

FAMILY HOLIDAY CONFERENCE AT GALASHIELS IN SCOTLAND

David Blunt

Approximately ninety adults and thirty children met in the Scottish Border town of Galashiels from the 30th July – 6th August 1994 for the Third Family Holiday Conference organised by the British Reformed Fellowship. The venue was the Scottish College of Textiles which catered admirably in what proved to be, by general agreement, a most profitable and enjoyable week.

Those attending came mainly from the four corners of the United Kingdom but we were also delighted to have in addition a party from the USA and people from Singapore and Germany. Not the least of the Conference's benefits was the friendship forged or strengthened among the Lord's people. These are especially precious in a day when, because of national apostasy, denominational declension and – it must be confessed – our personal sins, Reformed believers know something of that experience of the Psalmist: "I am like a pelican of the wilderness... like an owl of the desert... as a sparrow ALONE upon the house top" (Psalm 102:6-7). This sense of isolation seems particularly strong at present among our brethren in England and Wales. However if, like the Psalmist, we are able to pour out before the Lord our complaint regarding the Church, He will surely enable us also to sing with expectation:

*Thou shalt arise, and mercy have
upon thy Sion yet;
The time to favour her is come,
the time that thou hast set.*

[Psalm 102:13 – metrical version]

On the evening of our arrival Pastor James North (Lewes) sought to encourage us for the week from the words of Christ: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). The Lord's Day services were conducted by Professors Hanko and Engelsma, preaching on the cure of Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-14) and Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' (2 Corinthians

12:7-10), respectively.

The six addresses on the theme of "The Doctrine of Sovereign Grace" formed the heart of the Conference. We were greatly indebted to the two Professors for the standard and relevance of their lectures and for their patient handling of questions that followed. Sovereign Grace – in its relation to Predestination, the Cross, Preaching, Sin, Salvation and Life – was expounded. The forceful delivery of these messages reflected the jealousy with which both speakers held to the *particularity* of grace as it is revealed in Holy Scripture. One feels that many who are suspicious of the denial of 'common grace' and the 'free offer of the gospel' would have been helped by these talks. Our position does *not* make evangelism redundant or impossible and it *does* comfort the hard-pressed saint in a Christ-hating world.

It was good, therefore, that tape recordings were made of the addresses and copies are available for purchase.* A stimulating range of literature and tapes were also provided and the bookstall was eagerly perused in-between meetings. Catalogues can be obtained from the Editorial Office.

The warm weather meant that the three coach outings to sites of Covenanting and other spiritual interest were even more attractive. We were able to view the church buildings at Ettrick and Fenwick, connected respectively with Thomas Boston (*Human Nature in its Fourfold State*) and William Guthrie (*The Christian's Great Interest*). It was heartening to enter the newly-restored Magdalen Chapel, the first site of Reformed worship in Scotland. Our guide was the Rev Sinclair Horne, Reformed Presbyterian minister at Loanhead and Secretary of the Scottish Reformation Society, who also addressed the Conference on the subject: "The Relevance of the Covenanting Witness for Today."

One was struck by the harmonious spirit which prevailed during the week, given the diverse background of those attending. Informal discussion groups continued late most nights on a variety of topics and it was pleasing to witness the interest of the younger people in the doctrines of the Word of God. The *practical* nature of the Conference was evidenced in the final question dealt with by Professor Hanko at the Friday evening Question Time: "How are we to pray in the light of Matthew 21:21-22?"

The ACM of the British Reformed Fellowship was held during the Conference and details of this are set out below. At the final session, on behalf of the Fellowship, Tony Horne presented Dr Timothy Cross with a Certificate for having correctly recited

* Refer to leaflet enclosed with this issue of the Journal.

all 107 questions of the Shorter Catechism during the week. Presentations were also made to the two Professors and grateful thanks expressed to them and to the Protestant Reformed Churches of America for their willingness to support and encourage Reformed Christians in the United Kingdom.

We give thanks to our gracious God for all the blessings of the week and look forward to the next Conference, planned to take place (DV) at a centre in the south of England in 1996.

'ANNUAL' GENERAL MEETING - Report by the Secretary

The Second General Meeting of the British Reformed Fellowship took place on the 3rd August 1994 at the Scottish College of Textiles, Galashiels, Scotland. Thirty members were present and the meeting was chaired by Pastor Jim North.

In his report, the Secretary stated that membership of the Fellowship now stood at around 120 compared with only 20 two years ago. In addition, the *British Reformed Journal* was being sent to a further 64 subscribers and 25 copies to a single church congregation.

Within the past two years, two Half-Day Conventions had been held at Lewes in Sussex, and similar events had taken place at Morley near Leeds, Belfast and Wrexham, and a future Convention was planned for September in London. In addition, Covenant Reformed Fellowship of Ballymena, Northern Ireland, had held meetings in a variety of locations within that Province. The provisional venue for the 1996 Family Holiday Conference was Ashburnham Place, near Battle, East Sussex.

The Treasurer reported on the previous 18-month period and indicated that the finances of the Fellowship were in a satisfactory state, although leaving no grounds for complacency. He expressed his grateful thanks to the Protestant Reformed Churches of America for a gift of £750 and for all their continued support and encouragement.

Opportunity was presented for members to put forward ideas as to how the work of the Fellowship could be furthered. A number of suggestions were made, including making the *Journal* more attractive and informative, and that the Committee be aware of and investigate all situations where a need existed for Reformed ministry and fellowship.

Two amendments were made to the Constitution, both relating to Rule 5 (Organisation). The second paragraph is to read: "The

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Saviour. In the course of his remarks he said that all Christians were not called to preach although all were called to evangelise. He stressed the importance of family worship and said that the practice should be carried on throughout life right from the start of married life. In this way children would be raised in a God-fearing environment and benefit from the Word of God from their earliest days – perhaps, like John the Baptist – even from before they were born! (See Luke 1:41.) Professor Lee said that he was a Bible Christian, as distinct from a New Testament Christian, believing that all sixty-six books of the Bible were the revelation of God to man. He said also that he believed in 'jot and tittle' inspiration and disagreed with those who maintained that only certain 'fundamental' doctrines were important.

Concerning the final outcome of the Gospel, Professor Lee closed his address with words from John Calvin: "The Gospel surmounts innumerable obstacles; His [Christ's] ministers may confidently expect to be victorious over the whole world"!

A tape recording was made of the address and copies can be obtained from the editorial office.

'ANNUAL' GENERAL MEETING *(Continued from page 24)*

Committee shall consist of not less than six members, including a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer" and the third paragraph: "Members of the Committee shall be elected at a bi-annual meeting of the Fellowship and shall serve for a period of two years."

After the carrying of these amendments, an election took place and the following were appointed as members of the new Committee: James North (Chairman), Tony Horne (Secretary), Desmond Callender (Treasurer), Allen Baird, David Blunt, John Clarke, Ronald Hanco, Jonathan McAuley and Hugh Williams.

Finally, Tony Horne expressed his wish to relinquish the duty of editing the *British Reformed Journal* and (subsequently) Hugh L. Williams agreed to take over this responsibility. [See note on page 44 of this Issue.]

BEHOLD, HOW GOOD AND HOW PLEASANT IT IS FOR BRETHREN TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY! PSALM. 133 v 1.



B.R.F. CONFERENCE: GALASHIELS, SCOTLAND. 30TH JULY ~ 6TH AUGUST 1994.



**Prof. Hanko and
Mrs Hanko**



Prof. Engelsma



CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

***Left to Right.* Rev. Herman Hanko, Professor of Church History & New Testament Studies, Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary.**

Rev. David Engelsma, Professor of Dogmatics & Old Testament, Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary.

Rev. A. Sinclair Horne, General Secretary, Scottish Reformation Society.

CAUGHT ~ by the camera at the Conference



**From the Lone Star
State: ROSANNA**



**From Singapore:
LOIS**



QUICK! or you'll miss the picture!