

A new year: 1986

We have entered a new year, and from now on shall write 1986 above our letters. People who are of Dutch origin and know a little bit of the Dutch church history almost automatically realize that this year is a centennial. One hundred years ago the second reformation, known as the “Doleantie,” took place in the Dutch Reformed Churches. This church historical event will be remembered in the present year.

It is remarkable that exactly half a century later, now fifty years ago, the Synod of Amsterdam, 1936, started a course that would lead to the suspension of Dr. K. Schilder and Dr. S. Greydanus from their office, and thus to the Liberation, eight years later.

1886 — year of the Doleantie

In 1834 a new reformation of the church took place in The Netherlands. In 1816, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC: Nederlands Hervormde Kerk) was placed under the yoke of the state government. King William I, together with liberal church leaders, striving for a political and ecclesiastical unity in the nation, had come to the conclusion that this goal could best be achieved if the king would be the earthly head of the church. The church would further be ruled by a hierarchical system of church boards, with, under the king, the general synod ruling over the lower regional synods which, in turn, ruled over the classical church boards. And these classical boards ruled over the consistories.

The reader remembers that this hierarchical system had to promote and maintain a unity in the church above doctrinal divisions. This meant practically the protection of liberalism. The hierarchical system had adopted a subscriptional binding to the Reformed confessions that was no binding at all. Before, the office-bearers were bound to the Three Forms of Unity *because* they were in accordance with the Scriptures. Now they were bound to these standards *insofar* as they agreed with the Scriptures. The reader understands that this meant that now every minister and other office-bearer and member of the DRC could decide himself what part of the Three Forms of Unity was in agreement with the Scriptures (as he read them) and what was not.

When in the early thirties of the previous century Hendrick de Cock and others turned back to the Reformed doctrine, they were considered to be disrupters of the unity of the church; they were suspended and deposed from their office by the hierarchy, including the king. Hendrick de Cock and others with him, then seceded from the DRC, which had become a false church in their eyes and according to the Reformed confessions.

Not all Reformed believers went along with the Secession. Many true, Reformed, believers stayed in the DRC. Among them, the Lord gave men like G. Groen van Prinsterer, a lawyer and historian. He became a leader who contended for the Reformed faith, both in the DRC as well as in politics. He became

the father of the political anti-revolutionary party, and fought for a renewed enforcement of the Three Forms of Unity in the DRC. He did not succeed. There were not many who joined him in his struggle. In 1876, ten years before the Doleantie, he died.

But he had fellow soldiers and followers who continued his spiritual battle. We mention Dr. A. Kuyper and Dr. F.L. Rutgers (the great teacher of Reformed Church Polity), both minister of God’s Word, and Dr. D.P.D. Fabius, a young lawyer. All three of them were professors at the Free University, the Christian university based on Reformed principles, which Dr. Kuyper had established in 1880 in his struggle for the Reformed faith.

In 1886 this struggle led to a second secession from the DRC. A conflict broke out in Amsterdam between the Reformed consistory of the DRC congregation in Amsterdam and some of its liberal young members. The consistory refused to allow these unbelieving young members to publicly profess their “faith,” and, after they had succeeded to make that profession in a neighbouring congregation, the consistory refused to receive them as communicant members. The classical board placed itself behind these young people. The church building was seized. And the separation from the hierarchical system was a fact. Many followed in this second secession. And six years later, in 1892, the two church groups of the Secession and of the Doleantie found each other and merged.

The church political side

In this Editorial we can only be short in an evaluation of the Doleantie. The struggle that led to the Doleantie was radically the same as that in the Secession: the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands should bind themselves to the adopted standards, the Three Forms of Unity. This included a binding to the Reformed system of church government. Reformed church polity was a very strong point of the Doleantie, right from the beginning.

When we compare the beginning years of the Secession with the beginning of the Doleantie, we see an enormous difference on the point of the organization of the churches into a federation according to the Church Order of Dort. It took many years before the churches of the Secession had come to a solid organization based on that Church Order. With the Doleantie, the organization of the churches into a Reformed federation went smoothly and gave no difficulties. This was the consequence of the instruction of Dr. F.L. Rutgers, the master teacher of Reformed church polity in the Doleantie churches.

The word federation is derived from the Latin word “foedus.” This word means covenant. A Reformed federation of churches is a covenant of local churches, in which they promise to remain faithful to the LORD and His Word, and, for that reason, to the adopted confession. This covenant means further that these churches promise to be faithful to each other in binding each other to the agreements of their covenant. And for the

proper functioning of this covenant these churches adopted an antihierarchical Church Order.

If there was one thing that made the Roman leaders with their errors strong, it was the hierarchical system of church government. If there was one thing that gave liberalism power in the DRC in the nineteenth century, it was the hierarchical system of church government. Hierarchy is always a strong weapon in the hands of liberal leadership in a church or church group, with which it can dominate and manipulate the membership at large. That explains the aversion to it.

However, reaction against hierarchy as an instrument of liberalism can easily lead to an independentism that rejects a firm organization of local churches into a federation or covenant. But such a reacting independentism creates "ministerocracy" ("domino-cratie" in the Dutch language). This means that the local churches become minister-churches; churches dependent on, and dominated by, their minister. When, then, the ministers fall away, their churches fall apart. A clear example is the independent(istic) congregation of Rev. H.P. Scholte in Pella, Iowa.

It was the strength of the Doleantie, that, in its aversion to hierarchy, it did not fall into the trap of reactionism and independentism, but, liberated from a liberal hierarchically ruled church, returned to the Reformed system of church government as adopted in the Church Order of Dort.

With this Church Order of Dort the churches of the Doleantie did not become minister-dominated churches. They were churches that based their church life on the Reformed confessions with the help of their Reformed Church Order. In this connection I might be allowed to advise the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches to study the church political thinking and practice of the Doleantie. Such a study can prevent an identification of the truly Reformed system of church government according to the Church Order of Dort with hierarchy, and make clear that these two are each other's opposite.

1936 — the denial of the Doleantie

In 1936, at the General Synod of Amsterdam, the Reformed church polity of the Doleantie was denied and, on a certain point, exchanged for a hierarchical act, that led to more hierarchy.

Our Church Order, basically the Church Order of Dort, regulating the mutual agreements for the major assemblies, states in Article 30 that "These assemblies shall deal with no other than ecclesiastical matters and that in an ecclesiastical manner. A major assembly shall deal with those matters only which could not be finished in the minor assembly or which belong to its churches in common. A new matter which has not previously been presented to that major assembly may be put on the agenda only when the minor assembly has dealt with it."

It is clear from this article that a major assembly can only deal with those matters that are placed upon its table by the churches in the church orderly way. The churches, not the major assembly, determine the agenda of that major assembly. A major assembly cannot itself place certain matters on its agenda, neither can its members. This mutual Reformed agreement is one of the strong fences to ward off hierarchy. A major assembly that determines its own agenda and takes decisions accordingly has become a hierarchical church board.

This is what happened at the General Synod of Amsterdam 1936. The Classis Bolsward complained in a letter to this synod about the manner in which writers in church periodicals wrote against each other characterizing this manner as unbrotherly and confusing for the church people. This classis requested the synod to promote a bridling of this evil, so that a sound development and exchange of views could continue.

However, the synod did not answer this specific request. Instead it allowed its members to use this request in order to

come with a proposal that sent the synod in a totally wrong direction. This proposal read:

"the synod, noting the fact that in our churches ideas are propagated which deviate from doctrines that are, so far, generally accepted, and that, on the one hand, advocates of these ideas believe and assure that these conform entirely to Scripture and confession, while, on the other hand, the ques-



Abraham
Kuyper

tion is asked by many in our churches whether these ideas really are in agreement with Scripture and confession; judging that such uncertainty should not be continued; decides:

1. to appoint at least seven deputees ad hoc [= for this matter, J.G.]

2. to give these deputees the mandate:

a. to examine these ideas (which regard the following subjects, in alphabetical order: common grace, covenant of grace, immortality of the soul, pluriformity of the church, union of the two natures of Christ, self-examination) in their pertinent meaning and to compare them with Scripture and confession; and

b. to prepare a report on these matters for the next synod and to serve it with advice." (Acts, Article 212.)

See *De Feitelijke Toedracht. Tien Jaren Kerkstrijd*, by G. Jansen, pp. 7ff.

A plea for more brotherly polemics was answered with a decision to examine deviating doctrinal views, even though a request in that direction was not placed on the table of the synod by the minor assemblies, by the churches. Therefore, this decision was imposed upon the churches from above in a hierarchical way. This hierarchical line of action would be continued until, in 1944, a next synod suspended office-bearers from their office, and placed a whole church outside the federation, because they did not agree with the synodical decisions on the basis of Scripture, confession and Church Order. Indeed, here was a denial of the Reformed church polity of the Doleantie fifty years later. Opposition to this revived hierarchy ended in the Liberation of 1944.

It is good to remember what happened in the Doleantie, and to hold on to its good fruits, to maintain a Reformed, antihierarchical Church Order in order to remain a federation of confessionally faithful churches.

J. GEERTSEMA

The office of women; more precious than jewels

1. Equal rights?

We are living in the era of feminism. Everywhere we hear people talk about equal rights and equal opportunities. The classic role pattern of a woman, taking care of her household and raising children, has to be abandoned. A woman should have the same rights as a man. It is discrimination when a married woman is denied the opportunity to have a job and to take part in social life in the same way as her husband. The burden of raising children should be shared in an equitable way. It is already a thorn in the flesh of some feminists that only a woman can carry the burden of being pregnant. However, that is a "natural phenomenon" which no one can change. (If they could, they certainly would.) The inequality should not be made worse by forcing upon a woman a different role and denying her equal rights with the man.

That is the modern philosophy. We can find it in the feminist movement as well as in the government's proposed Affirmative Action Program. We can see the spin-off effect in many churches. Women have to be allowed to serve as office-bearers. In some churches only as deacons, in other churches also as elders and as ministers.

It is almost an exception that a mother stays home all day to run the household. Many consider it a humiliation for a woman to be confined to "dusting, cooking, and making the beds," as it is sometimes called denigratingly. That it is a dull and boring job, unworthy for an intelligent woman in the era of feminism.

How are we, as Christians, supposed to react and what should our attitude be in this respect? In what follows we will pay attention to a number of aspects which might too often be overlooked.

As is the case with many movements, also in this respect there is an element of truth in some of the complaints. The task of the mother is sometimes underestimated and undervalued. A job in an office or a professional career is often considered to be more important, to give more



satisfaction, and to be more exciting than being a housewife.

However, as is the case with many movements, going to the other extreme causes people to make the same mistakes which they say they are fighting or correcting.

Many married women have a job, and want to keep their job for a number of years before they have children. Others keep their job even though they have children and send their children to a day-care center, or the children have to manage without the parents for a couple of hours when they come home from school.

The basic reason for this development is not that being a housewife is an unimportant, boring job, or that such a role is imposed upon a married woman in a discriminating way. The underlying cause is that people underestimate the importance of the task of a housewife, and that they do not have enough respect for this position. This lack of respect is the real discrimination behind the feminist movement.

Before we turn to the Biblical guidelines in this respect, we will pay attention to some other aspects which play an important role today. One of them is the Affirmative Action Program of the federal government.

2. Affirmative actions

In the past we have voiced our objections against the work of Labour Unions and expressed our concern about the way they deal with certain issues. However, credit should be given when credit is due. The CLAC (Christian Labour Association of Canada) has made a submission to the federal government signaling a warning against the Affirmative Action Program. The submission is published under the title, "*Affirmative Actions: The Perils of Social Engineering.*" This submission is certainly worth studying by all who are interested in this matter. A firm stand is taken against the undermining of family life. Because this brochure has been sent to ministers of all churches to be used as

source material, we will use it as such in what follows.

The intention of the Affirmative Action Program of the federal government is to make equality in employment mandatory in the public sector and thereby strong pressure will be put on the private sector to do the same.

What does this "equality in employment" mean? Part of it is what they call "equal pay for work of equal value." That sounds reasonable. However, it is not as clear-cut a matter as it seems to be. It does not simply mean that a male and a female worker should be paid equally if they are doing the same job. That is called "equal pay for equal work," but "equal pay for work of equal value" means that every job has to be classified and "valued" according to a number of criteria. In this way the relative value has to be determined of a truck driver's job and the job of a secretary, the job of a firefighter and the job of a nurse. In this valuation the difference between typical male and female jobs has to be eliminated.

Another aspect of the Affirmative Action Program is that an employer has to hire an equal number of male and female workers, and that the average income of male and female workers should be the same.

However, the whole system ignores the reality of the market mechanism called *the law of supply and demand*. It also ignores the fact that male and female workers are not equal, but different. If a certain job can be done in a better way by women, more women will be hired and seek employment in that field. The "value" of a certain job cannot be determined in an artificial way. Such a system can only be used, and it will only work, as long as it is completely enforced by law. In general the market and the law of supply and demand will determine the "value" of a certain job. If a particular job is largely overpaid, more applicants will be attracted, the "supply" will increase and the "value" will go down. On the other hand, if a job is grossly underpaid, few will apply for the job and the law of supply and demand will increase the "value." That is why some unpleasant or dangerous jobs have comparatively high wages to attract people. The same counts for jobs for which qualifications are required which can be met by only a few.

A case in point is a mandatory minimum wage for young employees. If, by legislation this minimum wage is set too high, it will cause increased unemployment among young workers because most employers will prefer an experienced worker, rather than an apprentice or another young worker who has to be paid a relatively too high wage.

It is an undeniable fact that the government has the duty to interfere in cases

in which certain groups or individuals fall victim to an abuse of power or circumstances, or unwarranted profit making at the cost of people who are in a defenceless position. However, the whole idea behind the Affirmative Action Program is based on a wrong concept. Men and women are not equal. Both have their unique characteristics. The Affirmative Action Program flies in the face of reality. In professional sports this idea will never be accepted. It simply is not realistic. In the olympics, as well as in professional sports, male and female persons are not allowed to compete in running, jumping, swimming or any other branch of sports, and no one complains about discrimination or asks for affirmative actions. Although one particular person might be able to beat another individual, in general men and women are not equal. That is not a matter of higher or lower, of more or of less "value." It is a matter of being different. The same applies to a job. Although in many jobs men as well as women can be hired, the fact remains that in the one area men have a natural advantage, while in other professions women, in general, will perform better.

One of the reasons that in many "high ranking" positions less women can be found is that a great number of women with excellent qualifications do not want such a job and are not available for it. They prefer to be a mother rather than a business manager. That is also the reason why the average income of women in the work place will be less. A great number of


them leave the work force before they have climbed the ladder to the highest possible rank. The whole concept of the Affirmative Action Program does not fight discrimination but rather introduces discrimination. It introduces discrimination in downplaying and undervaluing the position of a full-time housewife. Her task is considered to be less important than the task of an office worker or a business manager, while in fact her task is one of the most important and high ranking positions available for a woman. The work of a housewife is certainly not of less value but rather invaluable, as we will see in section four.

Before we come to that point we will pay attention to another aspect which is quite often mentioned, namely the financial necessity for a married woman to have a job.

3. Financial necessity

We often hear the argument that having a job is a financial necessity for some married women. Without the job of the mother the family cannot make ends meet.

This is an important point and we should not disregard this aspect. There certainly can be a family situation in which the husband, for whatever reason, cannot provide the necessary means to sustain his family. Especially in cases in which a handicap or other health reasons puts the father in a less favourable position we should not think too lightly about the problems and ensuing financial consequences. However, still a few things have to be

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added to avoid a lopsided picture of the matter at stake.

I am not qualified to give advice with respect to the management of a family budget, but still, I am convinced that a housewife who makes a full-time job of caring for her family, can save a lot of money with homemade things, while a mother with a job outside the house has to spend extra money for the household because she does not have the time to prepare everything herself. I wholeheartedly agree with much of the advice given by an expert in this field, Mrs. F. VanderBoom, in her column "Around the kitchen table" in *Reformed Perspective*. I wonder whether a mother can "make" more money, or save more money, by staying home and making all kinds of things herself rather than having a job and relying on others.

Sometimes the argument is heard that the mother has to take on a job to earn

"education" is not in line with a Christian life-style.

What counts for the mother who has a job outside the house should be considered also when the father has to go out every evening. It is certainly important that a father uses his talents to serve the congregation and to pay family visitations as an elder. But it has an adverse effect, and it is certainly wrong, when the father is so busy with all kinds of congregational work that his own children do not receive enough attention. Once I overheard a boy say, "My father is so busy helping other members of the congregation solve their problems that he has no time to listen to me."

We should try to set our priorities straight. If a mother takes on a job to pay the school fees, and the result is that the child after school is on his own for some time, the positive effect of a Reformed education may very well be surpassed by

"The whole concept of the Affirmative Action Program does not fight discrimination but rather introduces discrimination."

the money necessary for sending the children to a Christian school. I will be the last one to deny the importance of a Reformed education. The parents have made the promise, on the day when their child was baptized, that they will instruct the child and have it instructed according to the Word of God. There is no doubt about that. Still we have to keep in mind that the school cannot replace the education at home. It is extremely important for a child, when it comes home from school, to find a home where it can relax, be cared for, and find support. The child might want to talk about his problems, he may have questions which need to be dealt with. Slowly the child grows to maturity. The way guidance is given in this process of growing can determine the course of his whole life. Recently a specialist in the field of child rearing made the complaint that nowadays children are pushed to maturity like beef cattle or chickens. There is no time for them to be children. They have to be independent and on their own too early. And, if they, because of their lack of experience, go in the wrong direction, the parents complain about an unmanageable youth. However, the cause is a lack of support and guidance during the process of growing to maturity. Children have to learn from someone. They need support and guidance. If the parents are too busy to give them the attention they need they will turn to their peers, or they will be educated "in the street" or in the day-care center. No one should be surprised when this

the negative effect of hanging around without proper help and support. The child should not be pushed to maturity. He should be given the time to be a child and to grow up as a child, with the necessary help of parents. It certainly does not mean that the child should be sent to a public school instead, but it means that the parents have to consider carefully what the priorities are. It might be necessary to cut down on other expenses. It is also possible, that by staying at home with the children, the mother can save money in the way frequently suggested by Mrs. F. VanderBoom in *Reformed Perspective*.

Another reason to take on a job is that people have to pay off their house. Not long ago someone said, "We cannot have children the first couple of years. We have to pay off our house. If we have children right away, we will not be able to send them to a Christian school." After what we have written in a previous article about having children, we need not say much about this approach. It separates what God has joined together and establishes wrong priorities. The one says, "We cannot afford to have children because we have to pay off a house." The other says, "We cannot afford to buy or pay off a house, because we have to raise a family." It all depends on how we set our priorities.

4. A preeminent position

We will now pay attention to the main

point in the whole discussion namely, the position of a housewife and the importance of her task. What does the Bible say about it? Is the task of a housewife a dull, boring, and unimportant job? Is she just confined to what denigratingly is called "dusting, cooking, and making the beds?" The Bible speaks in a completely different way in Proverbs 31:10-31.

The position of a housewife is not an unimportant one but one of the most eminent positions in human life. Today there are discussions about the question whether a woman can be an office-bearer in the church, but at the same time many neglect or downplay the most important office a woman can have in human life. Proverbs 31:10 says that it is difficult to find someone who qualifies for this office. "A good wife who can find?" Is the task of a housewife unimportant? Proverbs 31:10 says that "she is far more precious than jewels."

People consider the role of a housewife dull and boring. A woman has the right to take on a more important, more rewarding, and more exciting job. However, in Proverbs 31:10-27 we read:

"A good wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
She does him good, and no harm,
all the days of her life.
She seeks wool and flax,
and works with willing hands.
She is like the ships of the merchant,
she brings her food from afar.
She rises while it is yet night
and provides food for her household
and tasks for her maidens.
She considers a field and buys it;
with the fruits of her hands she plants a vineyard.
She girds her loins with strength and
makes her arms strong.
She perceives that her merchandise is
profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night.
She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.
She opens her hand to the poor,
and reaches out her hands to the
needy.
She is not afraid of snow for her
household,
for all her household are clothed in
scarlet.
She makes herself coverings;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
Her husband is known in the gates,
when he sits among the elders of the
land.
She makes linen garments and sells
them;
she delivers girdles to the merchant.
Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the time to come.
She opens her mouth with wisdom,

and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
She looks well to the ways of her household,
and does not eat the bread of idleness.”

This is one great eulogy on the pre-eminent position of the housewife. That is certainly not the picture of a dull job. On the contrary, it is a very exciting position. She rises early in the morning. She looks rather like someone who runs an important business. She provides food and makes clothing. She even buys and sells merchandise. Apparently she also knits and weaves clothes for others. That is the way she makes money and runs her business.

We find the conclusion of this “resume” or “curriculum vitae” in the verses 28-31.

“Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:
‘Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all.’
Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD
is to be praised.
Give her of the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the gates.”

Here the housewife is praised. How often does that really happen? The greatest discrimination today is that people do not value this position in the Biblical way. In excellence she surpasses many. It is a preeminent role. Let us not adapt to the worldly standards and the theory of feminists, which is taking away the most excellent role and the preeminent position of a housewife.

We do not have women in office in the consistories. But they are therefore certainly not less important. No glamour of a professional job can compete with the excellence described in Proverbs 31. That is the most desirable and rewarding office for a woman. One of the most important offices in the Christian church. Let us not ignore this Biblical teaching.

5. Unceasing education

We already mentioned that the effect of Christian education in a Reformed school can be undone by the effect of a lack of support from the parents. We have to keep in mind that education is a perpetual process. An unceasing, ongoing education is taking place. Although parents and children are not always aware of it, it is tremendously important that children receive continual and consistent guidance. The way in which they are guided and supported by the mother, before they go to kindergarten and after they come home from school, can determine their future. It is all the little things they hear, the questions they ask, the answers

they get, and the atmosphere they live in that prepare them for their future. Conclusive is not how much academic knowledge they gather, but, whether they are taught the right way of life.

In the Western world many children are left on their own, forced and pushed to maturity. They grow up in the street or are sent to a day-care center. Specialists in the field of child rearing are concerned about the increasing frustration among children. Many are unhappy and dissatisfied in spite of the luxury in which they live. Many are desperate and seek refuge in drugs, or commit suicide. In the Soviet

ties straight. We have seen and heard about cases in which the parents work hard to make as much money as possible. The father works almost day and night and has no time to talk with his children. The mother has a job and the children have to find their own way when they come home from school, or they are brought to a day-care center. The parents can afford all kinds of luxury. The children are spoiled with too much pocket money and expensive toys. However, the tragic result is that after a number of years, when the house is paid off, the children are gone. They have found their destination somewhere else.

Psalm 128:2

*Your wife a vine resembles, fruitful within your house.
Like olive shoots assemble the children God allows.
Around your table sitting, they are a rich reward,
A blessing great and fitting for him who fears the LORD.*

Union they seem to be better aware of the importance of child rearing. Many children there are trained and raised in government ruled institutions. They are systematically, and very strictly, indoctrinated already at a very young age. And it works. We should not take over their system. But it shows us how important the very early stage is and what consistent and unceasing education can bring about.

God has created the family as a haven of security for children, where they can grow up with the necessary support and guidance of the parents. Among the people of Israel great emphasis was, and still is, put on family life. The children were educated in the first place within the family. The father and the mother had the most important place in this process. In Proverbs 1:8,9 we read, “Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and reject not your mother’s teaching; for they are a fair garland for your head, and pendants for your neck.” Let us keep in honour this Biblical pattern. Not what the feminists movement tries to make us believe should determine our opinion, but what Holy Scripture says about the preeminent office of a housewife, “More precious than jewels.”

6. Who pays the bill?

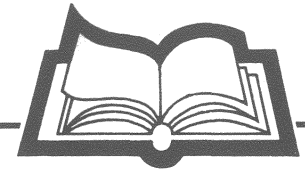
Let us be on the alert to set our priori-

When the parents finally have time and want to talk with their children, it is too late and they have lost the line of communication with them.

This is certainly not the general picture. Fortunately not. It is somewhat exaggerated to emphasize the danger. But many parents may recognize some aspects of their own situation in it. We hope that it may give food for thought in order to keep us on the right track. It is easy to complain about youngsters who are getting into mischief or who are unmanageable. Parents can try hard to correct a rebellious boy when he is fourteen years old. It is much better and more effective to begin fourteen years earlier with paying attention to the unceasing education of the child. It might be nice, even to a certain extent necessary, to provide some extra income for the family. However, if it is to be at the cost of attention paid to the children when they are young, the parents may sometimes have to pay dearly for it later. They may have to pay the bill in a way they had never expected.

Therefore, let us not underestimate the importance of the task of a housewife. It is a woman in the most feminine office, more precious than jewels.

W. POWELSE



“What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.”

Philippians 4:9

Resolution to continue

There is always a measure of uncertainty when entering into a new year. We do not know what will befall us, whether it be good or evil. In various newspapers and magazines, we can read many extensive predictions concerning the expected events of the new year, but all this speculation is futile. It remains a matter of “wait and see.”

When the apostle Paul writes his letter to the Philippians, he is also in a somewhat uncertain position. His case has been dealt with before the imperial court of Rome, and now he awaits a final decision. Paul has done what he could, and now he must “wait and see,” giving himself into the hand of the Lord. He might be released (and he hopes for this so that he may yet serve the churches), or he might be condemned to die (and he considers this a matter of gain, for then he will be with Christ). Still the outcome is unsure. In this very uncertain situation, he writes this letter, possibly his last one.

Seeing this very serious situation, we might expect that the apostle in conclusion has much to write to the Philippians. Whatever he still wishes to pass on, he must do so right away, for his time may be limited. Will we now get in this last letter a final message of great meaning for the Philippians and for all the churches?

Indeed, Paul does have something to say. Except, it is nothing new, nothing spectacular. The Philippians have already heard it before. Paul even emphasizes this, “What you *have* learned and received and heard and seen” Even at this occasion the apostle doesn’t really have anything new to say. There is nothing to add; it has already been said. The Philippians should not look to Paul’s final moments, but to his *entire* ministry, his complete teaching and total testimony.

The apostle Paul does not see his possible death as a disaster for the churches. For it is not as if his teaching were unclear or unfinished. Through God’s grace, the apostle has been faithful in his doctrine and conduct. The Philippians know how they are to live before God. They must simply continue on, doing what they have seen and learned in the apostolic ministry.

Paul gives no famous last words. No grand projections for the future. Also no deep thoughts about the past. We can leave the musing and the dreaming to the world. He says simply: do what I have taught you. There lies your task, now and in the future. Live according to the doctrine which you have learned. Be Christians in deed, persevere in the Truth. Regardless of what happens to me, Paul, *continue* your life as children of God.

Some people have the habit towards the end of the old year or at the beginning of a new year to make all kinds of elaborate, public promises, usually to better their life in

some way. The so-called “new year’s resolutions.” After a few enthusiastic days such resolutions mostly crumble under the pressures of daily life. We should not make any wild resolutions, but if we resolve anything, we should simply *resolve to continue* in the service of the Lord. Continue the same battle against sin, and take up our cross with renewed vigor. Remain faithful to the given Word of God.

Such is the style of God’s people, from year to year. No fancy stuff or impossible resolutions, but simply continuing on in the service of the Lord with a view to the new Jerusalem. Applying what has been taught and keeping to what has been received, even when apostles pass away and the years progress. Here lies our greatest challenge in life.

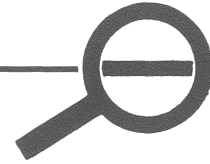
We live in a time of great uncertainty, crisis, and loneliness. People are more and more letting go of God’s Word, and false religion is gaining territory. Medical science takes great strides ahead; yet the hospitals are overflowing with patients. Amidst growing affluence, dissatisfaction is found everywhere. The world will continue, also in 1986, as long as God permits, showing its own style: groping, searching, screaming, and protesting. But God’s people show a different style: the resolve to continue in faith, truly comforted by the gospel of Christ’s victory over sin and death, believing His sure promises.

And, you know, then it will always be special. For the apostle adds, “. . . and the God of peace will be with you.” If we continue steadfastly in the Lord’s service, being satisfied with His covenant promises, He will be with us. That was the special mark of the year that lies behind us, and that is what it will be also in the new year! God with us. *Immanuel*. That was God’s grace in 1985, and so it will be in 1986.

Paul writes, “the God of peace.” This peace is the deep reality of the reconciliation by the blood of Christ. When the Bible speaks of peace, it means: spiritual and material well-being. This peace is a pouring out over us of the benefits of Christ, our Lord. To have this peace (with God through Christ) means to be able to say under all circumstances: it is good between me and my God! This peace alone grants joy and removes uncertainties. It makes life live-able and bear-able. It does not mean that there never will be anxiety or distress. But the God who alone can give this peace, in His Son, will be with us in all our trials.

It is written as a promise for the church. Hold fast to God’s Word, strive to do His will, and the God of peace will guide us on our way. We resolve to continue in His service and He resolves to give us in Christ whatever we need. In this light we say: it will be a very good year.

CL. STAM



Did CRC Conference really bury a ghost?

BURNABY, BC — Church conferences don't normally confront ghosts, let alone try to bury one, but that is precisely what the Fourth Pre Council Conference of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada sought to do as it met on November 11 and 12 in the New Westminster CRC.

The ghost in question was the claim that the CRC today is merely a copy of the Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands (GKN) — some 25 years behind the times. According to this idea, the negative changes in the GKN over the past two decades are bound, in due time, to affect the CRC in North America as well.

Not so, concluded the conference. The CRC is on a different track than the one travelled by the GKN, according to the principal speakers and their respondents. Moreover, it was shown that few members of the CRC today are still influenced by the current GKN, and that recent trends in both churches have been markedly different.

The main conference speakers were Dr. Paul Schrotenboer, General Secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, and Rev. Jacob Kuntz of Kitchener, Ontario. The former discussed theological and ecclesiastical trends in the GKN while Pastor Kuntz examined changes in pastoral and ethical dimensions.

The two respondents were Rev. Bastiaan Nederlof of Victoria, BC, and Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven, Editor of *The Banner*.

This is the beginning of an article in *Calvinist Contact* of November 29, 1985. The heading of this article reads "CRC Conference Turns Ghostbusters." It is written by Reinder J. Klein. He continues with giving his readers a summary of what Dr. Schrotenboer said. Part of it I take over.

The GKN. Dr. Schrotenboer highlighted a dramatic reversal in the GKN — the shift from pre-war principalism to a postwar emphasis on involvement. There was also the significant break out of the confessional "straight jacket" into the perceived freedom of a nonconfessional stance

How does one account for the GKN's changed mentality? The impact of the war and that of the world church were identified as factors, but none was said

to be as influential as one man — Prof. Berkhouwer, who led the Dutch church "from isolation to engagement. . . ."

This new mindset is founded largely on the freedom ideal, an ideal that has come to expression in six distinct ways, according to Dr. Schrotenboer. They are: 1. Academic freedom — theologians are allowed to teach unpalatable concepts. 2. Hesitation to discipline — especially office bearers in doctrinal disputes. 3. Preference for the underdog. 4. Acceptance (also to the ministry) of homophile persons. 5. Rejection of nuclear arms. 6. Stress on the Love command.

Schrotenboer also contended that the view of Scripture current in the GKN is "influenced largely by a modern philosophical view of truth; namely, that truth is relational, which is more akin to a form of modern subjectivism than to the objectivism of the past."

The Confessions he added, no longer hold the central position they once enjoyed.

The younger ones among the readers of *Clarion* probably do not know the name of Prof. Berkhouwer. He was professor at the Free University in Amsterdam and taught dogmatics. He was also the chairman of the General Synod 1943-1945 which suspended Professors S. Greydanus and K. Schilder. He led the GKN "out of the confessional 'straightjacket'" and out of the Reformed isolation into a freedom that is not the freedom of the Scriptures but of licentious liberalism.

In conclusion we can say that the GKN have forsaken the doctrine of the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures as we confess that e.g. in the Articles 3-7 of the Belgic Confession; and further, the GKN have abandoned the binding to the confessions. That is the root of all the other deviations, like acceptance of homosexuality, membership in the World Council of Churches, total lack of discipline regarding doctrine and life, and so on.

The CRC

Let us now listen to what the speakers said regarding the CRC. Schrotenboer said, among other things:

Turning briefly to the CRC, the speaker said he found it more misleading than helpful to claim that the CRC is on the same track as the GKN, only 25 years behind. The issue of women in ecclesiastical office, for example, was dealt with quite differently in the CRC, and the same could be said about the CRC position on homosexuality and on Scripture

Schrotenboer also saw differences in the CRC's interchurch relations, in its continued desire to base decisions concerning ethical issues on Scriptures and the confessions.

Rev. Kuntz gave the following picture, according to the article in *Calvinist Contact*:

The CRC in North America followed a different road, asserted Kuntz. Rather than accommodate, CRC synods in the past 20 years have sought to lead, to resolve issues instead of merely suggesting approaches for discussion. On homosexuality ('73) for instance, the *practice* was roundly condemned as incompatible with the will of God while the *persons* were commended to the church and its full fellowship. On marriage and divorce ('80), synodical guidelines

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confirmed marriage as a God-ordained, monogamous institution intended to be "a permanent relationship till death terminates it." For common-law living, the CRC left simply no room.

Other examples showed that "the role which Scripture and the Reformed confessions play in these decisions is very *basic* and *real*, and shows a totally different evaluation of the significance of the Bible for our moral decisions than can be found in the actions of the GKN."

Kuntz concluded that "there is considerable difference between the CRC and the GKN in the way in which they tackle and solve ethical problems. The complaint that we, in the CRC, follow the same trend and go in the same direction as the GKN is therefore simply unwarranted."

Rev. Nederlof underlined what the other two had said. And regarding the fourth speaker the following was reported:

Rev. Kuyvenhoven rattled some bones in the organizers of the conference by wondering out loud if the question "Is the CRC a 25 year younger edition of the GKN?" actually was worth a conference. He suggested that those who make the claim are not so young any more, and that there are probably not very many of them.

He feared that by allowing the agenda of the conference to be set by the critics, we might fail to talk about the forces that *do* influence us greatly, and about the things that urgently need doing.

The end of the article reads:

When Chairman Rev. Martin Contant of Langley, BC, adjourned the meeting, a ghost had indeed been pummeled into what appeared to be submission. Whether or not it will now also be buried still remains to be seen.

Evaluation


Is the view that the CRC follows the same trend and goes in the same direction as the GKN based on reality? Or is it not more than seeing a ghost? Comparing the decisions of the two churches, we still see great differences. It is true that the GKN said that homosexuality, divorce and remarriage, membership in the WCC, a modern critical approach to the Scriptures, etc. are acceptable in the church. It is also true that the CRC said, "no" to practicing homosexuality and to divorce and remarriage on the basis of the Scriptures although there are weak points in the reports that form the background or part of the decisions. It is also true that the GKN opened all the offices in the church to women, while the CRC denied women access to the office of minister and elder, but not to that of the deacons. So, is seeing the same direction in the CRC seeing a ghost?

In the first place, why was there not one person invited to this conference who is convinced that there is no ghost here but frightening reality? It is easy to defeat your adversary in his absence, when he cannot defend himself. It is easy to have four speakers who agree completely on this "ghost" issue pummel the ghost into submission, while there is no one to place the whole matter in a different light. It is not only very easy. It is also misleading. It is saying to the people: go home, close your eyes and have a good sleep, because there is nothing wrong.

In the second place, the change in the GKN did not come overnight. It came step by step, in a slow process. The doctrine of the pluriformity of the church eroded church consciousness that lives by the norms of the Scriptures for the church as confessed in the Articles 27-29 of the Belgic Confession. It paved the way for a vote in favour of membership in the WCC. An editorial the *The Banner*, in November 1980, declared that the Articles 28 and 29 do not and cannot function anymore in our present situation.

In the late fifties opposition to the confession, especially against the Canons of Dort, came up and was allowed to grow. Rejection of the doctrine as confessed in the Canons did not have doctrinal discipline as consequence. At the same time a different view on the Scriptures and a different way of interpreting them, according to the rules of the new hermeneutics, was accepted. It was basically these two facts of deviation from the confession and acceptance of the new hermeneutics that led to the other decisions mentioned above.

Now it is these same two issues that become stronger all the time in the CRC.



CHURCH NEWS

CALLED to Byford, W. Australia:
REV. C. BOUWMAN
of Chilliwack, BC

DECLINED to Armadale,
W. Australia:
REV. J. VISSCHER
of Cloverdale, BC

CHANGE of address:
REV. R. AASMAN
20 Seymour Drive, Ancaster,
ON L9G 3L2

Even though the 1980 Synod rejected a gravamen of Dr. Harry Boer against the Canons of Dort, he and others are allowed to continue to write publicly against what is confessed there as the true doctrine of the Scriptures. And the basis for the decision of 1984 to open the office of deacon for women was not the clear truth of the Scriptures, but the new manner of reading the Scriptures, the new hermeneutics. Elder Thomas Spriensma, delegate at the 1985 Synod, wrote an article in *The Outlook* of November 1985, in which he reflected on this synod. One of those reflections was that "Many in the CRC do not want to be in subjection to the Word of God. They are reasoning without regard to God's revealed will" (p.9). There are also in the CRC voices that speak in favour of membership in the WCC.

Our conclusion must be that there are still differences, but that the trend and direction that was at work in the GKN is now followed in the CRC. This sure is not a ghost, but a scary reality.

Secularization

The conference came to the conclusion that not a following of the GKN is a danger in the CRC, but that secularization is the enemy in both the GKN and the CRC. This was expressed in a resolution, issued by the conference. It said:

The present antagonist is not really an ethnic one. It is neither the GKN nor anything else uniquely Dutch. Rather, it is the global cancer of secularism which comes to incessant expression through the dominant cultural forces around us.

The GKN and CRC are beset by a common foe and must seek to learn from each other how best and most obediently to engage that antagonist. At the same time we must initiate and welcome ecumenical contacts in our own land which express the true unity of the Church and which enable us together with other churches to combat the hostile forces.

Our mission is here. We are to walk *with* the Lord as we contend *for* the Lord. We are to live out of a positive and lifegiving faith in the presence of pervasive secularism.

Is accepting the new hermeneutics, women in one of the offices, redeeming the dance, loosening the binding to the confession of the church not all part of a secularization process? Walking with the Lord is abiding by what He says in His Word as He says it, in humble submission.

I conclude with a saying used by Professor K. Schilder about a generation ago in connection with the trend in the GKN: the conference tried to mop the floor of the CRC to take away the water of secularism, but it left the tap wide open.

J. GEERTSEMA

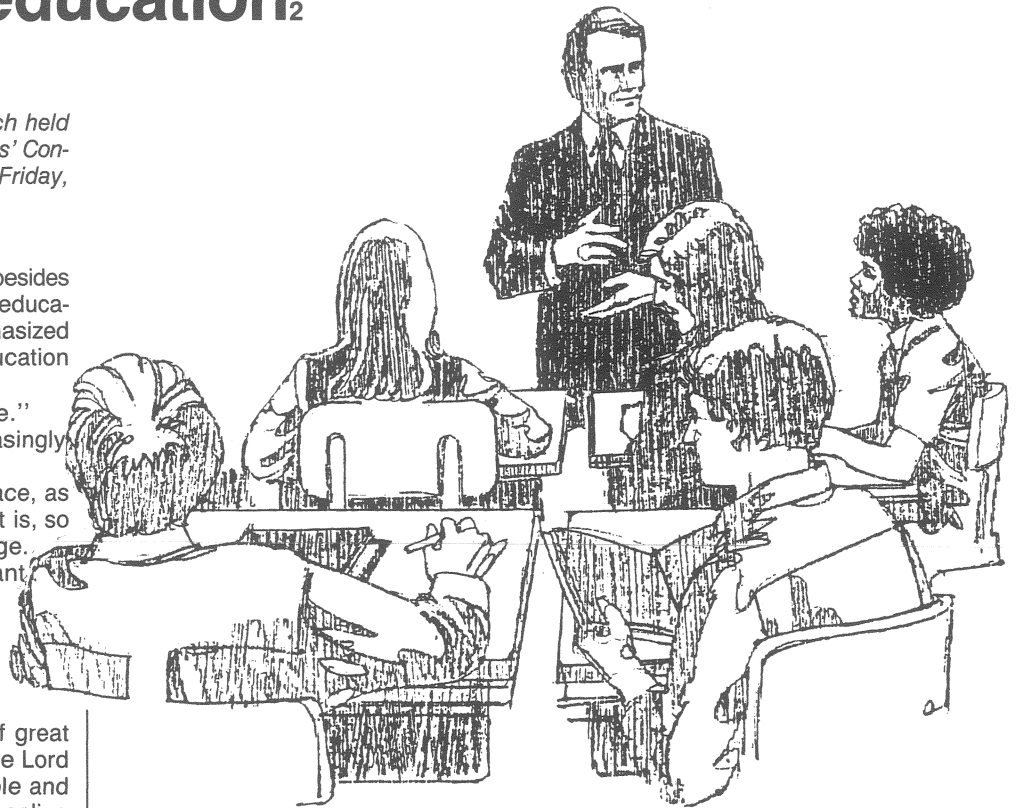
Christian ethics and Reformed education₂

This is the second part of a speech held for the Canadian Reformed Teachers' Convention, at Burlington, Ontario, on Friday, October 18, 1985.

Positive-covenantal

Therefore, it is important that, besides being empathic-critical, Reformed education be *positive-covenantal*. I emphasized at another time that Reformed education must be *covenantal* education, and I now add the word "positive." I mean by that: we should unceasingly approach the children as being ingrafted into the covenant of grace, as heirs of the kingdom of God! That is, so to speak, their status and privilege. The binding factor of this covenant should be a joyful reality, not a grey prison. I do not know if we always approach it from this positive angle. It is striking how the Lord's approach to His covenant people is always one of great patience and compassion, how the Lord time and again forgives His people and restores them, how He keeps appealing to their position as His covenant people, His treasure, His Bride. Something of this should be seen in our manner of educating. It should contain a lively and compassionate appeal.

Here is where I would like to bring in the matter of regeneration or conversion to which I referred earlier. It appears to me that there is some confusion on the matter. We should not conclude from the fact that our children are included in the covenant that, *as such*, they are converted. That, indeed, comes too close to the theory of presumptive regeneration. The covenant does not imply the possible existence of conversion, but the covenant poses the *necessity* and states the *promise* of regeneration. At baptism, where we are publicly ingrafted into the covenant, it is said that we *must be* born again. That is a covenantal condition. At the same time we are promised: the indwelling of the Spirit who will impart to us, among other things, the *daily renewal* of our lives! Our children are sinful; they must be born again, and the promise of



that regeneration is a covenantal promise.

This promise is one which specifically the Holy Spirit fulfills. He is the One who causes our youth, and all of us, to *internalize* Christian morals. Internalization is not a result of a responsible psychologically sound method — and I do not at all deny the merits of psychology — but it is the distinct work of the Holy Spirit. I must say that in many publications about Christian education, the work of the Holy Spirit is a forgotten chapter. This is also the case with N. Wolterstorff's *Educating for Responsible Action*. I know that Wolterstorff's book discusses only one phase of pedagogy and is based mostly on the findings of contemporary psychology. I appreciate his attempt to make these findings useful for Christian education, but in that vital area of tendency learning the work of the Holy Spirit, as well as the spiritual climate

(prayer and devotion) in the classroom, should have received prominence.

This brings me to a related point. We should not flee into a superficial speaking about the need to lead the youth to regeneration, as if that is the panacea for our educational woes. For the question whether the children are or are not (yet) converted is immaterial. You may have a born-again child who nevertheless does a very sinful and ugly deed, or a not born-again child who lives a seemingly orderly and irreproachable life. Important is that in the classroom we use *the means of regeneration*, which is the Word of God. I think here of I Peter 1:23, "You have been born anew of imperishable seed, through the living and abiding Word of God." We must unceasingly use the means — the Word — and let the Spirit of God bring this to fruition. We expect it positively from the power of the Word of God, also

in the classroom — above any technique which we might employ. Failure to see the decisive work of the Holy Spirit also results in failure to see the *prime place* of the Word in the classroom! I am happy that e.g. Wolterstorff does acknowledge the “centrality of the Bible” in this respect, but I worry when I read the following statement, “True, God’s speech to us today is not confined to the Bible, but what He says there is the touchstone, the criterion for what He says to us in other modes and manners.”¹⁰ What other modes and manners (even in the plural), I wonder, are there?

To get back to a positive-covenantal approach, we should stress that re-

when it appears that much patience is required to let the youth mature. It does happen — praise the Lord — that youth who have had a very difficult adolescence *mature* into faithful Christians, refined by their trials.

Church-oriented

Here is where there should be a clear line from the school to the *church*. The purpose of Reformed education is also to make the students church-oriented. Perhaps some of you may think that I should say: Christ-centred. And I do mean that, of course, but I purposely bring the church into the picture. For I find that much educational literature em-

church and school, that at school we should not hesitate to foster a living membership of the church, and in this way alone do we make better citizens of our country. The “tutor” will always guide to the “mater.” We go to school only for so long, but for our whole life we are members of the Church of Christ.

Norm-conscious

Ethics also involves the reflection on what is *normative*. We must confront the students not with our own opinions (no matter how noteworthy these may be), but with God’s revealed norms, His Law of love. And then the Law is also normative for the teachers in the classroom. I think here specifically of the fifth commandment, “Honour your father and your mother” The teacher must respect the family environment of the child. You shall not *replace* the parents, for the school has its own place beside the home. It is utterly wrong of any teacher to show disdain for the home situation or for parental values. The children should not at school be set up against their parents, and the teacher should try to show respect for parental values (even if he personally disagrees with such values). It has been suggested that all parents be visited once annually by the teachers, that parents be informed of the atrocities committed by their offspring, but are we here not beginning to set up some kind of home visitation which transcends the duty of the school? Visits may be necessary in specific cases, and contact between teachers and parents is a good thing, but we should not rob the parents of their parental honour or turn the livingroom into a classroom. Holwerda has written this about the office of the parents, “. . . the Holy Spirit has only given to the parents this office, and therefore it cannot be handed over or taken away.” The teacher must always recognize the office of the parents and show in his presentation respect for the parents. I am not sure if this always comes out as clearly as it should, especially in communities where everyone (thinks he) knows everyone so well. The school teaches *norms*, but should not become a moralistic institute.

Reformed education will make the students norm-conscious and make them aware of what the Word of God asks of them — and of us all — in concrete situations. In order to do this, the Bible must be an *open Book* in the classroom. More emphasis should be placed on teaching the *Ten Commandments* from the summarizing perspective of Christian love. More emphasis should be placed on teaching responsibility to God first, and also to the neighbour. I would like to ask you, “When do you consciously bring a specific commandment into a lesson in order to

“There is such a close bond between church and school, that at school we should not hesitate to foster a living membership of the church .”

generation is the work of the Holy Spirit, a promise of God powerfully realized by the Word of God, and that not only the initial regeneration is important, but also — as the Form for Baptism emphasizes — the *daily renewal* of our lives. In that sense we cannot say, “The youth are already converted,” for they must be converted every day again.

Because of this “daily renewal,” our students can be, and should be, encouraged to *start over again*. There are especially two words in the Greek which we translate with conversion. The one means: to have a change of *mind*. The other means: to turn around. Both elements need to be emphasized. Conversion is, indeed, getting a new (Scriptural) outlook on things and concretely breaking with specific evils. Conversion is never “vague,” but is always directed to concrete sins. So conversion is: letting the Word get a *grip* on you. Every day a new start. Young people need to be encouraged in this way. They need to know of the compassion *and* the faithfulness of the Lord, who knows that they are prone to stumble (Psalm 103). Teenagers, especially, have many inner conflicts, struggle with their own developing personality, and sometimes have very low self-esteem. Therefore much positive assurance and reinforcement is required. When we speak of the necessity of regeneration, it should never be used at a *threat* (“Better be born again, kid, or else!”), but it should be related as a wonderful covenant promise for which we may pray daily. That is what I mean by *positive* covenantal. Then we are not easily discouraged as educators

phasizes, at the cost of a solid church concept, that we should be *kingdom-oriented* and teach the youth to be responsible citizens of the Kingdom, the *civitas Dei*.¹¹ Meanwhile, the church is often relegated to the lesser commonwealth of denominations, aside even from the question whether a correct concept of “the Kingdom” is employed. I wonder if, with respect to the church, we are not often vague and thus cause confusion among our own youth. Do they really understand what it means to be *Reformed*? Do they take pride in being members of the Canadian Reformed Churches?

I do not mean that we should foster some kind of sectarian superiority complex, but we should certainly uphold the wealth of being Reformed and the privilege of belonging to a truly Reformed church. This, too, is a matter of obedience to God’s revealed Law, a matter of sound *morality*, and we should foster love for the church, urging the youth towards a living membership. After all, the school is only *tutor*, the church is *mater* (mother), and the heart of the Kingdom lies in the church (Lord’s Day 48).

Am I far from the truth when I conclude that many of our youth are somewhat down on our churches? To what extent is this perhaps a result of the attitudes of parents and — may I say — teachers? I have heard it said at a public meeting that the school is not to make better members of the church, but better citizens of the country. In my understanding, a wrong and unhealthy dilemma. There is such a close bond between

make the students aware of the *Biblical norm*, and to show how the Law of God makes whole, heals life, and so truly is a Law of liberty?" How often do we try to show the beauty of the Law, to instill in our students the refrain, "Oh, how I love Thy Law!" The tone of Psalm 119 — the Law not oppressive but uplifting — should permeate our lessons.

In this respect I would like to emphasize the idea of responsibility. Douma speaks of "responsible action." There is a sad contradiction in terms which is commonly accepted, namely, that people say and believe, "It is your *own* responsibility." That is ridiculous, to say the least. One can never be responsible to oneself, only to another, namely, to God and the neighbour! The very ideal of "responding" implies another party. It is this sense of responsibility which we should try to nurture in the students by careful and pointed teaching. This alone can break the self-centered egoism of our present age.

You cannot really do more than make the students *norm-conscious*, because the *youth* must begin to live, not just according to some, but according to all the commandments of God. They must make the beginning of a new obedience by the power of God's Word and Spirit, while you make them aware of these divine norms.

And then we must be careful, especially at school, that we indeed stick to the *norms*. Christian ethics does not mean *standardizing* life-style, or handing out uniforms. Do not give standardized lectures on specific issues about which you may feel very strongly, but go to the Scriptures to present the norms given there. Otherwise our teaching is not moral; it is phony.

J. Douma, following in K. Schilder's footsteps, has warned us for *Biblicism*, or wrong exemplarism, in which the Bible becomes a rule book for quick and easy answers to all moral questions. The Bible — as Douma points out — is a *lamp* and sheds light, but we must still *use* our heart, soul, understanding, and strength in the proper way. We confess the clarity of the Scriptures, indeed, but that does not mean that the Bible gives us an easy solution to every problem we encounter in life. We must *grow* towards solutions in the many complex situations which we face. We must use the Scriptures in a lawful manner, in the fellowship of the church we must work, think and grow together also in moral issues and not enter into an atmosphere of "uniform legalism or of a fixed morality."

I quoted the above words, not to give room for sinful behaviour, but to urge us all to be *busy* with the Scriptural norms and their meaning for the moral issues of

today which so greatly confront our youth. Making our youth *norm-conscious* means not giving them, all the answers, but giving them *correct tools*, so that they begin to discern, out of the Word of God, what is good and pleasing in the sight of the Lord. Then we do not work *beside* the Word, but *with* the Word.

Is there then a specific Christian morality, a Reformed life-style, which the school should promote? Yes, indeed, but it is not found in a list of do's and don't's; it is not a matter of outward form alone. Christians are not better than others, but they are certainly called to be *different*. We have a different motivation, for we know Christ, our Saviour. We "think" differently, namely, "spiritually." We have a different outlook on life, different expectations, and, *therefore*, a different life-style. Only from inward renewal comes outward obedience which is pleasing to God. Then our religion is not formal, even if it uses many forms. The youth are to be taught this *difference* by God's sovereign grace, to appreciate it, and to follow Jesus Christ in this way. Ethically speaking, a good motto for Reformed education is Christ's own word to His disciples, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24). Self-denial and cross-bearing must be key issues in a Reformed classroom!

And then certain matters are above discussion for all Christians — and the youth know it as well — for Christian morality has not changed much during the centuries. The Christian life, shaped by the Word, is one of thanksgiving, worship, and prayer. The Christian life is one of sobriety in stewardship, purity of speech, and of *diakonia* — service to the other. A Christian may appreciate all God's gifts within the confines set by God Himself in His Law. It is a wonderful challenge to make the students conscious of these things every day again.

Maturity-directed

Where did we go wrong? The question may be — at least for this convention — DID we go wrong? We all stumble,

especially in teaching. In the letter of James we can read, "Let not many of you be teachers, my brethren . . ." It is no easy task, but do we not try to make the youth conscious of these norms, of the new and different life of the Christian?

Then, let us admit: a city is not built overnight. Youth must grow. Our Reformed education must foster that growth and be maturity-directed. Lead the students to a responsible *discerning* of what is right and wrong. You cannot live their lives; you must give them the tools to live their own lives.

Maturity is a Biblical word. It has also found its way into the pedagogical terminology — *maturization*. Almost as nice a word as "internalization." Mature means: to have reached a goal. Actually it means: to become *perfect*. And we know, we do not achieve perfection in this life; it remains a small beginning. But we may work toward maturity — that we are no longer, like children, tossed to and fro. We must develop a positive Christian life-style that wells up out of a Christian heart and mind to the glory of God.

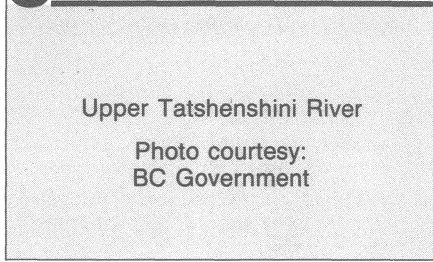
It takes time to mature. That's the way it is with quality wine. So it is with covenant children. It takes patience to let someone mature. It takes a lot of self-denying love to be a good teacher, a tutor who directs the child to its mother, the Jerusalem above. I encourage you to go on as you are doing. Do not be discouraged when you see no growth or slow growth. For God will bring His Word to fruition, also through your work. That is your certainty in the classroom where the Book is open.

It is good to reflect on our problems, our concerns. It is healthy to be aware of our shortcomings and limitations. Sins of youth — and of teachers — remember not, O Lord. But we must also see the progress, count the blessings. Above all, we must as Reformed teachers *believe* in the Holy Spirit — sovereign God — who leads the children to maturity of faith despite their own sinfulness. Believe in Christ who is preparing His Bride for perfection, for maturity-in-glory.

And if I may give you — besides my great appreciation for your work — a motto for an always fresh, ever humble, Christian approach, it is that Word of Galatians 6, now applied to the classroom, "You who are spiritual restore the youth in a spirit of gentleness." And the Holy Spirit, the great Internalizer, will lead the children of God to full maturity.

CL. STAM

OUR COVER



¹⁰ N. Wolterstorff, *Educating for Responsible Action*, p. 12.

¹¹ As e.g. Wolterstorff (following Jellema) in a speech titled, "Where are we now in the Philosophy of Christian Education?"



Inter-League Publication Board meeting with Executive Committee, Nov. 30, 1985

The Chairman's Report revealed that during the past year I.L.P.B. has been able to publish:

Redeemer Versus Destroyer, outlines on Daniel, by Dr. R.H. Bremmer. *Summary of Faith*, a booklet of 150 questions and answers dealing with the confessions of the Church, Church History and the Church Order, by Dr. K. Deddens. *Christ in the Family*, a book on Christian family life, by W. Meijer. *Response to Your Baptism*, written for those who are preparing to profess their faith publicly, by Dr. K. Deddens.

Almost ready for publication are:

Call Upon Me, a book on prayer, by H. Westerink. A collection of speeches commemorating the Secession of 1834 and the Liberation of 1944, presented in Burlington, October, 1984. *Belgic Confession, Vol. 1* by Rev. C.G. Bos. *Hebrews*, by Rev. L. Selles, reprinted because of continuing demand.

A number of other works are being translated or edited. Publication of these books will depend on the finances available.

A renewed effort will be made to encourage the writing of new material. Sales

of I.L.P.B. publications have improved greatly since the reorganization of the I.L.P.B. To ensure that all church members are acquainted with our study aids a marketing committee has been appointed. This committee will maintain contact with I.L.P.B. representatives in every congregation, encourage and assist them in the promotion of our publications. The committee will also promote I.L.P.B. publications in periodicals and amongst other interested people. Several enquiries and orders have been received from outside our federation of churches.

Since sales have increased the financial picture also looks good. Nevertheless printing costs for one book are quite high. It will not be possible to send all four books now ready for publication to the printer at once. A choice will have to be made and the remaining titles will be printed when finances permit.

The I.L.P.B. urges all readers to add to their library of Reformed books by buying our publications. The money now tied up in our present inventory will then be made available for new books. Donations are also most welcome.

I.L.P.B. Box 783
London, ON, N6A 4Y8

M. DE GELDER

Executive Committee meeting of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College, Dec. 6, 1985

The chairman Br. A. Hordyk opened the meeting with the reading of Scripture and prayer.

A special welcome was given to Br. John Tenhage of Brampton who will replace Br. C.J. Nobels as representative of Brampton.

Br. J. Gelderman gave the treasurer's report which shows again that the revenues are not coming in as they should be.

We again discussed possible restructuring of the organization of the college, this needs further study and will be on the next agenda.

Br. C. Hoff gave the drive report.

The principal Br. T. VanderVen gave his report by which we were informed that a computer had been purchased for the college, and also that the equipment fund

has depleted. Can there be something done in our Canadian Reformed circles for an equipment fund? The principal gave a few comments on the report of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario. "Shapiro report" and that this should also be well studied by our School Boards.

After a brief question period, Br. W. Bartels led in thanksgiving to our Lord and the meeting was closed.

for the executive,
JOHN JONKER

"Anchor" Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, Dec. 12, 1985

The meeting is opened in the customary manner.

All are welcomed, especially Br. D. Kooiman, who has arrived in Ontario from Lynden, WA.

The minutes are read and after minor changes adopted.

Information from the Niagara Escarpment Commission is received from the "Ebenezer Home for the Aged Society." The fire department requires more information about the home. This matter will be dealt with by J. Boersema. The lease is in the hands of the building committee.

Br. P. Veenstra will organize a new public relations committee.

Br. B. Hoogland will be asked to initiate an advisory committee.

A lengthy discussion arises about the feasibility of staying permanently in Burlington or making use of the property in Lincoln.

Br. D. Kooiman will investigate this.

The building committee will meet with Br. D. Kooiman regarding needs in the home. A membership meeting is planned for Jan. 31, 1986.

Tentative opening of the Home is Feb. 3, 1986.

The press release is read and adopted. A question period follows.

After the singing of Psalm 19:6 the meeting is closed with prayer.

E.J. DE JONG

Canadian Reformed School Society of Calgary, Dec. 18, 1985

With joy and thankfulness to God, the Board of Directors is able to announce that the first steps toward a Reformed Christian school have been taken. The Constitution and By-laws of the Society, presented by the ad-hoc committee, have been amended and accepted by the members. The first Board of Directors has been elected: B. Boersema, president; H. Van Delden, secretary; and J. Hoogerdijk, treasurer.

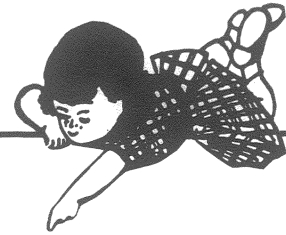
A volunteer committee for setting-up a Saturday School and a committee to study day-school requirements and possibilities have been approved by the board.

We ask for the assistance of the other school societies in acquiring information that could help us in this endeavor (i.e. finances, student/teacher ratios, grades taught per teacher, etc).

Mailing address for the society:

C.R.S.S. of Calgary
c/o H. Van Delden
88 Bedford Dr. N.E.
Calgary, AB T3K 1L4
Phone: (403) 275-4048

H. VAN DELDEN, Secretary



Dear Busy Beavers,

Happy New Year to you all!
Another brand new year ahead of us!
This year let's ALL join in the fun and be REAL Busy Beavers!

Share your pictures, your jokes and puzzles.
Write your letters to:

Aunt Betty
c/o Clarion
Premier Printing Ltd.
1249 Plessis Road
Winnipeg, MB R2C 3L9

We'll be happy to hear from you!

Today's let's start with a story from Busy Beaver *Alan Van Raalte*. He writes: "This winter we want to make a fort with a little stove. Last year we did it and first we made a huge pile of snow. Then we dug it out. We got a five gallon pail and welded an old eavestrough to it for the chimney. And then we cut in it for doors and the doors just bent to open. And we put handles on the doors. Our Dad helped us. The snow from the fort melted a bit, but when the stove went out it turned to ice."

Time for birthday wishes! February is coming soon!
Here's wishing all the Busy Beavers who celebrate their birthday in February a very happy day and also, many, many happy returns of the day. We hope you have a really good time celebrating with your family and friends. And may the Lord bless and keep you all in the year ahead.

February

Adrian Bartels	1 Jodi Brouwer	10
Joyce Wiegers	1 Cheryl Boeve	11
Henrietta de Witt	3 Michelle Oostdijk	20
Linda Van Sydenborgh	3 David Van Raalte	20
Michelle Bartels	4 Wayne Bartels	21
Sheila Klaver	6 Roland Klos	24
Elizabeth Barendregt	6 Sharon Werkman	26
Patricia Hoeksema	8 Sylvia Leffers	27



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Erica Veenendaal*. We are happy to have you join us. I guess you have to help look after the pets, right, Erica? You must have had a very good summer, too. Thanks for the puzzle. I see you're a real Busy Beaver already!

Welcome to the Club *Karen Heres*. Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver activities. Will you write and tell us about yourself and what you did to keep busy during the holidays?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Carolyn Van Andel*. How about you? How did you enjoy the holidays? Did you play outside a lot? Will you write and tell me your birthday, please, Carolyn?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Patricia Hoeksema*. We hope you will eagerly join in all our Busy Beaver activities! Did you finish *Journey Through the Night* during the holidays, Patricia? Did it make you feel thankful for your own home, Patricia? Bye for now.

Hello, *Gary Penninga*. It was nice to hear from you. Of course you may join the Club. We hope you will have lots of fun joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Did you have a good holiday, Gary? Bye for now.

Thanks for a very pretty letter, *Vanessa De Jong*. I see you had lots of fun skating. Is there lots of snow for you to play in now, Vanessa? I hope you had a very good holiday.

I see you have been a real Busy Beaver, *Melanie Veenendaal*. Thank you for the interesting puzzle. I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy doing it. Happy holidays, Melanie.

Hello, *Katrina DeJong*. How are you enjoying winter and your holidays? Please write and tell us about your Christmas concert and your Santa Claus evening. Will you do that? Bye for now, Katrina.

Thank you for the riddles, *Wendy Beyes*, and the poem, too. Congratulations on a good report card. And I'm glad you had such a nice birthday, Wendy.

Hello, *Helena Beijes*. It was nice to hear from you again. How did you like your holidays, Helena? Thanks for your poem. Keep up the good work!

I really like your picture, *Jennifer Siebenga*! You're a real Busy Beaver! Be sure sure to write about your Christmas concert, and your holidays, and how you liked your cold weather!

I see you're keeping very busy, *David Van Raalte*. How is your pet hamster doing? And how is your music coming along? I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

What a lovely puzzle you have for the Busy Beavers, *Terri-Lynn Schulenberg*! I'm glad you had such a good birthday. Thanks for a nice letter, Terri-Lynn. I hope you write again soon.

Thanks for a nice chatty letter, *Joanne Visscher*. It was nice to hear news from you. How does your little brother like kindergarten? Thanks for the lovely magic squares, Joanne!

Did your weather warm up a little, *Alice Van Woudenberg*? I liked your newsy letter, Alice. How did you feel being bridesmaid? How long did it take the teacher to dry out from all the dunkings?

How are your pet rabbits, *Heather Vandenberg*? Are you and your pen pals writing pretty steadily? And when will you be bridesmaid, Heather? Be sure to write and tell us!

How did you like going to work with your Dad, *Stuart Schenkel*? I see you've been very busy making puzzles to share with the Busy Beavers. Good for you! Keep up the good work!

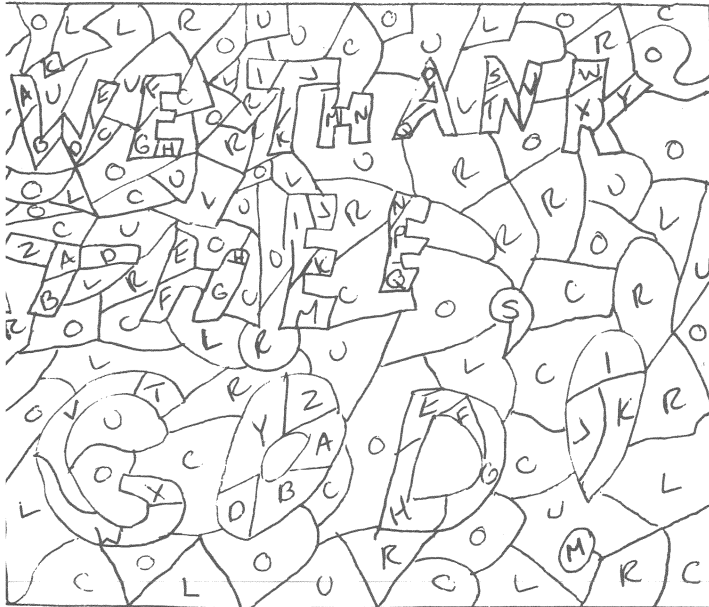
Hello, *Alida Knol*. How did you keep busy during the Christmas holidays? Did you have lots of winter fun? Thanks for sending in the puzzle. Keep up the good work! Bye for now.

Thanks very much for the riddles *Wayne Penninga*. I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy them! You didn't write about yourself, Wayne. Let's hear about your Christmas concert and the holidays, all right? Bye for now.

Quiz Time!

Here's a game from Busy Beaver, *Terri-Lynn Schulenberg*.

Fill in all spaces that have a letter in it from the word: COLOUR



Busy Beaver *Joanne Visscher*
has some games for you, too!

Magic Squares

	1	2	3
1			
2			
3			

1. an insect
2. a long animal that lives in water
3. a kind of tree

	1	2	3
1			
2			
3			

1. "juice" of a tree
2. you did eat already
3. what a kitten is

(Answers below)

WORDSEARCH by Busy Beaver *Katie Marren*

W A D T E A G W S N O W M E N L
H I O S I E Z I A Z X N E I T G
I C N E V E F N M R A R L S M H
T B P T N W I D X A D I L O H O
E N O O E T S I C D B R H O A P
P X S L L R O Q I L I G S S T F
S F L Z H I C E M I T T E N S H
N M E I C O A T S I S V K A X B
O I D Q O F M O H S I E N J A P
W O D B L U E I T N A E I I B F
S O I W D I R B O O T S T J L H
I N N C I S H I S W B K A I I J
O E G S D R O L A F T A C X Z L
R T N Q N H N Z L Z T E Y Z N C
M R W Z M O G F I A A I G K A M
X Y A D M S W T O K S N H W R K
J I E C B K B Q Y E Z G I R D I
L S T N A P W O N S B X F Z S G
M K Z Q P L T Q U O U V D I S E
H N S N O W B A L L S T B P Z C

Look for:

- | | |
|------------|-----------|
| winter | skating |
| blue | sledding |
| cold | ice |
| white | snowballs |
| mittens | |
| hats | |
| snowflakes | |
| snowpants | |
| snow | |
| wind | |
| blizzards | |
| snowstorm | |
| snowmen | |
| coats | |
| boots | |
| holiday | |



MAGIC SQUARE *answers:*

Second set: 1. sap 2. ate 3. pet
First set: 1. bee 2. eel 3. elm

Did you enjoy doing our puzzles?

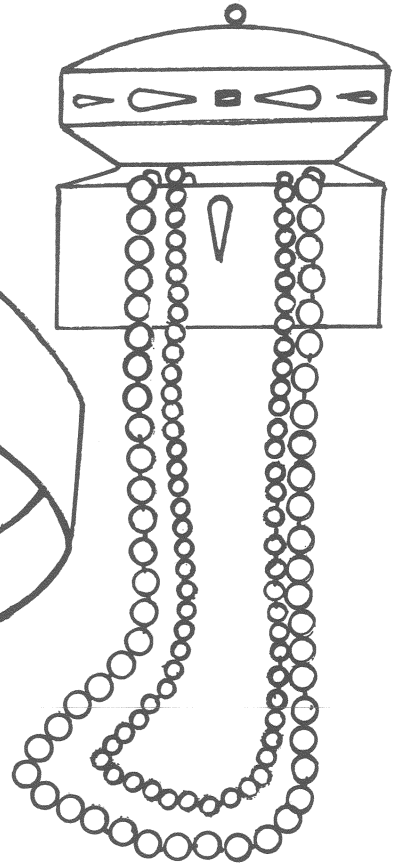
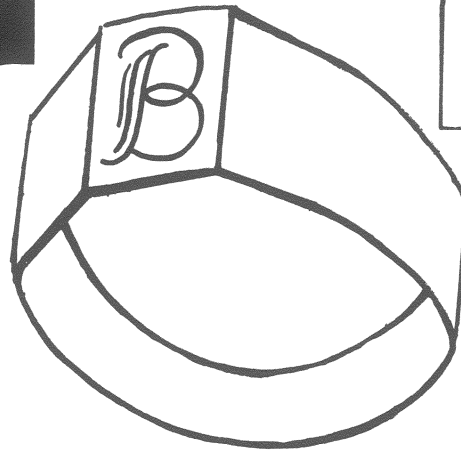
That's great.

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.

Yours,
Aunt Betty

ABC BIBLE COLLECTION - by Mrs. John Roza

Rr



R-ring

Signet ring became seal of authority (Genesis 41:42).
Also worn as adornment.

Quiz Questions

Colour me!

1. A mother schemes with her son Jacob to take Essau's blessing from Isaac by a trick. Who is this woman? _____(Genesis 27)
2. Joshua sent two men to Jericho as spies. They came into a house where a harlot hid them. Who was this harlot? _____(Joshua 2:1)
3. This woman is the daughter-in-law of Naomi. She married Boaz and became the mother of Obed. Who was this woman? _____(Ruth 1)
4. Paul was imprisoned twice in this city and finally died there. What was the name of this famous city? _____
5. After Jesus was crucified on the cross and buried, what important event was to happen? _____(John 20)
6. Who was the wife of Jacob and mother of Joseph and Benjamin? _____(Genesis 29:6)

Answers for "The birth of Jesus"

1. Holy Spirit
2. Jesus
3. Bethlehem
4. King of the Jews, Star
5. Gold, frankincense, myrrh
6. Herod
7. Egypt