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Timeless
TRUTHS
for a Changing Culture

Treasures from
The Torch and Trumpet

Compiled and Edited by Jerome Julien

Timeless Truths for a Changing Culture
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This 70th Anniversary memorial anthology is dedicated to the memory of Reformed Fellowship Inc.'s first board of directors who were responsible for its founding and incorporation as a beacon in opposition to a growing modernistic tendency that was developing in the Christian Reformed Churches. These brothers are listed below as they are found in the original Articles of Incorporation dated February 21, 1951.



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We are also thankful for the financial contributions from members of Reformed Fellowship, Inc. that have made the publication of this anthology possible.

Finally, we are grateful to our God who motivated the authors to write the articles that are contained in these pages, and in our publications over the last 70 years.

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* Also currently spelled Wycliffe.

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Introduction

Seventy years ago the Reformed Fellowship, a very young organization, published its first magazine called *Torch and Trumpet*. Since then its name has been changed to *The Outlook*. The publication has been blessed to have had faithful editors, writers who have represented a broad group of Reformed churches, and board members who have come from Christian Reformed, United Reformed, Protestant Reformed, Presbyterian Church of America, and Orthodox Presbyterian churches.

In an early issue of *Torch and Trumpet* it was stated that the magazine's "purpose is to give sharpened expression to [the Reformed] faith, stimulate the doctrinal sensitivity of those who profess this faith, help promote the spiritual welfare and purity of the Reformed churches, and further the interests of all Kingdom Institutions of Reformed caliber."

Sad to say, many of the articles which have been published during those early years are collecting dust and have been forgotten. As we rejoice in God's faithfulness, it is our desire to place before you only a small portion of the many articles which have been published during the first ten years. Choosing the articles that are included was difficult for there were many others that could have been reprinted.

Of course, you understand that some of the articles may contain dated material. We have sought to do only the barest editing. Sometimes you will see an ellipsis (. . .) or brackets [. . .] to indicate something has been omitted or added. Otherwise, you will read each article as it was originally printed.

It is our prayer that this publication will be a blessing to you in your walk with the Lord, and that these articles will prove to be as much of a blessing to you as they were to our Reformed brothers and sisters seventy years ago.

Jerome Julien

January 7, 2021

To Whet Your Appetite



These three articles will give you the flavor of what this anthology is like. We trust that you will find them as interesting and helpful as they were seventy years ago.

One

Sunday Morning—1900

“Peter” Palmer



This delightful little story reminds us about what went into going to worship over one hundred years ago. By comparison, how easy our lives are today! “Peter” Palmer (“Peter,” a self-chosen nickname) was the wife of Dr. Edwin Palmer, who served Christian Reformed churches in Spring Lake, Ann Arbor, and Grandville Avenue (Grand Rapids), Michigan.

The buggy is all hitched and the mare is prancing, Ma. Let’s go!” While Pa holds the horse steady, Ma and the six children climb into the buggy and snuggle down under the carriage robe. The four miles to town quickly slip by to the clippety clop of the horse’s feet, and the white steeple of the little church soon comes into view. While Pa is unhitching the mare and putting her in one of the horse stalls alongside the church, Ma and the children make their way to the *c’storie kamer*, the consistory room at the rear of the building which also serves as society room and, on Sundays, as a gathering place for the worshippers.

Several families have already arrived and, having put their soapstone footwarmers on top of the wood stove in order to have them “lekker warm” for the homeward ride, are busily engaged in exchanging the latest local news. Pa soon joins

them. After a few minutes of warming his hands by the stove, and participating in the conversation, he beckons to Ma and the children that it is time to go into the sanctuary. Taking the boys with him, he goes to his customary pew on the right side, while Ma and the girls take their place on the left side of the aisle, each one getting her feet comfortably settled on her little box-like footwarmer which contains a pan of hot coals.

The church is now filling up rapidly, and soon the *dominie* enters with the consistory. He pauses for a moment at the foot of the steps leading up to the pulpit, and, with head bowed, silently asks God that he might not preach the Word in the wisdom of men, but in the power of the Spirit. He then ascends the pulpit, and the consistory take their places on a slightly raised platform to his right. From that elevated vantage point, they are well able to keep check on any nodding heads or on any undue activity on the part of the older boys sitting in the rear of the church.

As the small congregation has not yet found it possible to purchase an organ, the *voorzinger* steps up to the *lessenaar* (lectern) to lead the seated congregation in its psalms of praise. He sets the pitch, and when the congregation begins to drag, regulates the tempo as much as possible with his own singing. Of course, there are no hymns or special music of any kind. The *voorzinger*, also serving as a *voorlezer*, then proceeds to read the Law and the Scripture lesson for the day.

Gurglings from the front row announce the fact that there is a baptism this morning, and as soon as the *voorzinger* has returned to his seat, the *dominie* begins to read the baptism form. As the happy parents stand to answer the questions in the form, Pa realizes that the parents are but baptized members, never having made profession of faith. This procedure is not customary, nor approved of by the consistory, but it has been tolerated in the case of faithful members. The *dominie* then descends from the pulpit, and since there is no baptismal font he dips his hand into the

basin of water which an elder holds for him and administers the holy sacrament. Reascending the pulpit steps, the minister calls upon the congregation to join their hearts in prayer unto their covenant God. Thereupon, the members of the consistory rise and remain standing until the Amen has been pronounced.

It is now time for the offering. As the congregation sings a few verses from another psalm, the gloved deacons take their velvet collection bags, which are affixed to the end of long poles, and shuttle them in and out of the pews, exercising great care (in most cases) not to dishevel with the end of the poles any beards or hairdos of the worshippers behind them.

By the time the preacher begins his sermon (in Dutch, of course), the two crackling wood stoves and the flickering oil lamps have spread a welcome warmth throughout the sanctuary, for outside it is a bleak, cold day. In fact, some of the hardy farmers, so accustomed to working out of doors, become *benauwd*, and here and there a head begins to nod. Some resort to the orthodox remedy for this by standing for a minute or two until they feel refreshed. Others, however, prefer to succumb rather than to stand. One lone figure toward the front of the church, however, stands during the entire sermon. It is deaf old Jan, with his ear trumpet lifted on high, so as not to miss any of the message. As the sermon approaches being an hour in length, Ma passes a little silver box containing cologne to the other women in her pew. A sudden violent clatter in the stalls outside testifies that even the horses are getting impatient, and two men must leave to quiet the fracas. When the sermon is concluded and the congregation is singing the last psalm, two more men slip out the back in order to start hitching up their carriages and be the first ones to clip down the street after the service. Descending from the pulpit, the *dominie* is met by the consistory, who individually shake his hand as a sign that the sermon was sound in doctrine and met with their approval.

Pa then hurries out to the stalls to make the buggy ready. Ma picks up her hot soapstone footwarmer from the *c'storie kamer* stove, and with the children quickly joins Pa. They must not loiter now, for the afternoon service begins at two o'clock, and the distance home and back must be covered in time to allow for their simple Sunday noon meal.