

Introduction to This Issue

The *Reformed Review* is pleased to present this issue on the colleges of the RCA.

Elton Bruins lays a strong foundation of this issue by discussing the historical significance of the Reformed Church's many and varied educational endeavors from 1628 to 1866. Most readers will be surprised by the depth and breadth of RCA activity, and as they move to the next essays they will see how the life of its three continuing colleges relates to pre-1866 RCA history.

Three essays on the current RCA colleges are at the heart of this issue. Bruce Murphy, the president of Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa, discusses the history of Christian higher education at Northwestern; his description of Northwestern's current thinking on curricular and co-curricular reform will be thought-provoking for everyone engaged in Christian higher education. Arend Lubbers, first a president of Central College and then a longtime president of Grand Valley State University in Michigan, gives a fascinating personal reflection on the history and nature of Christian higher education at Central. Finally, Caroline Simon, professor of philosophy at Hope College, and James C. Kennedy, a professor of modern history in the Free University of Amsterdam, discuss the unique way that Hope College has defined its Christian identity. They draw upon their recent book, *Can Hope Endure?*, a careful, full-length treatment of Hope's relation to its Christian identity and mission.

Finally, George Brown, Jr., G.W. and Eddie Haworth Professor of Christian Education at Western Theological Seminary, offers a helpful survey of the extensive secondary literature on faith and higher education, most of it published in the last ten years. See also his essay on individual and institutional vocation that leads off the book review section.

Although not often recognized as such, the colleges of the RCA, past and present, have always been a critically important part of the RCA's mission. They have brought thousands of students to the knowledge and love of God, and deepened the faith of tens of thousands; they have nurtured generations of church leaders, both laity and clergy; and they have contributed to human betterment by the discovery of knowledge about human life, about the natural world in which we live, and about God. They deserve the continuing, sustaining support of the RCA.

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Editor