaxation. Besides our normal devotional periods, our time was filled with hayrides, contests, skating, beach activities, and the list goes on. Everyone especially enjoyed the mud pig contest on Thursday and the "kangaroo kourt" on Friday morning. At the latter, Rev. Kamps' passion for bananas was revealed. Four of us also learned to appreciate Hershey's Chocolate Syrup, having had whole cans poured over our faces.

The 42nd Annual PRYP Convention was the 8th I've attended. I have left each convention more aware, encouraged, and spiritually satisfied than the last, and this convention was no exception. Having fulfilled my term on the Federation Board, and being one of the oldest conventioners at the last three conventions, led me to think this would be my last. But I left very eager to attend, the Lord willing, the 43rd convention next year in Washington. I know I am not alone.

In closing, I would like to thank, personally and on behalf of the Federation Board, the host societies, the steering committee, its advisors, the host ministers, the speakers, and all those who contributed to the success of the convention. Above all we thank our Heavenly Father, Who has provided us with this valuable tool, to better know Him as our Savior.

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