SCOTT HOEZEE

Grace Through Every Generation

The Continuing Story
of the
Christian Reformed Church

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Grand Rapids, Michigan

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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For David H. Engelhard
1941-2005

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PREFACE

As I completed this book during the week following Christmas in 2005, I sensed more keenly than ever something I knew would be true from the get-go: far more stories have been left out of this brief history than have been included. Yours may be one of them! And I'm sorry about that.

I wish there had been space to tell the story about what has happened these last fifty or so years across not just the full sweep of the Christian Reformed Church in North America but in many specific places too. I wish we could trace all the wonderful and blessed things that have happened through the work of World and Home Missions and through Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. I wish we had room to talk about what has changed at our institutes of higher learning: Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, Dordt College, and Trinity Christian College in the United States; The King's

University College, Redeemer University College, and the Institute for Christian Studies in Canada. I wish we had time and space to discuss agency developments in the areas of chaplaincy, pastor-church relations, abuse prevention, and publishing, as well as the changes that have occurred over the years at the denominational mainstay *The Banner.* Some of these stories are told elsewhere, of course, but some are not.

Yet each of those stories (and ten thousand more besides) lies behind and beneath the stories that *are* told here. The broader sweeps of change and innovation that are told here would not have taken place the way they did were it not for the contributions, ideas, insights, and plain old hard work of untold (and largely unsung) people throughout the Christian Reformed Church these past 150 years (and certainly in the last fifty years on which this book will focus). Of course, merely acknowledging this will not get me off the hook with people who will want to know why such-and-such part of our shared story did not get told! But I do at least want to say up front that I recognize the disappointment some will feel in not having been mentioned.

Not long after taking on this assignment, I e-mailed a couple dozen church leaders and historians, soliciting their "Top Ten" list of key Christian Reformed events from 1957 to the present day. Thanks to their good responses, I was able to narrow down the focus of this book to what you see here. In some ways, parts of this book may read as much like a history of synod as of the wider denomination. But because ours is a polity (or church system) that brings local concerns up from the grass roots, what appeared on the various agendas for synod over the years did reflect in a real way the concerns of the rank-and-file members in the pews. Many of the key issues of the wider culture and of this most recent portion of world history—as well as many of the most dearly held and sometimes the most hotly contested issues within congregations during this last half century—did indeed become grist for the synodical mill. In any event, synod and what it said at key points in recent years is in part the place where I decided to sink various narrative fence posts in the corralling of our larger collective story.

I hope, in any event, that by perusing this book you will be able to gain a partial sense of where the CRCNA has been since 1957—where it has found cause to rejoice and sing and where it has found cause to lament and weep; where it has made changes seamlessly and easily and where it has changed through travail and tears. Because if there is one thing this story will make

clear, it is that change has been the one constant in the last fifty years of our shared life together.

I have dedicated this book to my friend, teacher, and mentor, David Engelhard. I first met David when I was seven years old. At that time David was a freshly minted Ph.D. from Brandeis University and had just taken up a new teaching post at Calvin Theological Seminary. During that first year of teaching, David and his wife, Jeanne, were house-sitting for a year in the home of our backyard neighbors. Soon their eldest daughter Kris and I became fast friends and our two families enjoyed picnics and conversations together. Not long after this, my family moved and so did the Engelhards. We didn't see much of each other then. Fifteen years later when I enrolled at Calvin Theological Seminary in the M.Div. program, my old neighbor David Engelhard became my first seminary professor at "Hebrew Bootcamp"—a three-week summer intensive course that got all of us students accustomed to an alphabet that had to be read from right to left. David was a master instructor of language whose teaching I and others absorbed with delight and not a little awe.

David Engelhard

David taught Hebrew and Old Testament for twenty-four years to hundreds of people who went on to become pastors in the CRCNA. In 1994 he surprised many colleagues and friends when he announced he was leaving the seminary to become General Secretary of the Christian Reformed denomination, succeeding Rev. Leonard Hofman.

For the next eleven years David thrived in his new position. He proved himself eminently capable of providing the organizational and detail-oriented knowledge necessary to a job that involved, among other things, culling vast quantities of information about the denomination as well as preparing the perennially unwieldy "Agenda for Synod." But David also traveled extensively and became the face of the CRC to a variety of church communions around the world. David introduced "fraternal delegates" to synod

each year with an ardor and a sincerity that lent new warmth to the word "fraternal." And these representatives from denominations from around the world spoke with equal affection about David.

In late January 2004 I met with David in his office to discuss writing this sesquicentennial volume. The prospect of promoting a denomination-wide celebration of the CRCNA's 150th birthday was clearly a passion of David's, and he was deeply involved at most every level of planning. When I agreed to do this project, David thanked me warmly. He also told me, "You've got until the end of December 2005 to complete this manuscript—that's twenty-three months from now. I know it seems like a long time but it will go fast." Indeed it did. And as it turned out, that was—almost to the day—how much time David Engelhard had left on this earth. In February 2005 he was diagnosed with glioblastoma, a brain tumor known to be aggressive and incurable. David died ten months later on December 22, 2005.

At his funeral service family and friends testified that in his final months David was radiant with the hope of the gospel. His only comfort in life and in death became palpable to him in ways that inspired all who visited him. David's was a life worth celebrating in holy thanksgiving to the God who lent us this good servant, wonderful husband, and outstanding father and grandfather. "Grace through every generation" was a hallmark of David's life and family, and is his legacy to the church that he served so well as minister, theologian, scholar, teacher, and churchman. And so we give thanks to God for David's life and service as part of our celebration of the sesquicentennial of the CRCNA.

INTRODUCTION: "THAT WAS THEN . . ."

My parents were married in 1959, just two years after the Christian Reformed Church celebrated its centennial anniversary in 1957. They were wed in a church in Holland, Michigan, about as close to the historical epicenter of the Reformed and Christian Reformed denominations as you can get. About the time I was starting to think about writing this history of the CRC's last fifty years, we celebrated a landmark wedding anniversary for my parents: their forty-fifth. As part of the celebration, we thought it might be fun to do a little "That Was Then" trivia contest focusing on key events and other cultural happenings of 1959. With a little help from the Internet, I was able to cobble together a small trove of 1959 facts and figures quite quickly. But when we held our trivia contest after the anniversary dinner, my parents were not able to answer many of the questions. The rea-

son behind this may be quite revealing of the very historical shifts and changes that this book attempts to summarize.

When I asked my parents, for example, which movie had won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1959, they had no idea—in the 1950s, Christian Reformed people did not go to the theater. It was still synodically forbidden, as a matter of fact (and would remain so until 1968), and so my parents had neither seen *Ben Hur* nor much cared that it had won an award. When I asked what the most popular song was for 1959, again they didn't know—most radios in their childhood homes were tuned to *The Back to God Hour.* Peter Eldersveld was a name they knew and a voice they loved to hear, but Bobby Darin singing "Mack the Knife" was not familiar. Finally, after a number of similar questions about the pop culture of 1959, my father said, "You have to understand: back then we stayed away from the wider culture and so we just didn't know much about it."

How things have indeed changed these past fifty years! Today the average twenty-year-old in the CRC not only attends movies, he or she may well have a growing collection of favorite DVDs. The youth of today, including those in the church, are outfitted with all the trappings of our technological age: laptops that connect to the Internet, portable CD players and iPods that can play thousands of hit songs, and cell phones with which to call their friends.

Preacher and writer Craig Barnes noted recently that the world is a vastly smaller, very different place for today's youth compared to just a generation or two ago. Barnes's daughter recently spent a semester studying in Europe. While there, she decided to spend a weekend in Budapest, where she withdrew some cash from an ATM, with which she bought some cappuccino at an Internet cafe, from which she sent an e-mail to her best friend, who was spending the semester studying in Brazil (Barnes, p. 48).

As Barnes notes, none of this seems extraordinary today, but compared to the way life was even as recently as 1957, it is clear that the world is an extraordinarily different place for us today. What we consider routine, our parents and grandparents would have considered so fantastically amazing as to count almost as a miracle. If you were to somehow transport forward in time a Christian Reformed person from the mid-1950s to the CRC of 2007, this time traveler might have a difficult time even recognizing what he or she would see. Upon closer inspection, this person would eventually find that the CRC

beliefs, doctrines, and practices felt like home after all—but only after the shock had worn off from all that seemed so very different.

Of course, in its first hundred years, from 1857 to 1957, the CRC changed much, as did the world around it. But as this brief history will show, the past fifty years have introduced new dimensions to this denomination at a clip that outpaces most of the changes that came prior to this remarkable period of time.

Today the CRC is a richly diverse and varied body of believers. As the denomination turns 150 years of age, Christian Reformed worshipers can still find congregations where the pastor is a white man with a Dutch name, where worship is led by stately organ music and songs are sung from the *Psalter Hymnal,* and where liturgies are printed in predictable form week after week. On the other hand, there are also congregations where the pastor is a woman who hails originally from Korea, where worship is led by praise teams with steel guitars, and where everyone sings songs that are projected onto a screen. And in between these poles of traditional and contemporary, it's also possible to find just about every conceivable variation and combination of liturgical elements.

Although there was a measure of variety in the CRC even in 1957, it existed on a much narrower band width than is the case today. From British Columbia to New Jersey, from Florida to Toronto, most Christian Reformed churches in the 1950s still followed a pre-printed order of worship that varied almost not at all from week to week. Every Sunday morning and evening, the 211,000 souls who called the CRC home gathered in 495 churches across the United States and Canada. At that time, a Christian Reformed person on vacation—even far from home—could have wandered into just about any one of those hundreds of congregations without having to wonder in the least what to expect. The pastor, most likely a Calvin Theological Seminary graduate, would preach on the Heidelberg Catechism at one of the two Lord's Day services. The congregation would sing from the red *Psalter Hymnal*s found in the pew racks, and if there were any variation in the order of worship, it would be restricted to something no more dramatic than the placement of the offering.

However, vacationers away from home in 2007 have no reason to know what type of worship service to expect in a given CRC congregation. From the outside, it may even be difficult to be certain whether a church is Christian Reformed at all. You might have to read the small print on the

Worshipers from Golden Gate Christian Reformed Church, organized 1973

bulletin logo to find out that "Jubilee Community Church" is indeed a part of the CRC (and you might have to ask someone to be really sure).

But beyond the burgeoning variety of worship and the richness this variety has brought to the wider denomination, so much else has changed this last half-century, only a small portion of which can be chronicled in this book. The growth of the church in Canada is a remarkable story all by itself, as the number of Canadian members of the CRCNA grew from just over 37,000 in 1957 to nearly 60,000 in the early twenty-first century—an increase of nearly 40 percent (mostly as a result of immigration from the Netherlands) over a period of time in which the entire denomination increased just 23 percent over its 1957 membership total.

The explosion of various other ethnic groups also signifies changes in the CRC. At mid-century, many Christian Reformed people could still remember the days when in a given city you could choose whether to attend the Dutch-speaking church or the one that had finally made the switch to English. Today services conducted in Dutch are at best a once-a-year event to commemorate the past, whereas services in Korean, Spanish, and Chinese are weekly occurrences. In fact, the denomination now has entire classes (or groups of churches) comprised solely of various ethnic groups.

Theologically, the CRC has also addressed issues and made changes in its official polity as a result of rich scholarship that has challenged and educated Christians far beyond the borders of the denomination itself.

So although this volume is a celebration of the CRCNA's sesquicentennial, the past fifty of this denomination's 150 years will occupy us the most. A good deal of what the CRC is in 2007 comes as much from the last half-century as it does from all the years that formed the church in the years prior to 1957. And much of what may happen as we move forward as a denomination may also prove to have stemmed from changes that occurred in the recent past.

But whether we look back at periods of relative calm and stability in the history of the CRC or examine times of great change and controversy, the truth of "grace through every generation" always shines through. The CRCNA is not the largest segment of our Lord's history-long and worldwide church, nor is it more important or vital than any other part of the body of Christ. But the Lord whose "eye is on the sparrow" takes providential note and care of all his people, wherever they worship and whenever they come together to work for the kingdom's advance. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the church. His grace extends through every generation of this story. The history of any church is always first and last about the God whose grace is more than sufficient to stick with us through the peaks and valleys of every story we can tell about church life.

It is the story of this God and of God's grace that we want to tell to all generations yet to come.

Chapter One

THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS: A LOOK BACK

For many years I had the opportunity to teach my congregation's high school catechism class. In truth, we didn't always study the Heidelberg Catechism but made forays into the Belgic Confession, the ecumenical creeds, and other doctrinal summaries of the faith. But no matter what the specific topic of study was in any given year, at some point I would give a brief review of the history of the Christian Reformed Church. To set the wider historical stage, we also reviewed the larger Protestant Reformation from which the CRCNA ultimately derived. It was always interesting to watch students' reactions when I told them that for basically half of all the years the Christian church on earth has existed, it formed essentially one giant worldwide denomination known as the Catholic Church and was headed by the pope in Rome.

To high schoolers born in the late twentieth century, that kind of global unity seems nearly unimaginable. For instance, in 2004 the Grand Rapids,

Michigan, Yellow Pages listed 100 different denominations. Among those were twelve variations on Baptist denominations, four discrete denominations that called themselves Reformed, four different varieties of Lutherans, and another four variations on being Presbyterian.

As I used to tell my students, one of the finest features of the Protestant Reformation was not only a return to the Bible as the final authority but also getting Scripture into the hands of ordinary people, not just clergy. One of the first things Martin Luther did after his break with the Catholic Church was to translate the Bible into German so that every literate person could read it. Until then, the Bible had been in Latin or in Greek, languages most ordinary Christians could not read (if they could read anything at all). Prior to the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, there were no books for ordinary people to own anyway. But the ability to crank out lots of books made possible by the printing press, together with Luther's translation of the Bible into the language of the people, suddenly made real what had been unthinkable: ordinary Christians could have their own personal copy of the Bible. As a result, they no longer needed to rely on priests to tell them what the Bible said. They could be their own biblical interpreter. Of course, the community of faith still needed to agree on matters collectively in reliance on the Holy Spirit. But now each person (not just the clergy) could bring his or her thoughts about the Bible into that wider discussion.

Getting the Bible into the hands of Christian lay people was a wonderful gift. But along with the gift came an unintended consequence. Not surprisingly, having lots of people reading the same text led to lots of different opinions on that text! And within a generation of Luther and Calvin, the Protestant wing of the church had splintered into multiple factions that eventually turned into different denominations, each led by a particular school of biblical and theological interpretation.

Sometimes I would draw a diagram for my high school class: from the time of Christ forward, the history of the church formed one long continuous line, with a single breakaway line at the year 1056, right up until the mid-1500s. From there, the Roman Catholic line continues pretty much unbroken to this day. But the Protestant line ends up looking like the pattern you see on a car windshield that's been cracked with a big rock: spider web-like tendrils snaking off in all directions.

The genius of the Reformation was a return to the Bible. Yet in one of history's sharper ironies, that unified return to Scripture resulted in the most profound disunity the church has ever known. That's why my students

could barely wrap their minds around that long period of history when denominational diversity did not exist. The idea of a unified church of Jesus Christ on earth was as quaint to their young minds as the vinyl LPs their parents used to play on a turntable. In our age of ever-growing denominational diversity, looking back on a unified church is like peering into a world none of us has ever known firsthand.

The history of the past five hundred years bears unhappy witness to the fact that one church schism tends to beget others. And even where actual schism does not occur, the specter of potential future breaches of fellowship looms over every important discussion churches have. The CRC is certainly no exception. After all, there's no escaping the fact that it grew out of several nineteenth-century church splits both in the Netherlands and in the United States. Throughout its history, the CRCNA has tried, successfully for the most part, to hold together in unity a group of Reformed Christians who, although sharing a common heritage and biblical-theological foundation, came to the denomination through several different historical paths, each sufficiently different from the others to generate some tension. At its best, this has been a creative tension that has sparked fine scholarship and biblical interpretation. At its worst, however, this tension has grown to the breaking point, which is why, in part, the denomination produced a couple of further fractures in the twentieth century.

Nineteenth Century Roots

Because this sesquicentennial volume focuses on the CRCNA's most recent half-century, this chapter is a quick review of the first hundred years, a period of denominational history that has been well-documented in many other places, including James Schaap's delightful book *Our Family Album: The Unfinished Story of the Christian Reformed Church* (1998). As already indicated, to tell the full story of the Christian Reformed Church one could go all the way back to the Reformation and then trace the subsequent offshoots throughout Europe, especially in the Netherlands. Instead, we will turn back the clock to 1834 to set the stage for the most immediate backdrop to the formation of the CRC.

By the early 1800s, the Reformed church in the Netherlands had essentially become the state church. But, as often happens when a church body becomes large and official, it sometimes begins to assume a profile that is perceived to be very different from the olden days. In this case, church leaders began to suspect that the church had become not only official but a bit officious. Doctrines were the stuff of state policy as much as, if not more than, the stuff of personal devotion.

But there were structural issues that proved nettlesome as well. For instance, some in the Dutch church, known for its adherence to singing only settings of the Psalms, were highly displeased when in 1816 the government decreed that all churches would henceforth be required to add hymns to their weekly worship services. This did not sit well with some church leaders for a couple of reasons. First, the top-down, authoritarian nature of the decision was at odds with the traditional Reformed way of decision-making, in which congregations were supposed to participate in making major decisions. But it also seemed to be a step in the wrong direction in a spiritual sense: the old heritage was being left behind in favor of a new future that many were not willing to embrace.

HET BOEK
DER
PSALMEN,
NEVENS DE
GEZANGEN
BIJ DE
HERVORMDE KERK VAN NEDERLAND
IN GEBRUIK;
MITSGADERS
TE MIDDELBURG,

Psalmbook used in the Dutch Reformed Church and also by the early CRC and RCA in North America

During this same period, a spiritual revival was sweeping across Europe. This return to piety and devoutness—a movement that many trace back to Geneva (the old stomping grounds of John Calvin himself)—eventually reached the Netherlands in the form of a movement called the *Reveil,* which meant to "wake up." Led by poet and historian Willem Bilderdijk (1756-1831), this return to spiritual devoutness soon encompassed a number of Reformed pastors who, already dissatisfied with the direction taken by the state church, discovered in the *Reveil* the final nudge they needed to push for an all-out reformation of the Dutch church. The drive for this ecclesiastical makeover had both an urban and a rural component, and the differences between the two (and how they ultimately combined within the CRC many years later) form a key part of what eventually coalesced in the character of the denomination.

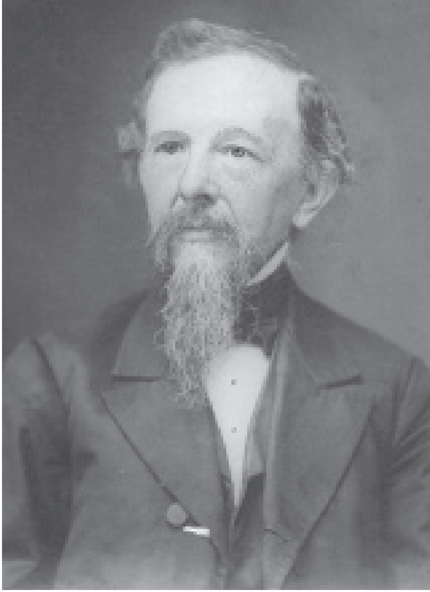
When efforts to work with the state church proved unsuccessful, some *Reveil*-influenced pastors acted decisively. In 1834 the secession that became known as the *Afscheiding* took place when Rev. Hendrik de Cock and his Ulrum congregation formally decided to break away from the state church. Others soon followed, including Hendrik

Pieter Scholte, the man who would later found the Dutch colony in Pella, Iowa, and Albertus C. Van Raalte, the founder of Holland, Michigan, who at the time of the *Afscheiding* had just graduated from seminary. Van Raalte, who was ordained in 1836, would be one of many immigrants who would later help to transplant the newly formed church to a faraway place called America.

However, tracing back the precise origin of the CRCNA does not end with the 1834 secession. The next part of the story takes place in the United States. By the time of the *Afscheiding*, there were already many Dutch immigrants living in North America, especially concentrated in New York and New Jersey. These immigrants had forged an American version of the church known then as the Dutch Reformed Church (later called the Reformed Church in America). By the mid-1800s the Dutch Reformed Church was firmly established with approximately 274 congregations totaling nearly 33,000 members. What's more, these immigrants had even managed to establish two schools: Rutgers College and New Brunswick Theological Seminary (Beets, p. 44). So by the time the *Reveil*-influenced pastors and parishioners of the 1834 secession began coming to the United States in the mid-1800s, an established Reformed presence in the New World was eager to enfold them.

Hendrik de Cock, leader of the secession known as the *Afscheiding*

By the mid- to late-1840s, newly formed colonies had been established in Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, and Iowa. Despite all the rigors and perils that were part and parcel of the immigrant experience (and despite ravaging diseases that at times threatened to decimate the newly formed colonies), Van Raalte's colony in Holland, Michigan, and Scholte's in Pella, Iowa, were large enough to catch the eye of the Reformed Church leadership. The East Coast-based denomination dispatched representatives to the Midwest to invite these Dutch brothers and sisters into an ecclesiastical partnership. In


Albertus C. Van Raalte

Hendrik Pieter Scholte

the spring of 1849, Rev. Isaac Wyckoff of the Reformed Church paid a visit to Classis Holland, which at that time consisted of Van Raalte's own congregation in Holland, Michigan, as well as neighboring congregations in Zeeland, Vriesland, and Graafschap. At a meeting the previous September, these congregations had briefly considered making a formal overture to become part of the Reformed Church in America but had delayed action, citing "the pressure of local business and the difficulties connected with a new settlement" (Schaap, p. 135). In short, they were barely hanging on and had scant energy to consider anything as ambitious as merging with a wider denomination.

Nonetheless, Rev. Wyckoff's arrival in 1849 set into motion a series of events that eventually made Classis Holland part of the larger Reformed presence in the United States. By then the number of Reformed congregations in West Michigan totaled seven. But there was some confusion and controversy as to how this came about. Wyckoff returned home reporting these congregations as being on board. The colonists were uncertain as to how official this all was. Not until 1850, following Van Raalte's attendance of the Reformed Church synod in Schenectady, New York, was the union plainly official. But seeds of doubt concerning the wis-

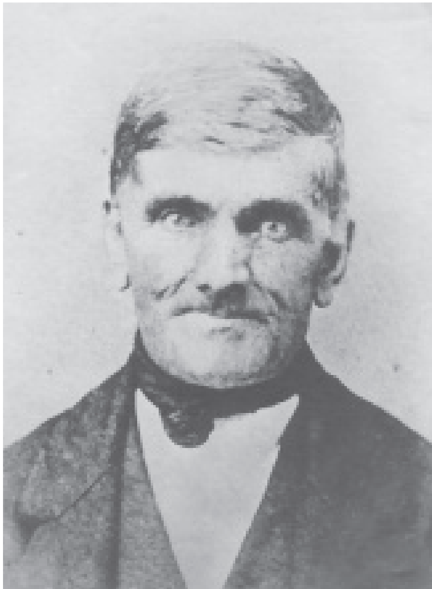
dom of this union had already been sown. A few years later Van Raalte would experience the bitter fruit that came once those seeds sprouted and grew.

By the 1850s, some of the Dutch Reformed believers in West Michigan began to detect in the American version of the Reformed Church some of the same characteristics that had driven them out of the Dutch state church in 1834 to begin with. Already in 1849, when Wyckoff visited Classis Holland, he sensed some unease toward being part of yet another larger church body. These congregations feared losing control over key decisions in a situation similar to what had happened in the old country. As part of his effort both to assure and to woo these immigrants, Wyckoff said they would be under no obligation to remain in the American Reformed denomination should they someday want to leave; they would always be free "to bid us a fraternal adieu and be by themselves again" (Beets, p. 57). As Henry Beets stated, this was "a typically American way of surmounting the obstacle encountered, although not according to Reformed principles of church government . . . [But] the Michigan Dutchmen accepted the reservation at face value and stored it in their memory."

Indeed they did. What's more, as some Michigan colonies learned more and more about the Reformed Church in the East, they liked it less and less. It was the 1834 *Afscheiding* all over again, as people began to lodge formal complaints about departures from the traditional Church Order, including singing hymns instead of psalms only, the practice of private baptisms and open communion, and toleration of Free Masons lodge members within Reformed congregations. By the April 8, 1857, meeting of the Reformed Church Classis of Holland, four congregations had sent notices of withdrawal.

But these changes did not come out of the blue. For several years many West Michigan leaders, including Rev. Koenraad Van Den Bosch of Noordelos and church elder Gijsbert Haan from nearby Grand Rapids, had been agitating for change and accusing even Van Raalte of being too lax on matters of doctrine and the purity of the church. Van Den Bosch and his Noordelos congregation believed that Van Raalte's 1850 union with the Reformed Church in America had placed all of them right back into the same situation that had existed in the Netherlands before 1834. If the first *Afscheiding* had been the right thing to do, it seemed their present course was obvious: they needed to get out of this American version of the old state church. By April 29, 1857, a formal organizational meeting was attended by five West Michigan congregations. Together they formed a new classis. Ultimately, this new entity

Koenraad Van Den Bosch


Gijsbert Haan

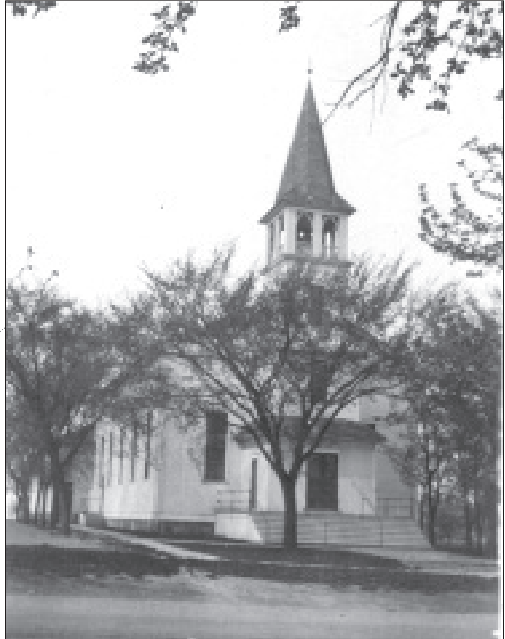
would become known as the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

In subsequent years, other congregations followed Van Den Bosch's lead and joined the new denomination, which called itself initially the *Hollandsche Gereformeerde Kerk* (the Dutch Reformed Church) and then later the *Ware Hollandsche Gereformeerde Kerk* (the True Dutch Reformed Church). Not until 1880 did the group adopt a version of the name "Christian Reformed Church." For the first twenty or so years of its life, the early CRC existed as what James Schaap calls "an orphan" off by itself in a still-strange New World. Records of those early years bear witness to the grace of God that the fledgling group managed to survive at all. There is evidence of a series of disagreements and uncertainties as well as no small amount of infighting. As noted earlier, the positive dimension of people who are fiercely committed to purity and truth is that their passion can be second to none. But this same tendency to get things exactly right can also become a club with which to bludgeon those who disagree. As Schaap notes, our denomination's earliest classis meetings "were riddled with lists of charges and countercharges of heresy as long as your arm" (Schaap, p. 169).

Throughout the 1860s new churches were formed as part of the CRC in Zeeland, Michigan, in what is now South Holland, Illinois, and even as far

away from the West Michigan epicenter as New Jersey, Ohio, Iowa, and Indiana. In 1865 the first meeting of what would later be known as synod took place in Graafschap, Michigan. On February 14, 1868, the eleven-year-old denomination published its first in-house periodical, *De Wachter.*

The first editor of *De Wachter* was a West Michigan powerhouse whose efforts on multiple fronts helped the CRC thrive and move forward: Rev. D. J. Van der Werp. In addition to being the pastor of the Graafschap congregation and founding editor of the denomination's first magazine, Van der Werp also began training students in theology in order to help them become future pastors in the denomination. Van der Werp continued this work until age and declining health forced him to stop, but his vision of an educated clergy planted the seed for what would eventually become Calvin Theological Seminary and later also Calvin College.



Graafschap CRC, organized 1847

Originally called the Theological School of the Christian Reformed Church, this new institute of learning got its formal beginning on March 15, 1876 (a date subsequently known to all Calvin Seminary students as *Dies Natalis*, the "day of birth" for the CRC's official seminary). On that date, Rev. Gerrit E. Boer (1832-1904), who had just become the school's full-time professor, delivered a convocation address on "The Training of Future Ministers of the Gospel." In the school year that followed, the seven-member student body received from Boer an education that ran the gamut from language studies in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew to philosophical disciplines, rhetoric, and, of course, the theological disciplines in systematic theology, church history, exegesis, and practical theology. An impressive display indeed for this one-man faculty! Boer began what would become a hallmark of the CRC: a tradition of excellent liberal arts education conducted under rigorous academic standards and

Students at Calvin Theological Seminary, 1877

aimed always at engaging God's world. A century after Boer's pioneering work, Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary are known nationwide as being among the finest institutions of higher education anywhere. Many Calvin graduates and former professors have gone on to make their mark in the annals of academia, putting the CRC on the map as much for its excellence in scholarship as anything else.

By the late 1870s, the CRC had grown sufficiently to warrant the organization of new classes in Illinois (1868), Iowa (1877), and on the East Coast (Hudson, 1878). Meanwhile, back in the Netherlands, another secession was brewing—one that would ultimately have a direct and long-lasting effect on the CRCNA. Nearly fifty years after the *Afscheiding* from the Dutch state church, another breakaway group was forming, led by Abraham Kuyper, one of the most remarkable figures in the history of the Dutch Reformed movement. Kuyper (1837-1920) was a man of keen intellect, deep insight, and wide-ranging interests. He was committed to engaging with society and the wider world and did so as prime minister of the Netherlands from 1901-1905.

But Kuyper was also a preacher who had grown up in and worked as a pastor for the same state church that the 1834 seceders had left. Kuyper was born three years after the *Afscheiding* to parents who, although sympathetic to the cause of the seceders, never wanted to leave their home church. About

the time the CRC was being founded across the ocean in Holland, Michigan, Kuyper graduated from the University of Leiden and entered the ministry. As historian James Bratt and others have noted, Kuyper was an unlikely figure to become associated with the heirs of the *Afscheiding.* Kuyper's mind embraced tensions and possessed a worldview that was more urbane and tinged with modernism than was typical of the more pietistic traditionalists who founded the CRC in 1857. But because Kuyper led a movement out of the same mother church as the *Afscheiding* group, when many of Kuyper's followers came to the United States, as in the large wave of Dutch immigration that took place between 1870-1920, they found in the CRC enough commonality of mind, thought, and heritage that they joined the denomination gladly.

Abraham Kuyper

The movement Kuyper founded became known as the *Doleantie,* which meant "the grieving church." By 1883, Kuyper had gained a reputation as a powerful preacher. His ideas resonated with many who, like Kuyper, began to suspect more and more that the state church, known as the *Hervormde Kerk,* was drifting both doctrinally and in official church practice. Like his parents, Kuyper wanted to reform the church from within. But when, in 1883, the church formally rejected the requirement for officebearers to conform with the confessions of the Reformed faith (known to this day within the CRC as signing the "form of subscription"), it became clear to Kuyper and his followers that they could no longer remain. Just in case the *Doleantie* folks were unsure about the need to secede, the state church settled the matter for them by deposing those pastors who continued to lament this step back from the confessions. Abraham Kuyper was among the deposed.

The followers of the *Doleantie* formally organized themselves in 1892 into the *Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk,* which means "Christian Reformed Church" (the name shows why Kuyper's followers were attracted to the North American denomination with that same moniker once many of them

immigrated around the turn of the century). In 1894 churches in the United States were permitted to use the name "Christian Reformed Church" (initially they had been called the Dutch Reformed Church and then later the True Dutch Reformed Church); the full adoption of the name Christian Reformed Church came in 1904.

The influx of the *Doleantie* forever changed the complexion of the denomination. In his brilliant history *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America,* Calvin College history professor James Bratt highlighted the differences by noting that the CRC, at least since 1900, has always been a mixture of mentalities, any one of which can ultimately be traced back to either the *Afscheiding* or to the *Doleantie.* What the mindset of the *Afscheiding* brought to the CRC was a strong strain of pietism and confessionalism that tended to be rather defensive in its theology and frankly suspicious of whether, or to what extent, the wider culture could or should be engaged. For its part, the *Doleantie* tended to be more outgoing and optimistic, willing to engage the world and seeing great potential for good to come out of a constructive theology that was willing to push at the margins for new ideas and strategies.

As Bratt notes, even within these two broadly defined schools of thought there were further subsets. In general, however, the CRCNA continues to this day to live with some of these historical tensions. Even contemporary debates on the floor of synod contain echoes of this tension. Bratt claims that the more *Afscheiding*-influenced wing, which he calls the "Confessionalists," advocate strongly for tradition, for a tightly defined form of what constitutes orthodoxy, and so tend to speak against approaches to Scripture that seem novel or that could produce results that would be at potential variance with the thoughts expressed in the Heidelberg Catechism and other such Reformed documents. On the other hand, the "Doleantie" descendants Bratt calls "Positive Calvinists" often seem willing to test the ideas of the past against more up-to-date hermeneutics and theological reflection, displaying a willingness not only to engage the wider society but even to recognize that sometimes the insights of the surrounding world can help Christian people refine their thinking and theology.

As we will see in coming chapters, even some of the great issues that occupied the CRCNA in the last half century bear witness to the fact that there is no escaping history.

The New Century

At the same time these broader influences on the make-up of the young denomination were taking place, the CRC initiated a number of endeavors that, over time, greatly increased its influence in North America, even as the church itself grew in numbers because of the new programs. By 1900 the CRC encompassed a total of nearly 54,000 members belonging to 144 congregations. Although still concentrated largely in the Midwest, the Christian Reformed presence extended literally from coast to coast and many places in between. The East Coast had long been a CRC stronghold and was strengthened in 1890 with the formation of Classis Hackensack, the second East Coast classis in the denomination. In 1900 the CRC went far west with the founding of a Christian Reformed congregation in Lynden, Washington. Additional congregations were founded in the Dakotas, in Kansas, and throughout Minnesota.

In 1896 the CRC began also a new venture in the area of domestic or home missions. As noted earlier, the first quarter-century of the CRC's existence was a tenuous, often difficult, era. The fledgling denomination had all it could do to survive and to establish the structures that would be needed to forge ahead. But by the last part of the nineteenth century, many became concerned that this inward focus, although perhaps necessary initially, had become an abiding characteristic in ways that made it difficult for the CRC to fulfill the Great Commission of spreading the gospel to all the world. Eventually those voices got the attention of the synod, and the denomination founded what it called (indelicate though this sounds to our twenty-first century ears) "The Board of Heathen Missions."

In the book *Flourishing in the Land,* Christopher Meehan and I chronicled the CRC's first 100 years of domestic mission activity in North America. The story began in the Old West on an October day in 1896 when Andrew Vander Wagen and Herman Fryling and their wives arrived in Gallup, New Mexico, to begin the CRC's first-ever attempt at missions among the Navajo people. The work began modestly among the Navajo people located near Fort Defiance. A year later the Vander Wagens had left that work to the Frylings and had shifted their efforts to the Zuni pueblo south of the area around Gallup. In coming years the mission effort spread out to the surrounding areas, the most significant of which became known eventually as Rehoboth.

Around the turn of the century it was a common practice of both the United States government and of church mission agencies to establish Indian

Hull (North Dakota) CRC, organized 1887

boarding schools. Although painful to recount, the unhappy historical fact is that Native Americans were generally regarded as "savages." For a long time it was believed that the only way to turn them into useful, productive members of American society was to whisk children out of their homes and place them in schools that would stamp out (and sometimes beat out) all vestiges of Indian culture, replacing it with white ways of thinking and behaving. In 1903 the CRC used this boarding school model when it established its own mission at Rehoboth, just outside of Gallup. Although its earliest days bore too much resemblance to the many institutions that vandalized Native American culture, over the years the school developed into an excellent place of learning that continues in the twenty-first century. What's more, those initial efforts of the Vander Wagens and the Frylings flourished to the point that Classis Red Mesa was established in 1982. Today Red Mesa encompasses seventeen congregations with just over 2,000 members throughout New Mexico and Arizona.

But it was not only in the American Southwest that the CRC grew and expanded through its mission efforts. World Wars I and II forced the at-times sheltered members of the CRC out into a wider world, even as the GI Bill after World War II altered the American (and Christian Reformed) landscape as millions of people were able to take advantage of the possibility of higher education. These wars also led to the founding of chaplaincy ministries in

the CRC. Although chaplaincy began in the military in World War I, the ministry of Christian Reformed pastors serving as chaplains extended to include university campuses, hospitals, retirement communities, prisons, and hospice programs.

Rehoboth mission school, 1908

In 1939 the CRC's efforts to have a presence on the airwaves culminated with the inaugural broadcast of *The Back to God Hour.* The program opened with a prayer by Rev. Henry Schultze asking God to enable the new radio show "to move men everywhere to a renewed consciousness of the great glory of our God" (Hoezee and Meehan, p. 79). Carried on Chicago station WJJD, that December 17 broadcast began a tradition of excellence in radio and, later, television.

The early years of *The Back to God Hour* featured a variety of on-air speakers and ministers, but by 1947 one name alone stood out as the voice of the CRC on the radio—Peter Eldersveld. For the next eighteen years until his sudden death from a heart attack in 1965, Eldersveld crafted a radio show that was cherished by members of the CRC but also succeeded in reaching out to a vast audience with the gospel. Eldersveld's unexpected death created a shock wave that swept over the entire denomination.

United States Army Chaplain InSoon Gho

By God's grace and providence, Eldersveld's able successor was already in the wings.

Joel Nederhood had been working with Eldersveld for some time and was seen as the natural choice to take over the show. Nederhood remained for the next thirty years. During that time, nearly twice as long as Eldersveld's tenure, Nederhood continued the Back to God Hour's tradition of stalwart Reformed preaching aimed at bringing the good news to the world. Nederhood also oversaw an expansion of the foreign language broadcasts that had begun in Eldersveld's day and helped the ministry transition into television during the late 1970s.

Other portions of the CRC's work on the domestic front will be told in subsequent chapters of this book, including the growth of the denomination in Canada as well as the success of many urban mission efforts that have, in part, contributed to the CRC's growing ethnic diversity.

Peter Eldersveld, radio minister for *The Back to God Hour*

Meanwhile, the denomination also initiated foreign missions. By 1920 CRC member Johanna Veenstra was laboring in the Sudan (although not as an official missionary of the CRC). Synod 1920 declared that similar mission efforts would be made in China, an effort that was initially spearheaded by people whose names have become nearly synonymous with Christian Reformed missions in the early days: Lee Huizinga, Wilhelmina Kalsbeek, and A. H. Smit. Along with their families, and often through great hardship, these people began a kind of foreign mission work that would grow and expand, especially in the second half of the century. For her part, Johanna Veenstra moved her work from the Sudan to Nigeria. And although there may have been some initial hesitancy in 1930 when she requested financial support from the denomination, and despite the fact that she died in 1933, by mid-century it was clear that the work Veenstra had begun in Nigeria simply had to be continued. Nigeria went on to become a fruitful field for Christian Reformed mission work and is now home to many CRC-related congregations with nearly 200,000 worshipers each Sunday.

During the past half-century, Christian Reformed World Missions has witnessed a steady expansion of its work in every corner of the world. Although

the rise of communism after 1949 made missionary work in many places (including China) difficult, if not impossible, other fields continued to open up. Central America, South America, Asia, and Africa became the targets of concerted efforts to bring the gospel in both word and deed.

The "deed" portion of that work was magnified immensely after 1960 with the formal establishment of a diaconal service agency called Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. CRWRC went on to become an agency able to respond quickly to natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes as well as to sponsor longer-term programs designed to enable people to provide for themselves and their communities. CRWRC also tried to increase people's health in disease-prone areas of the world by digging wells to provide clean drinking water and by bringing medicines and health care.

Johanna Veenstra, missionary

Today the Christian Reformed presence on earth can be truly described as global. In addition to ministries of all kinds throughout the United States and Canada, World Missions and CRWRC have established a presence in the Ivory Coast, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Taiwan, Japan, Guam, Laos, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, France, Hungary, Russia, the Netherlands, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico. Clearly those in the late nineteenth century who knew that the CRC could not remain inwardly focused can be credited with not only helping the denomination be faithful to the Great Commission but also with helping the CRC to flourish and become a key part of the larger North American and the global church scene.

In 1907 the CRC turned fifty. On its golden anniversary, the denomination could look back gratefully at how far it had come. With a total membership of around 63,000 members in 165 congregations, the CRC was still much smaller than the Reformed Church in America, which numbered 154,000

Baptism in China

souls nationwide. But the CRC was about to begin one of its strongest periods of growth ever, more than tripling its membership and nearly tripling its total number of congregations by 1957. Of course, this second fifty-year period of CRC history was also at times tumultuous. Along with the rest of the world, Christian Reformed members endured the terrible shocks of two world wars, a severe economic depression, news of the Holocaust, and, by mid-century, looming fears of nuclear annihilation. As often happens, the stress caused by times of global crisis sometimes fosters stress in other areas. Tense times tend to make people tense about everything.

Some of that stress may account for the CRC's struggles in the first half of the twentieth century, but there were also internal sources of anxiety. As noted earlier, the influx of members associated with Kuyper's *Doleantie* secession in the Netherlands introduced new members to the CRC who, although speaking basically the same Reformed language as the descendants of the *Afscheiding,* spoke that mother tongue with a rather different theological accent. In addition to this potential source of disagreement on some of the finer points of theology, the CRC was finally an immigrant denomination. As such, it faced the challenges that all immigrant groups eventually encounter. Over time, the older generation, who still spoke Dutch

and who had come directly from the Netherlands, gave way to the next generation, who were born in America and preferred to speak English.

The first congregation I served was Second CRC in Fremont, Michigan. Second CRC, like many congregations around the denomination, traces its roots back to 1914. By that time, Fremont already had two Christian Reformed congregations in close proximity, one in the heart of Fremont and the other in neighboring Reeman. So why was it necessary to establish yet another congregation? The issue in Fremont and in many places in the early twentieth century was the language used in worship. Second CRC in Fremont was founded by those who wanted to worship in English instead of Dutch. Those who opposed this switch to the language of the land appealed to far more than a traditionalism of the "we never did it that way before" variety. During those years of transition and struggle from one language to the other, serious articles were written in *De Wachter* and *The Banner* alleging that it might not even be possible to adhere to Reformed theology in a language other than Dutch. Something might get lost (or worse, corrupted) in translation. To be Reformed was to speak Dutch!

Over time, of course, this controversy faded as fewer and fewer Christian Reformed members spoke Dutch even in their homes, much less at church. But other cultural pressures also came to bear on the denomination, some of which were expressed in theological pronouncements. The third decade of the twentieth century was known as "The Roaring 20s" in the secular world. The CRC roared in those years too—but not in the exuberant manner of the wider society. Instead the denomination was consumed with controversy and rife with attempts to hold at bay the influence of the world.

The 1920s began with controversy when Professor Ralph Janssen, who taught Old Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary, was accused of teaching his students un-Reformed views of Scripture. Critics feared a creeping form of incipient liberalism that was being imported to North America from the liberal citadels of European—especially German—universities. Janssen, they claimed, was diminishing the sacred character of God's holy Word by taking a rationalistic approach to some of the miracles in the Old Testament (suggesting, for instance, that God could have worked through natural phenomena in nature). Janssen was also accused of undercutting the inspired nature of the Bible by promoting the idea that the Bible had resulted from a long and complicated process of editing and piecing together by many writers and editors across many centuries of time. Janssen's seminary colleagues

tried twice (and failed twice) to make the seminary board take action. When these professors felt that Synod 1920 had failed to go far enough in reprimanding Janssen, they communicated their concerns to the wider denomination through articles and brochures. This stirred things up sufficiently so that by 1921 the board gave Janssen a year-long "vacation" from teaching. Janssen used his free time to defend himself and attack his most vociferous opponents, chiefly colleagues Foppe Ten Hoor, and also Rev. Herman Hoeksema, who had been using his regular column in *The Banner* to pillory Janssen's teachings. When Janssen refused to appear before the delegates to defend himself in person, the synod moved to depose him on the grounds of insubordination and heresy.

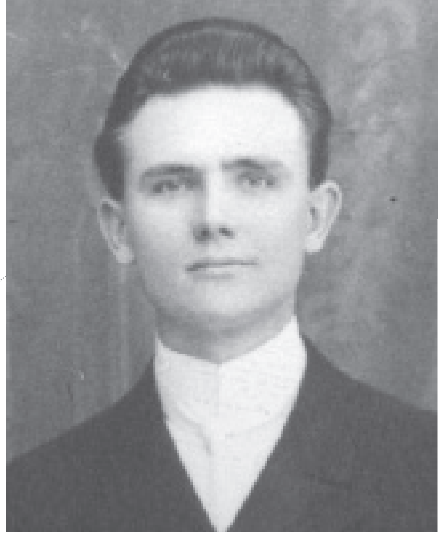
Ralph Janssen

It was a victory for Janssen's critics, including Herman Hoeksema. But, as James Bratt notes, "Hoeksema would soon learn that the sword of hatred cut more ways than one" (Bratt, p. 110). Within just a few years' time, Hoeksema would find himself on the losing end of a synodical battle that forced him to leave the CRC. If the Janssen case was a CRC battle to keep European liberalism at bay, the Hoeksema matter was more in-house, as it caused the CRC to grapple with common grace, one of the teachings imported by Abraham Kuyper's followers. As much as anything, common grace encapsulated the outgoing and optimistic side of the Positive Calvinists—an optimism that grew well in the soil of the optimistic American spirit of the 1920s. But some folks from the Confessionalist side of the Reformed tradition had always been suspicious of this belief. Dealing with common grace was, in a sense, an accident waiting to happen.

And in the mid-1920s it did. Without describing the ins and outs of this controversy, we can summarize by reporting what synod said. In the end, synod affirmed that there is such a thing as common grace, which is not the same thing as saving grace in Christ but is a divine gift that is present even in the lives of unbelievers. Through common grace God manifests a certain favor

toward all creatures by which God both restrains sin from being as bad as it could be in individuals and in whole societies, and God nurtures good gifts in people—gifts that enable also non-Christians to do civic good, produce excellence in the arts, and generally contribute to goodness in all of life.

But some in the CRC dissented from these ideas, and Herman Hoeksema became their chief spokesman. Hoeksema and others ardently believed that the very word "grace" had to be restricted to God's saving work through Christ Jesus. The "total depravity" of unregenerate reprobates was total indeed: they were incapable of producing works that could be considered "good" in any sense worth talking about.



Herman Hoeksema

More was at stake here than some fine point of theological reflection. Those opposed to the concept shared a palpable fear that embracing common grace would erode the differences between the church and American culture, possibly opening up the floodgates through which an ugly tide of worldliness would flow. They feared that if the CRC became still more Americanized by promoting common grace, it risked losing all that made the Reformed heritage so dear to their hearts. With so much at stake, the battle became fierce. Although Synod 1924 weighed in on the side of promoting common grace, they surrounded this affirmation with ringing warnings against modernism and worldliness. It urged all Christian Reformed congregations "to fight tooth and nail" to maintain the antithesis, the abiding distinction, between society and the church (quoted in Bratt, p. 115).

If this kind of world-shunning sentiment was intended to soften the blow of synod's wider endorsement of common grace, it did not succeed. Hoeksema railed all the more against synod's decision in published materials and from his pulpit at Eastern Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids. The ensuing controversy eventually led to discipline procedures against Hoeksema and his ouster from the denomination. Those who followed him out of the CRC formed the Protestant Reformed churches.

Delegates at Synod 1924

A split in the church is always the unhappiest possible outcome in any disagreement among Christians. This particular split remains painful for many, and not infrequently there are pleas to investigate healing the rift. But, as is often the case, after many years of being apart, subsequent developments tend to widen the differences between two groups to the point where what may have been a fairly small gap starts to look more like a chasm.

For its part, synod continued to affirm its desire to build a barrier between the church and the world. In a speakeasy society where flappers danced the Charleston and where the nickelodeon was becoming all the rage, Synod 1928 took a stand against "worldly amusements," outlawing for the CRC faithful the practices of gambling, dancing, and theater attendance. Again to quote Bratt's assessment, the 1920s ended with the CRC erecting a kind of religious fortress. Common grace had been upheld, which was a kind of victory for the more outgoing wing of the Reformed tradition. But the rest of the decade witnessed a firm holding of the traditional line. Inside the ecclesiastical fortress that the CRC had built for itself, church members would huddle together to endure the terrible years that were about to come crashing down upon the world.

By the time the world emerged from the rigors and horrors of the 1930s and 40s, the CRC had managed nearly two decades of relative calm. The denomination added seventy-eight new congregations and 40,000 members. While the world had been in turmoil, the church had been relatively tran-

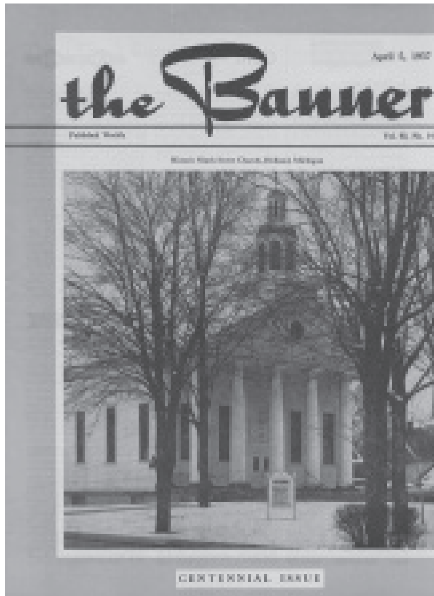
quil. But that was about to change in the 1950s. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the denomination's next major flap coincided once again with external pressures from the wider world. For thousands of Christian Reformed GIs returning from the war, the world had become bigger, and their horizons were further expanded through the opportunity to attend college under the GI Bill. By the 1950s the walls of the ecclesiastical fortress built by the CRC appeared to be cracking, allowing new influences to seep in.

Once again, Calvin Seminary faculty found themselves the focus of significant quarreling as the denomination grappled with the "communist menace" in the East. By this time the neo-orthodoxy of Karl Barth had become a major player in theology and was being promoted in many seminaries and universities worldwide. Perhaps it was this influence that led some Calvin faculty members to suggest the formation of a Ph.D. program at Calvin as a way to keep future seminary professors safe through an in-house education from start to finish. Others on the faculty disagreed fiercely, deeming this a very un-Reformed approach to the world. In any case, the faculty was so completely at odds with itself that Synod 1952 made the extraordinary move of sacking nearly the entire teaching staff at Calvin Seminary.

Although this severe move brought more peace to the seminary community, disagreements continued elsewhere. *The Reformed Journal,* founded in 1951, gave voice to the more progressive, optimistic, Kuyperian wing of the CRC; *Torch and Trumpet,* founded one month later, was the forum for expressing a more reflexive case for the tradition. As the 1950s progressed, the *Reformed Journal* repeatedly pleaded for theological creativity and the freedom for theologians to explore new angles on old truths; *Torch and Trumpet* criticized such a stand, seeing it as a threat to orthodoxy and the purity of doctrine, to which the church had to adhere with all its strength.

By the time the CRC celebrated its centennial in 1957, it was able to look back at a varied history full of triumphs and steady growth that bore loving witness to the grace of God. But it could not avoid noting moments that were sobering and sad too. The church that had been formed out of multiple secessions had suffered a split of its own. The Christian Reformed community was perceived by some as being combative and occasionally mean-spirited, sacrificing love for the sake of fierce adherence to the tradition. Perhaps that explains in part the theme of the centennial celebration: "God's Favor Is Our Challenge." Many contended that by the grace of God, the CRC had been given a very refined doctrine. So in his lead article in the April 3, 1957,

centennial celebration issue of *The Banner,* Marvin J. Vanderwerp laid out the very first prerequisite of meeting the challenge of God's favor: "a sincere concern for the truth." Vanderwerp went on to claim, rightly, that the very existence of the CRC as a denomination "is fundamentally a matter of doctrine." Looking toward the future, Vanderwerp contended that the CRC would not survive unless there was a revival of teaching doctrine to the youth and making their parents as enthusiastic about such matters as earlier generations had been. On that same page, Henry Schultze similarly claimed that Christian education is what enabled the CRC to survive as long as it had: "Throughout the years we as a church have been able, under God, to remain true to our basic confessions chiefly through the sustained teachings of our Christian schools. Our distinctiveness has been preserved for us largely by the work done in our school rooms."



Centennial edition of *The Banner,* 1957

One hundred years after the CRC had been founded as a move away from those perceived to be watering down the Reformed tradition, the writers celebrating the 1957 anniversary demonstrated by their words how deeply ingrained the desire for doctrinal purity remained. The intellectual rigor required to do that in an ever-changing world has always been and still remains one of the CRC's greatest strengths.

The apostle Paul said that those who are strong must lovingly bear with those who are weak. If the CRC's first hundred years proved anything, it was precisely how difficult that is to do, especially when each side of any given dispute is certain that it is the strong one! But if in 1957 the members of the CRC thought they had persevered through a century of tremendous change, they were right. What they could not have imagined was that the changes of the first hundred years were just a foretaste of the incredible changes the next fifty years would bring. To that more recent part of the story we now turn.