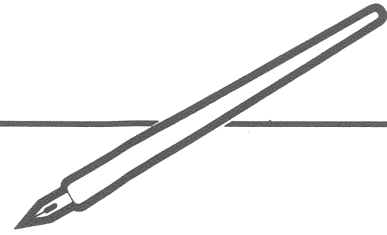




Clarion
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We need twenty new ministers!

In the new *Yearbook* the reader can notice (as he probably knows already) that, in Canada, our federation counts only three vacant churches: the Churches at Attercliffe, at Guelph and at Calgary. If we include the need for a second missionary for the Church at Hamilton, we come to four vacancies at the moment. This is a low number. One could conclude that there is not a great need for theological students.

This conclusion is wrong.

The fact that we have so few vacancies possibly is the reason that young men in our churches seem not to see a future in the ministry and therefore, do not prepare themselves for the College in Hamilton.

If this is true and young people in our churches do not see a future in the ministry because there are so few vacancies, they should have a change of mind. There is a future.

In the next ten years we need at least twenty new ministers.

Yes, the figure of twenty is right.

I shall tell you how one has come to this number. In the next ten years, the Lord willing, seven of our ministers will reach the age of sixty-five. During the same period three professors will also have reached the retirement age. This means that in the next ten years our churches will need ten new ministers to take the place of those who will retire.

Presently there are two, and soon there will be three, vacancies among our Australian sister Churches. Add to these three our own three vacancies, and the number of vacant churches which need a minister comes to six. I do not count the Church at Blue Bell since I expect Br. K.A. Kok will become its minister. When we put the number of retiring ministers and the present vacancies together, we come to a total of sixteen.

However, that is not all. Within the next ten years we can expect a further increase in the number of churches: at least one more in the Burlington area and in the Fraser Valley. Hopefully, Vernon, in the Okanagan Valley, will also have a minister within the next few years. If we add a second missionary for Hamilton, we come to at least four more future vacancies. Herewith we have reached the number of twenty.

At this moment there are not enough students to fill all the future open places. Among the students at our College seven belong to our churches, while it is not certain whether all seven will become ministers. The conclusion is easy. Our churches need more young men who see it as their calling to become minister of the Word of God.

What is required?

A young man who considers following the theological studies as preparation for the ministry must be intelligent. He must be able to follow and complete academic studies. This is obvious. Our College requires a Bachelor of Arts degree, which includes courses in English, the classical languages, Hebrew, and philosophy. A minister, and therefore a theological student at our College, must be able to read the Word of God in the languages in which it was written. It is my experience that a text or a certain passage of Scripture comes much closer

and is understood better when studied in its original language. Its colour and beauty is grasped much better. The reward of knowing Hebrew and Greek is the joy in reading God's Word in the language of old Israel and in the language of the early church.

The necessity of study capabilities is also obvious when we think of the calling of a minister to prepare two sermons every week again. It is not easy to grasp the meaning of a text, a passage of God's Word, to explain it and to bring that specific Word of God to the congregation. But again, also in that there is a reward. It is a joy to learn God's Word for yourself, to gain in insight, and to comfort, strengthen, and guide others with it — being built up and building up in faith.

Besides the ability to study, the theological student and future minister must be able to communicate with others. I do not mean that he must be an easy talker. He must be able to talk. But that is only one side of communication. The other side is listening. A minister must be able to listen. To listen carefully, attentively, and sympathetically, trying to understand the other, is often much more necessary than talking. The ability to listen comes from a loving heart that cares for the Brothers and Sisters.

This brings us to the next requirement. A theological student who wants to become a minister must be grasped by the love of the Lord for sinners, for people in need. He must have that love in his heart. Christ was the opposite of self-centered. A minister, a servant of Christ, who has to preach and to show Christ in His seeking love, must not be a selfish, self-centered person. On the contrary, his heart must be open for others. He must be helpful and caring.

In this connection I would like to make one other remark. A theological student who seeks a place in the ministry must have a great love for the Churches of Christ. Realizing that Christ so intensely loved His Church that He literally went through hell for her in order to save her, the student must love what Christ loved and loves. Also here the reward is great. If you love what Christ loves, you will receive His love and the love of His Bride.

I want to mention another very important requirement. It is humbleness, meekness. Christ said to His disciples "Learn from Me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). He also said, "Blessed are the meek." A proud person who seeks himself and his own glory is easily irritated and offended when his person is attacked or when he is criticized. What he will fight for, then, is not his Master or the congregation, but his own person. And whenever that is the case, he has lost the true battle. Therefore, he must be meek and humble — a willing servant. Only as a servant himself, can he call others to be faithful servants.

Do we have young men in our midst who have the intelligence to study, who can communicate, who love the LORD and His Church, who are humble? Let them seriously consider preparing themselves for the ministry. The churches need ministers. "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few;

pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:38). Praying for this work means involving yourself in it.

Perhaps there is someone who says: I have considered studying for the ministry. But reading about these requirements I now come to the conclusion that I am not good enough. But do not forget that it is Christ who calls and who also enables and gives gifts needed for the work. It all comes from Him who bought His Church, and who therefore gathers and preserves her as well.

J. GEERTSEMA

ICRC Papers

We continue with the publication of the papers delivered at the International Conference of Reformed Churches, held in Edinburgh in September 1985. In the next issues of our

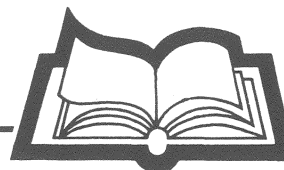
magazine you can read what Rev. John N. Macleod had to say on "The Doctrine of the Covenants and the Reformed Confessions." It is good to remember that Rev. J. Visscher wrote in his report on the ICRC that Rev. Macleod "began by thanking the Canadian Reformed Churches for the honour of inviting him to present a paper on this topic to the Conference." See *Clarion*, November 29, 1985. Further, it does need some effort to read. This is study material. But those who do not shun the effort will be rewarded. What I would like to add is: we can be thankful for the emphasis on the covenant in the days of the Liberation. On the point of the Covenant of Works, I would like to mention that Professor K. Schilder preferred to speak of the Covenant of Favour, since also Adam, before the fall into sin, could not really earn salvation by his own good works. Enjoy the study!

J. GEERTSEMA

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

"Is any one among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any one cheerful? Let him sing praise"

James 5:13



Simple Solution?

Many scholars have in the past expressed their difficulty with the letter of James. One of the objections has been that the letter of James is written too much in an "Old Testament" style, that is, a rather formalistic and legalistic letter. James seems to think too much in a "black and white" scheme and offers solutions which are just too simple in the real complexities of daily life.

The above text seems to be a case in point. James mentions two completely different situations in one breath, and without really dealing with each situation in its own right, simply gives two rules: if you are suffering, pray; if you are cheerful, sing. And is this, indeed, not a simplistic solution? Is this really a word which brings us further in dealing with the problems of life?

We might object that no two situations are exactly the same. Are not all people different in the way in which they deal with suffering or happiness? Those who are suffering *have* perhaps already prayed more than once. Those who experience joy *have* possibly already sung a Psalm or two. Is this text truly a pastoral advice which has an eye for the uniqueness of each different situation in life? It almost sounds like the advice of a minister who is much too busy to delve into a situation and suffices with a quick and easy answer to life's problems: pray or sing.

We should note that in these last verses of his letter, James is beginning to *summarize* what he has been saying throughout. He has extensively dealt with the issues of prosperity (wealth) and adversity (suffering). In Chapter 1 he spoke about the purpose of trials; in the Chapters 4 and 5 he dealt at length with the dangers of wealth. And now

in these verses he is formulating clearly and concisely the way in which the Lord wants us all to go in these situations.

And he does not come with a simple solution, neither for those who are suffering, nor for those who experience joy. The Lord here points us to a way which for us is very *difficult*. He directs us to God. Those who suffer and those who are joyful have this in common that they must both live before the Lord! In this respect there is indeed one rule for every situation in life: go to God!

The situations here are indeed different. The one is suffering. James does not mention exactly what this suffering is or what has caused this suffering. It can be sickness, grief, loneliness, or disappointment. Suffering takes on many forms in this world. But there is for a Christian only one way to deal with all suffering: go to God! Pray. Literally the word used here means: to beseech, to petition. It has in it the notion of "coming forward." We should not try to bottle up our suffering, or crawl away in a corner, but we should come forward and lay our cares before God's heavenly throne, begging Him for strength and relief. This word denotes an *active communion* with the Lord.

The Bible does not tell us to deal with our sufferings in a passive resignation, but we are to come forward in active fellowship with God, pleading on God's covenant promises. We also need not deal with our sufferings in a grim determination, taking every hit square on the chin without batting an eyelash. That is how the world copes with its suffering, either passive resignation or fierce determination. But we may in our sufferings go forward in the grace of God.

This means also that we do not suffice with one or two

prayers, but that we lead a *life* of prayerful communion with our God, beseeching Him daily. It is this daily prayerful communion with God, this never-ceasing fellowship in prayer which meets with God's blessing. For then we pray "in faith" (Chapter 1:6), in the certainty that our Father will hear us in Christ Jesus.

Everyone will understand: this is not a simple solution to life's many problems. The church may not give a smooth formula which fits each and every situation. But the Lord calls us in our trials to the struggle of faith, to daily prayer. Here we need perseverance, and we are given perseverance in every trial which may come upon us.

The other is cheerful. Also here we do not read of the reasons why. It can be happiness because of prosperity, health and wealth. Happiness, too, comes in many different forms. But the same rule applies: in our joy we must go to God! Not to petition Him, but to praise Him. It says literally: let him sing Psalms. And Psalms are also prayers, because in them we direct ourselves to God.

It is certainly not superfluous that we are reminded to go to God in times of joy. For prosperity tends to make us secure in ourselves. We might think that we have done it all and earned it all, and we may come to spurn the grace of God evident in His gifts. It is not without reason that Moses in the book Deuteronomy so seriously warned Israel not to forget the Lord when they would become rich in the land of Canaan. For because of our sinfulness, prosperity tends to make us smug, self-indulgent and callous. If anyone

is cheerful, let him indeed not forget to praise God for the many undeserved blessings!

You see, the one pleads with God on the basis of the covenant promises in Christ. The other praises God because of the blessings received in the same covenant. But in both cases the covenant communion with the Lord is the common factor. In that communion we recognize our God who in Christ Jesus redeems us and causes us to share in His great gifts.

Simple solution? We are not a formula church which does not reckon with differing personal circumstances. We do not offer simple solutions to the many complexities of life. Our text offers us no simple solution at all! The way of prayer and praise is always a matter of self-denial. Prayer always means that we seek our salvation not in ourselves, or in men, but in God alone. It means asking God to help because He alone can help, and thanking Him because He alone has helped.

In this respect we are all one, no matter how different our situations may be. We are one in a living communion with the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are one in the confession that all things are from above, from the Father of lights (Chapter 1:17).

James offers no simple solution; he gives the *only* solution. The matter is indeed black and white. There is only one way to deal with life's blessings and trials: the way of prayer.

CL. STAM

Special children₁

1. A selfish society

In a previous series of articles we paid attention to different aspects of family life. We discussed the matter of having children, adopting children, and raising children. It was pointed out that tender loving care has to be shown to children and that love must determine the relationship with them. Such love does not contradict discipline, but most importantly it involves care for the other and a willingness to bring sacrifices of self-denial. It is an important part of family life, but also a rare commodity today.

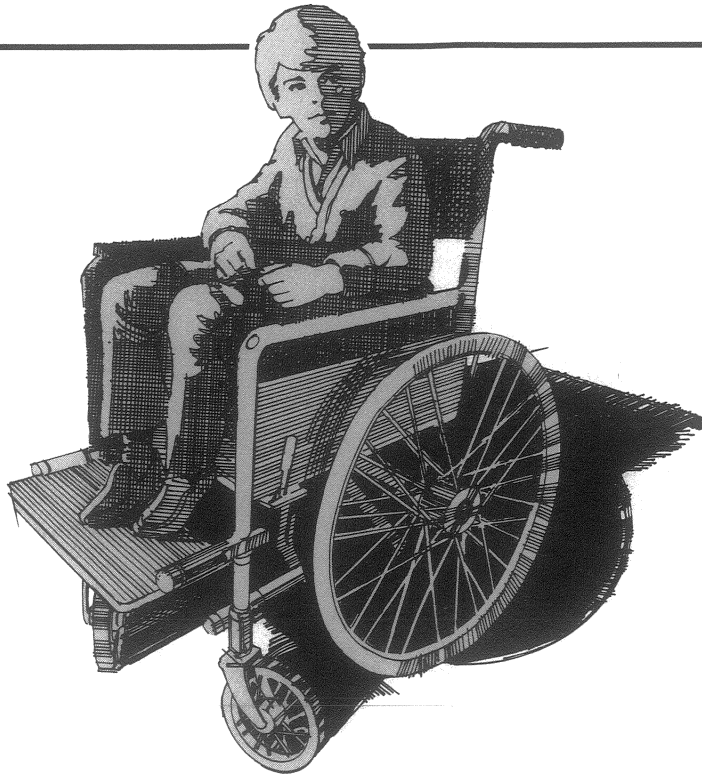
We live in a selfish society. Everything caters to efficiency. We are accustomed to throwaway items in every area of life. We discard everything that does not serve a purpose or is not worth being maintained or repaired. This trend can be noticed even with respect to human life. The older ones, the demented and useless people, and those who have become a burden to society have to be discarded by euthanasia. The little ones who do not fit in the program and are unwelcome

have to be destroyed either before birth, or shortly after.

In this article we will not deal with abortion in general, but like to pay attention to the position of special children and our attitude with respect to them. The ex-

pression "special children" in this context refers to those who are different because of physical or mental deficiencies. They are also called the "handicapped."

Prenatal care has drastically increased during the last decades. All kinds of tests



can be performed before a baby is born, to determine whether the child is healthy or suffers some anomalies. Such tests can be very important but there is also danger involved, and caution is certainly required.

Such tests can be important to determine whether special measures have to be taken to protect the health of either the baby or the mother. It can even be a "life saving" matter. Sometimes labour has to be induced at an early stage or a caesarean section has to be performed to save the life of the baby or to prevent further complications, or worsening, of an existing condition. In all such cases prenatal tests are certainly important, can provide vital information, and should be used. However, there is also a dangerous aspect of which we should be aware. Some tests are performed to determine whether a child should be aborted or not. When a child suffers certain anomalies, especially a physical or mental handicap which cannot be cured, abortion may be recommended. That can happen in cases of Down's syndrome, spina bifida or other anomalies. Down's syndrome, also called mongolism, causes severe retardation. Spina bifida is a defective closure of the spine which can cause serious damage of the spinal cord, paralysis, and other severe problems. In such cases of prenatal tests the danger exists that a less scrupulous doctor will advise his patient to have an abortion. In a case of mongolism nothing can be done to change the situation and, therefore, it does not serve any purpose to let the mother know in advance that her baby suffers this disease. In a case of spina bifida a prenatal test can provide information to suggest the need for caesarean section to prevent unnecessary aggravation of the defect during delivery.

The main point in all these cases is that we have to accept also special children, with their mental or physical abnormalities, as human beings, created by the Lord, intricately wrought by His Fatherly hand, and of no less value than others. In what follows we will determine what our attitude and approach should be with respect to such special children and their parents. We often take it for granted that healthy children are born, but every birth is a wonder of God's creating power. To watch such a fragile creature makes one always wonder how people dare to destroy such a work of God's almighty hand with their cruel tools of abortion. It also makes one wonder how it is possible that such a child is so perfectly and intricately wrought by the Lord (Psalm 139:15). We should certainly not take it for granted that a child is healthy. Those who have been confronted by having "special children" realize what it means.

Now the question has to be faced how we approach such children and their

parents. Are such children only a burden we have to live with? Are the parents only to be pitied for their unfortunate circumstances? Or do we consider also these children to be a blessing? Do they have an important place in human life and do they serve a purpose? In what follows we will see that they certainly are not less important than "normal" children but very valuable and precious indeed.

2. How precious they are!

There is a lot of misconception among outsiders about the value and the meaning of special children, and about the way parents feel and cope with their problems. Some consider the children only poor pitiable creatures and the parents unfortunate people who have to put up with an almost insurmountable problem.

Now no one can deny that such parents have a difficult task and that they certainly, on occasion, feel sad about their circumstances. However, more has to be said to give a balanced view about their situation.

When we deal with such families it is always a surprise to notice that they see their special child, in the first place, as their precious child, and not as a poor wretch. They enjoy all kinds of little things. They overlook the handicap. It is their child, a child that provides them with lots of joy, happiness, and unity in the family.

When you deal regularly with such children, you learn to see through their being different and you learn to appreciate their personality. It is certainly not always,

and not only, a burden. Consider also how often a "normal" child can cause problems, discord, and frustration in a family. It is remarkable to see how such normal children can cause a lot of trouble and disunity, while these special children often cause an atmosphere of unity, closeness, happiness, and peace.

I have had the privilege of visiting different summer camps of physically and mentally handicapped children as well as special "catechism classes" or "Bible classes" for these children. There are few things I have enjoyed more than the openness, honesty, thankfulness, and happiness of such children. With normal adults and children you always have to be on your guard. They can fool you, pretending something which is not real. Although special children can react in an unusual way, and express themselves in an unexpected manner, they are often more honest and straightforward than many "normal" people. When a Bible story is told they can ask questions which give food for thought, and they can express their feelings and their faith in a way which makes you feel ashamed.

Dealing with such children has quite often reminded me of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, mentioned in Matthew 19:14, "Let the children come to Me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven," and in Matthew 18:3,4, "Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."



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3. Special treatment

Another aspect of this matter is the question how we have to treat such parents and their children. Do they need to be treated and pitied in a special way? A general guideline is that few people like it to be singled out or treated in a very special way. Handicapped people, adults as well as children, and the parents of handicapped children, want to be, and should be, treated as normal as possible. Don't systematically avoid speaking about the fact of life, but don't overdo it either. They want you to show interest in their child, his weal and woe, his progress, and how nice and special he is to them, but they also want to be treated as normal parents and not overly pitied.

Also the handicapped himself, either a child or an adult, has to be treated as normally as possible. You should not ignore a physical handicap, but not overemphasize it either. A handicapped person sometimes needs assistance. Such help should be given in a natural way, but don't take everything out of his hands. It can promote a person's self-esteem to show that he can manage without help. Even if it takes him some extra time and effort, don't be too hasty in taking over.

With respect to mentally handicapped or retarded persons, we have to be careful not to act or to speak in a childish way. Some people tend to use childish language, but keep in mind that retarded children, although they might not be able to express themselves in the proper way, can understand you much better if you

use normal language. Moreover, how can they ever learn to use the proper phrases, if everyone speaks to them in a childish manner? They often understand more than we are aware of, although they are not always able to show it with a proper response.

The question has been discussed in many places and at different levels, whether special church services should be held for mentally handicapped children, or whether they should be brought into the normal services, or even whether they do not need to participate in the worship service at all, because they cannot understand it anyway. As is the case in many such situations, the answer cannot be given by a plain yes or no. They certainly belong to the congregation as children of the covenant, no less than other children. They should participate in congregational life as much as possible. Even when they cannot understand everything and do not always behave like others, they should be included as much as possible. They probably enjoy it more than we are aware of and being together with the congregation might mean more for them than for many a smart child or adult who does not pay much attention or sleeps all the time.

In general I am not in favour of special services for such children. We rather should try to give some attention to them in a regular service, if need be, and if the circumstances permit. A few words can mean a lot for them. They sometimes hear, feel, and understand more than we realize.

Once I preached in a congregation, while a group of handicapped children were there. They had a summer camp in that area, and a row of children in wheelchairs were sitting in front of the congregation. I had a sermon on Ephesians 4:20. In Dutch it says: "Gij geheel anders." (You completely different.) It was a hot summer day. All the elders had taken off their jackets and walked in, in their white shirts. A retarded boy in a wheelchair was playing with a piece of paper and a pencil. After the service he showed one of the leaders of the summer camp his piece of paper. On it was a row of men, one of them black and all the others white. He had noticed that only the minister wore a black jacket and he had made his own application of the text. It was certainly not the most appropriate application of the text, but it showed at least that he had heard the text and that he had noticed what was going on. Such children certainly hear, see, and feel much more than we think.

Although I am not in favour of excluding such children from regular church services by introducing special services for them, I strongly endorse having special Bible classes for them, or giving them special instruction in another way, adjusted to their level of comprehension. That brings us to our next point, namely, how we use the talents which the Lord has entrusted to us. We hope to deal with that the next time.

— To be continued
W. POUWELSE

The deacons' office

Deacons

More than the office of elders, the office of *deacons* is in danger today. That is not only the case in our days for we can say that none of the special offices in the church experienced so much alteration of assignment and change duty as the office of deacons. One said, "Just as Laban dealt with Jacob's wages, so they dealt with the office of the deacon: they changed it ten times!"

Already in the second half of the second century the deformation began; deacons slowly but surely became no more than helpers, the *adjutants* of the bishop. They could not do anything without his order or permission. Besides that, one placed between the bishops and the dea-

cons the presbyters, and this hierarchical order was maintained very strictly. Also archdeacons and subdeacons appeared, and it looked like the order in the Old Testament — the bishops being compared to the high priest, the presbyters to the priests and the deacons to the levites. As a rule the deacons had to stand, while the higher clergy might sit.

In the Middle Ages the image is even more sombre. There is nothing left of the care of the diaconry for the poor. There is begging everywhere, and that is not discouraged by the clergy, but rather promoted. The poor complain that nobody takes care of them. Meanwhile there is great luxury and wealth in the monasteries, as well as the costly splendour and lustre of

the higher clergy, especially at the Papal court, attained by exploitation of the people. But from the beginning it was not so.

Therefore, the reformers had the enormous task, of looking back to the beginning and restoring the office of deacons completely. Luther discovered from Scripture what the office of deacons actually was, but time and again he let himself be ruled by the spirit of his time. So in the Lutheran church the deacon received the function of assistant preacher. Zwingli recommended the care of the poor to the government, so he did not restore the office of deacons. But Bucer first, and after him Calvin, rediscovered the beauty of the office of deacons, and they read again the Scriptures in order to reform this office.

Diakonein

It is also our task, to read the Scriptures again in order to understand what the task of the deacon is. In the New Testament the verb *diakonein* (and also the noun *diakonos*) has a general and a special meaning. According to its proper significance, *diakonein* means “to serve at the table” (namely, for food and drink), according to Luke 17:8 and John 12:2). Hence the word is used for all “provision” (see Luke 8:3, Matthew 27:6, Mark 15:41), while the personal provision with love is stressed (see Matthew 25:42-44, Acts 2:19 and I Corinthians 16:15).

The *diakonos* is he who practices *diakonein*, and our Lord Jesus Christ continues to practice it as no one else. He experienced in this world the call from His Father as a service, endlessly great, immeasurably deep, totally unique in its appearance. Although He is the Son of God Himself, He did not come into this world in order to be served, but to serve. He completely breaks the idea of the old world that to serve is something less worthy. He turns around all human ideas of greatness and rank. He tells His disciples, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave” (Matthew 20:25-28, see also Mark 10:42-45). So Jesus Christ did Himself. He did not seek a *crown*, but the *cross*.

When Jesus Christ, the great *diakonos*, ascended into heaven, He continued this office in the first place by His apostles. They have the task, to glorify God’s Name on earth, to proclaim His great deeds. They have to serve God by serving their brethren, also with material goods. That was an enormous task! No wonder that when the number of believers increased that much, this enormous task excelled the powers of the twelve. After a short time, there were problems with the care of the poor. The apostles had received and taken charge of the money given by the people of the church. The whole task had become a large one, and the care for the poor did not function as it ought to have. We read in Acts 6 that the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.

Widows neglected

What does that mean, that the Hellenists’ widows were neglected in the daily distribution? Dr. Van Bruggen is of the opinion that this means that those widows were neglected, not as *objects*, but as *subjects*. In other words: they were not neglected in *receiving* support, but in *giving*

support (*Ambten in de Apostolische Kerk*, p. 65ff.). He appeals to Acts 9, where we read that Dorcas was also one of the women who was full of good works and acts of charity. And Dorcas was one of the leaders of the widows, who made clothes for the poor. But I do not think that Dr. Van Bruggen is right. In the first place, we do not read that Dorcas was a leader of a group, but we only read that the people very much regretted that with her death the charity of making clothes had stopped. In the second place, turning back to Acts 6, if the

Another objection was that what is said about the seven does not have anything to do with the care of the poor. Philip goes to work as an evangelist, Stephan delivers sermons and does great wonders and signs among the people. Also this objection does not hold water. It is explicit that the work of the deacons is not mentioned in Acts 6, because the reason for the trouble had been solved. The measure was undoubtedly effective. In addition, the “seven” could have received the charisma of *didaskalia*, the special gift of

“What the deacons exercise is Christian mercy, according to Christ’s mandate, to the honour of the Name of the LORD and to the well-being of the poor and lonely members of Christ’s body.”

negligence had been in the fact that no women were involved in the distribution of the goods and money, then we might expect that this would be rectified by appointing *women* now. But that did not happen. Neither did the seven brothers receive the assignment to *enlist women* in the future as a kind of help to the sisters. No, seven brothers were installed. They were appointed to that duty (verse 3), namely, to serve tables (verse 2).

The seven

Time and again, the objection has been made that the word “deacons” is not mentioned in Acts 6. But I am of the opinion that this does not at all prove that this chapter does not deal with deacons. I think we have here the *prototype* of the later deacons, in the special sense of those who have to *diakonein*.

Repeatedly people have tried to deny and to dispute the ecclesiastical office of the deacons. For instance, one pointed to the fact that in the rest of the book of Acts no deacons are mentioned. In Acts 14:23 we read about election of presbyters, but not of election of deacons. In Chapter 11:27-30 we read that the relief to the brethren of Judea was sent to the elders, so not to the deacons. But we cannot see that this poses a great difficulty. For in Acts 8:1 we read that a great persecution arose against the Church at Jerusalem. So it already happened very soon that the office of deacons could not function any more in the Church at Jerusalem. And also later on, when the persecution grew less, it appeared that the office of deacon was not necessary in Jerusalem, for we read in Acts 21:8 that Philip, one of the seven, lived in Caesarea.

teaching, just as it happened often in the beginning of the New Testament church. Neither is it excluded that, for instance, Philip started preaching when it was impossible to function as deacon.

There are also the objections that the “seven” had no office at all, that they had the same office as the presbyters, that they had a special status between presbyters and deacons, or that they had a temporary task in order to solve specific problems. These are all arguments against the permanent office of deacons. But I am of the opinion that Acts 6 deals with the service of deacons as a *permanent, special, independent and proper* office.

Office

It is an *office*. The seven were not appointed by the apostles or by the presbyters as “helpers.” The whole, broad, solemn course of facts shows us that this is more than a kind of subordinate, less important function; the calling together of the congregation, the exposition of the necessity and the requirements of the service of mercy by the apostles, the election by the congregation, the approval of the apostles, their prayer and laying on of hands — all that is an indication of the institution of a certain office.

It is also a *permanent* office and not a temporary service. Of course there were in that time temporary services. We should not consider the organization of the Christian church in the very beginning as if everything concerning the offices was finalized. But we may say: the more the extraordinary offices disappeared, the more the normal offices came to the foreground. The distinction in Acts 6 between *diakonia tou logou* (preaching the Word of God)

and *diakonein trapedzais* (to serve tables) is rather sharp. What was united for the apostles in their service, is now split into two services: the preaching of the Word of God, and the service of mercy.

It is also a *special* office, discerned from the extraordinary office of the apostles and the prophets of the New Testament. It is a special service in the local church. We do not read that the seven executed their office outside Jerusalem.

It is also an *independent* office. That independence is strongly expressed by the apostles when they say "whom we may appoint to this duty." The word that is used here points to the ordination to an

office. The apostles leave the whole matter of the care for the widows to the deacons because this whole care became too heavy for them. It appeared that the preaching of the Word required all their energy. They had to hand over the care of the poor to others in an independent office. Therefore the seven were given the responsibility for caring for the needy.

Finally, it is also a *proper* office. In former Latin publications we can read the term *proprius*, from which the English word "proper" is derived. That means: this is an office with its own task, not to be shared with others. That also means that the deacons may not claim what belongs to the

duties of other office-bearers. Neither is the office of the deacons to be equalled with the function of government officers. What the deacons exercise is Christian mercy, according to Christ's mandate, to the honour of the Name of the LORD and to the well-being of the poor and lonely members of Christ's body.

This permanent, special, independent proper office is not less holy or worthy than the office of minister of God's Word or the office of elder.

— *To be continued*
K. DEDDENS

The Doctrine of the Covenants and the Reformed Confessions.

Introduction

In recent years there has been a remarkable revival of interest in Covenant Theology. This has been particularly the case in the fields of Old Testament studies and in the history of Dogmatics and there is abundant evidence that the spate of research is still gathering momentum. Federal Theology is so closely linked with Biblical chronology that it could not but suffer eclipse from the reconstructions of higher criticism. But with the increasing scientific confirmation of traditional Biblical chronology we are seeing a renaissance of Covenant Theology. This places a special responsibility on churches which faithfully adhere to the Reformed Confessions to engage in an ongoing appraisal of these developments in scholarship and to evaluate the bearing of these matters, if any, on our confessional formulation. However high a regard we may have for the purity of our tradition we may not shirk this and indeed if we are faithful to the teaching of our Confessions on General Councils this will be mandatory for us. We believe that such an evaluation need not be undertaken reluctantly or in fear. We are not lacking in confidence that the result will be in the main; though perhaps not in every precise detail; to authenticate the Biblical reliability and doctrinal excellency of our symbols. This paper does not claim to be such an evaluation but it may furnish us with some evidence of the need for it and of the general vindication of our standards under the scrutiny of present day scholarship. For the comfort of the pious

who may already be trembling for the ark of God we can do no better than quote from the remarkable preface to the Scotch Confession of 1560 "If any man will note in this our confession any article or sentence repugnant to God's holy Word, that it would please him of his gentleness and for Christian charity's sake to admonish us of the same in writing; and we upon our honour and fidelity by God's grace do promise him satisfaction from the mouth of God, that is from his holy Scriptures or else Reformation of that which he shall prove to be amiss."¹

Definition of subject

The title of the paper is somewhat vague but I am happy about this because a sharper definition as a starting point might serve our purpose less well. Whilst we can identify a corpus in Reformed Dogmatics designated "Covenant Theology" it is also true that there are significant differences in the way that this locus of doctrine has been set forth in works on dogmatics. Indeed one of the interesting theories at present strongly advocated is that we have two equally authentic traditions of Covenant Theology; the bi-lateral concept of covenant said to emanate from Zurich, primarily from Bullinger, and the unilateral testamentary approach more closely related to Calvinism. It is not our purpose here to examine the presuppositions of this hypothesis or to test the accuracy of its claims historically but we can say that it ought not to be lightly dismissed especially since it impinges upon articles

of faith that are at the heart of Reformed Dogmatics. It is enough for us here to make the observation relevant to our study that though the "Doctrine of the Covenant" is a cognizable designation it is not in itself a precise definition.

The second member of the title "Reformed Confession" requires preliminary comment especially because of the rather general usage of the term "Reformed" as a verbal adjective with nouns like Presbyterian or Baptist etc. Here it is used as designating the Creeds of the Swiss, German, French, Netherlands, Scotch, Irish and English Churches. From the Sixty Seven Articles of Ulrich Zwingli in 1523 to the Formula Consensus Helvetica 1675. The great Lutheran Creeds such as the Augburg Confession and Apology; Luther's Enchiridion and the Formula Concord are not considered. Nor are the Savoy Declaration or the Baptist Confession of 1688 or numerous more recent revisions of the Reformed Creeds on both sides of the Atlantic included. Not because they are regarded as unimportant or judged peremptorily to be not Reformed but simply because that the differences between them and the Westminster Confession; on which they are based; are more or less predictable. But the creeds of the Anglican Church particularly the Thirty Nine Articles and the Irish Articles are included. The principle documents then that we will consider are The Second Helvetic Confession; The Gallican Confession; The Three Forms of Unity; The Thirty Nine Articles; The Scotch Confession; The Westminster Standards and the Formula Consensus Helvetica.

This prescribes our field of enquiry within manageable proportions.

Arrangement of subject

We will divide our subject into the two most obvious general divisions. Considering first the Covenant of Works and the Reformed Confessions and in the second section we will cover the field regarding the Covenant of Grace. This may appear stereotyped but it is almost impossible to do anything other than a consecutive study of the subject. Any attempt to take both divisions of Covenant Theology concurrently presents great difficulties and frequently ends in confusion and we hope to show that the two economics are interrelated.

Only in the Westminster Standards, The Formula Consensus Helvetica and to a lesser extent in the Irish Articles do you have what may be called a doctrine of The Covenant of Works explicitly asserted. The term covenant is not used in the Gallican Confession, The Thirty Nine Articles, or the Scotch Confession. There is one phrase in the Scotch Confession that some may judge to be synonymous with Covenant where it speaks of the Angel of the Council of God but this would be disputed. Direct references to the notion of the Covenant in the other Symbols of the 16th century are generally confined to the articles on the Sacraments and more particularly to the articles on Baptism. Certain remarks are pertinent to these observations. A mere tabulation of the number of times "Covenant" occurs does not constitute an evaluation of the doctrine of the Covenants in the Reformed Confessions. Nor does the absence of the term prove the non-inclusion of Covenant doctrine in the Confessions. Our study then may not be confined to the specific references to Covenant in the Creeds but must rather examine the symbols as to what extent they are compatible with the constituent elements of federalism or else are inhospitable to them.

Historical comment

The observation made concerning the paucity of Covenantal terms in the Confessions of the 16th century is partly, at least, due to the facts of history. Though the root ideas of federalism can be found in Calvin and even in some of the earlier reformers like Zwingli and Bullinger yet there was no great development of the concept until the later part of the 16th century. Bullinger had indeed a fairly detailed Covenant Theology of Redemptive revelation but in many respects it was embryonic. As we shall have to note more fully later the initial covenantal theologies related to redemptive revelation. The conceiving of pre-redemptive revelation covenantally came somewhat subsequently. This his-

torical fact must be considered in evaluating the Creeds or Confessions of the Reformation and post Reformation era.

We need not be surprised to find great developments in Theology in an age of Reformation. The very creedal symbols themselves are proof of the theological vitality of the age. And we must bear in remembrance that of no creedal document can it be said that the theological terminus has been reached in it. So development is not IPSO FACTO suspect, far less wrong. Of course it has to be borne in mind that many so-called advances have proved destructive to the church. All the more reason why every new formulation must be carefully scrutinized. Covenant Theology has been subject to a great deal of research and investigation, its fortunes have varied according to the prevailing theological climate. We believe the climate is favourable for a renaissance in the evangelical world. The enthusiasm for an all-conquering individualism is losing some of its momentum as revivalism is becoming threadbare. Also the recovery of lost ground by conservative scholarship must give a great impetus to the return on the part of Reformed Churches to their true and native habitat.


The Confessions and the Covenant of Works

The designation Covenant of Works is frequently objected to for a variety of reasons. It is alleged that it connotes the idea that man brings God under obligation. We allow that due respect must be given to the semantical aspect of doctrinal statements, though as Calvin never tires of saying, one should not strive about words where principles are not at risk. If the term "Works" bears the connotation of man bringing God under obligation it was very far from the minds of federal theologians. The name can be exchanged, without prejudice to the schema, for Covenant of Life, or Covenant of Nature, as is frequently the case in the writings of federal theo-

logians and in the Westminster Standards.

But it is not just the terminology that is chiefly objected to but the very idea of a Covenant with Adam in his pre-fall state. Since this is not a defense of the Covenant of Works arrangement only the most cursory attention will be given to this point here. Objections are principally based in the first instance on the lack of explicit Scripture testimony. Federal Theologians although frequently quoting such texts as Hosea 6:7 and Job 31:33 have never based the case for an Edenic Covenant on random Biblical texts but more so upon the good and necessary consequences of large segments of revelation such as Romans 5:12-21; I Corinthians 15:45-49 and upon foundational principles like the corporate oneness of mankind in their sinfulness. It is also urged, not only by those who reject Covenant Theology but even by many covenant theologians as well, that to speak of a Covenant of Works is to make an improper use of the Covenant concept, for not all covenant theologians accept a Covenant of Works. But neither etymology nor usage seems to preclude us necessarily from describing the Edenic administration as a Covenant. Some usages of the term BERITH [Covenant, J.G.] certainly do not comport with the nature of the Edenic dispensation but it is another thing to assert that the term is so univocal and the concept so stereotyped that they may not properly admit of application to it at all. At the very least we can say that linguistic, exegetical and other studies, in recent times are supportive of the propriety of designating the pre-fall administration as a Covenant.

It will be helpful if at this stage we recall the main features of the Covenant of Works as that has been generally set forth by federal theologians. It was recognized that God alone can make a Covenant with man and He alone as God wills to do so. Hence the Covenant was always judged to be fundamentally MONOPLEURON. And in those Confessions which enunciate a Covenant of Works as one of their articles; like the Westminster Confession and the Formula Consensus Helvetica; this aspect of the Covenant is underscored. But in as much as the keeping of the Covenant by man; in order to enjoy Covenant favour; rested upon his obedience to the Will of God, it was DIPLEURON. It was commonly stated that there were four parts to it. The STIPULATIO — the demands made by God upon man; the PROMISSIO — the divine commitment to do good to man as long as he was obedient to His will; or the negative sanction of death threatened on our disobedience; the ASSUMPTIO — man's commitment to supply what God demanded of him and finally the RESTIPULATIO — the right to claim the good promised; which right it was said



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was his by virtue of the Covenant alone since it was not man that bound God but it was God who bound Himself to do good to man, if he remained faithful in observing the divine demands. To this it was usually added that the covenant had its sacraments. Most held that these were two in number; paradise and the tree of life. Others spoke of four. Adding to the two above; the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the Sabbath. As is well known the celebrated covenant theologians Cocceius and Witsius differed on this point. The promise was life. Not so much in the sense of bestowing upon man something which he did not have but rather in confirming man in what he had already received in his creation. It was generally acknowledged that, as God's image, man's state was not static but that it allowed for progress to ultimate blessedness. This

“The Confessions in general do not view man, though created in the image, as already in possession of the pinnacle of blessedness possible for him to attain to, but speak of life as the boon bestowed on man in virtue of his perfect obedience to the Will of his Creator.”

brief resumé of the Covenant of Works is adequate to allow us to proceed to examine whether it comports with the Confessional Articles on man in his pristine condition or differs from their affirmations on the matter.

It has already been pointed out in respect of the creedal documents coming under review that we do not find an explicit confession of the Covenant of Works other than in the Irish Articles, the Westminster Standard and the Formula Consensus Helvetica. Hence the course that we shall follow in our investigations is to highlight the constituent elements of the Covenant of Works Schema and search our Creeds as to their statements on each particular article that attention will be focused on.

Unquestionably the most felicitous statement that we have in any Creed on the Covenant perspective of man's pristine state is in the opening assertion of Chapter VII of the Westminster Confession of Faith. “The distance between God and the creature is so great that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to Him as their Creator yet they could never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward but by some voluntary condescension on God's part which he hath been pleased to express by way of Covenant.”² The two thoughts that are basic to this statement are that man's blessed-

ness consists in seeking by obedience to glorify his God and enjoy His favour and that God grants this boon to man not as a debt strictly owing to him for his obedience but as a privilege bestowed upon him out of the bountifulness of the good pleasure of God. To this is added a third thought that God was pleased to bind Himself by way of Covenant with man so that he might truly grasp with assurance the prospect of enjoying the promised boon. Such is the heart of the Covenant of Works schema. In other words the Covenant was to establish a felicitous communion of life between God and man as a permanent unlooseable boon arising from divine benevolence but bound up with man's covenant faithfulness.

Now federal theologians have ever recognized that this Covenant was as truly a Covenant of Nature as it was a Cove-

nant of Works. By this was meant that there was perfect affinity between man's nature and the Covenant. Put in other words it means that the promise of life, conditional upon man's obedience to the commandment of God, was in perfect accord with the state in which man was created. It emphasized that man was created in the Image and Likeness of God. To be more specific the Image was not “Donum superadditum” but a concreated excellency.

The Gallican Confession Art. IX says “We believe that man was created pure and perfect in the image of God.”³

The answer to Question 6 in the Heidelberg Catechism is, “God created man good, and after His own image — that is, in righteousness and true holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him and live with Him in eternal blessedness to praise and glorify Him.”⁴

The point of this is brought out very clearly in the Irish Articles Art. 21 “Man being at the beginning created according to the image of God (which consisted chiefly in the wisdom of his mind and the true holiness of his free will) had the Covenant of the law ingrafted in his heart.”⁵

The Second Helvetic Confession expresses it with equal felicity. “We therefore confess that ‘the law is good and holy’ (Romans 7:12) and that this law is by the finger of God either ‘written in the hearts of men’ (Romans 2:15) and so called a law of na-

ture, or engraven in the two tables of stone.”⁶ Chapter XII, para. 11.

In accordance with this we find in Scripture that the totality of man's life, not just as a general rule, but in every detail, was placed “under law to God.” His relation to the creation in general, usually spoken of as the creation mandate — his social and family life — as the Lord of Glory testifies, concerning Adam before his heart was hardened by sin — conformed to the Will of his Creator; his vocation in all its dimensions including labour and rest, even his procreative functions and responsibilities. Every facet of life was measured by the category of obedience and every one of the Confessions testifies to his capacity to appreciate and offer the requisite obedience.

But this is not all. The Confessions in general do not view man, though created in the image, as already in possession of the pinnacle of blessedness possible for him to attain to, but speak of life as the boon bestowed on man in virtue of his perfect obedience to the Will of his Creator. As we saw the answer to Question 6 in the Heidelberg Catechism strongly implies this and the statement in the Belgic Confession is even more explicit. In Article XIV it says “For the commandment of life, which he (i.e. Adam) had received, he transgressed; and by sin separated himself from God, who was his true life.”⁷

The Scotch Confession likewise represents man's original destiny in this way. Article XV “The law of God we confess and acknowledge most just, most equal, most holy and most perfect commanding these things which being wrought in perfection were able to give life and able to bring man to eternal felicity.”⁸

The Formula Consensus Helvetica, Article VIII, is much more full and explicit on the matter, designating the arrangement a Covenant, nevertheless not differing in substance from the thrust of previous Confessions. “The promise annexed to the Covenant of Works was not just the continuation of earthly life and felicity, but primarily the possession of eternal life in heaven of course.”

And in Article IX it states “Therefore we do not assent to any view of those who deny that any reward of heavenly life was propounded to Adam, if he should obey God, and do not recognize any other promise of the Covenant of Works than that of enjoying perpetual life overflowing with every kind of good things — and that in an earthly paradise.”⁹

It is interesting that in its statement on this aspect of the Edenic administration the Second Helvetic Confession cites Psalm 8 which is a profound theological reflection on man's glory in creation and what must be observed, even more partic-

ularly, is the pronounced eschatology of the psalm, plainly indicating an eschatological dimension to man's original state. This must be emphasized, so that it will be seen that these creedal assertions do not come to us as some kind of scholastic refinement in dogmatics, but as the confession of what they judged to be the truth, revealed by God in His holy Word, concerning man's destiny under the pre-fall economy. "The Commandment ordained to life was found to be unto death." Romans 7:10. The law was designed to make man more blessed still. That it proved to be unto death is not the fault of the law as Paul emphatically declares in verse 14.

A few remarks on these confessional data are in order at this point before we lose sight of the significance of our citations. Geerhardus Vos, whose knowledge of the writings of the Reformers was of the very highest order, and whose insights into the revelational principles at issue in any theological construction was rarely matched; saw that the crucial distinction between Reformed and Lutheran anthropology hinged upon this very point. In his great article on the Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology after having summed up the Lutheran, Pelagian and Roman doctrine of man's original state he said "The Reformed view of the original state of man leads to a totally different result. It was a state of perfect uprightness in which he knew the good and did it consciously. As long as he remained in that state he could also be sure of God's favour. Up to this point the Reformed view concurs with the Lutheran. But whereas the latter can be satisfied by perpetuating such a state and extending it indefinitely, the Reformed view fixes its gaze on something higher. It sees man not as being placed in eternal bliss from the beginning but as being placed in such a way that he

might attain to eternal bliss. There still hovers above him the possibility of sin and death which is given with his mutable freedom. He is free to do the good out of his good nature but he has not yet attained the highest freedom which can do good only. The latter is placed before him as an ideal. The means of obtaining it is the Covenant of Works. Here too the state of grace is again ultimately determined by the idea of man's destiny in the state of original uprightness. What we inherit in the second Adam is not restricted to what we lost in the first Adam. It is much rather the full realization of what the first Adam would have achieved for us had he remained unfallen and been confirmed in his state. Someone placed in that state can never again fall from it. As truly as Christ is a perfect Saviour so truly must He bestow upon us the perseverance of the saints."¹⁰ Herman Bavinck in his work "Our Reasonable Faith" writes in similar vein, "He (Adam) lived in paradise, it is true, but this paradise was not heaven and it could with all its beauty be forfeited by him. One thing was lacking in all the riches, both spiritual and physical, which Adam possessed: ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY. As long as we do not have that, our rest and pleasure is not yet perfect."¹¹

Before leaving this point it is in order to draw attention to the Tree of Life which it is said was in the midst of paradise. Numerous points of great interest arise here which cannot be dealt with now but we would be remiss if we failed to refer to the significance of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil for the point under consideration. Covenant theologians have uniformly taught that there was a sacramental relation between the Tree of Life and the Promise of the Covenant. The use of the symbolism of the early chapters of Genesis in the escha-

tology of the Apocalypse, was seen as confirmatory of this. Such sacramental signs and seals were looked upon as further confirmation of the covenantal character of the administration, since it was held that sacraments belonged to a covenant. In regard to "the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" all the confessions agree in asserting that the cause of man's fall and ruin was his transgression of God's prohibition concerning the eating of the tree and thus incurring the penalty of death. The disobedience arose from the mutability of man's will wrought upon by the evil influence of satanic temptation. "The woman being deceived by the serpent and man obeying the voice of the women both conspiring against the sovereign majesty of God who in express words had before threatened death if they presumed to eat of the forbidden tree."¹²

It is needless to further develop here the details of confessional statements on this particular aspect of federalism we must move on to even more crucial elements of the Edenic administration from the point of view of Covenant Theology.

— *To be continued*
JOHN N. MACLEOD

¹Preface to the Scotch Confession of 1560 (Schaffs Creeds of Christendom)

²Westminster Confession of Faith. Chapter 7 para. 1.

³The Gallican Confession Art. IX.

⁴The Heidelberg Catechism, Question 6.

⁵The Irish Articles of Religion 1615 Art. 21 (Schaffs Creeds).

⁶The Second Helvetic Confession, Chapter XII para (Schaffs)

⁷The Belgic Confession Art. XIV (Schaffs).

⁸The Scotch Confession Art. XV.

⁹The Formula Consensus Helvetica Chapters VIII and IX.

¹⁰Geerhardus Vos. The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Confessions.

¹¹Herman Bavinck "Our Reasonable Faith" translation by Henry Zylstra.

¹²The Scotch Confession Art. 11.

Secretarial report of the CRTCA 1985/1986

Another year has gone by since all the governors of the Teachers' College have met together.

Nineteen-eighty-five has not been a particularly easy year for the board and those involved with the financial aspect of the College. We will not elaborate on this point now for it will receive ample attention during this Annual Meeting.

I will not attempt to recount all that took place in and around our College but will review some of the happenings of the past year.

In May of 1985, A. Witten made a trip to the West where he gave a workshop, a speech, and a guidance session to the Grade 12 students of Credo Christian High School.

The principal, T. van der Ven conducted a workshop in May at the CRTA (Canadian Reformed Teachers' Association) Convention in Chatham, ON.

When the board received the applications from prospective students for the 1985-86 season there was some concern as to the larger number, especially

with regard to practice teaching. Including the students already enrolled there would have been a total of twenty-five, but when September arrived there were a total of twenty-one students at the College. At least two of the students did not meet the required qualifications and were therefore not accepted.

The College acquired an Apple II E computer but the hard disc drive could not be bought due to budgetary restrictions. A yearbook for the College was considered but it was decided not to

make one because of the prohibitive cost.

As the governors can see from the above items it can be disheartening to see that even the relatively small things are held back due to lack of funds and you can be sure that the principal and staff of our College feel it even more acutely.

As you can well imagine, much of the time at our board meetings was spent on matters relating to finances. Newsletters were sent out, letters were sent to consistories and school boards requesting collections and more financial backing.

One of the conclusions reached was that all school societies should see the Teachers' College as an educational institution from which they derive a definite benefit and as such should have their support.

Regardless of the stress and difficulties of the past year, we may see the Lord's goodness in that He has allowed the College to operate and that He is, in this way, providing our schools with teachers who not only have a Christian background but who have been taught to pass on Christian principles in education to our young people.

May the Lord be with the staff and students throughout this school year and may He work in the hearts of many Brothers and Sisters so they may give willingly to ensure uninterrupted Christian training for our teachers-to-be.

K. BROUWER

Canadian Reformed Teachers' College Association's annual meeting of the Board of Governors at Hamilton, ON, February 7, 8, 1986.

1. The chairman, A. Hordijk, opens the meeting in the usual Christian manner at 8:00 p.m. He extends a hearty welcome to all present.

2. Roll call is held. R. Lenting of Watford is unable to attend. J. Tenhage of Brampton is absent on account of the snowstorm covering Southern Ontario.

3. The agenda for the meeting is adopted as presented.

4. The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting on January 3, 1986, as sent to all governors, is adopted.

5. Incoming mail:

a. Letter from A. Witten advising us that he obtained a 2nd Master's degree.

b. Parkland Immanuel School of Edmonton, AB, requests information about our Teachers' College.

Outgoing mail:

a. A response to be sent to the BC Ministry of Education seeking information about the Teachers' College.

b. A letter to the Canadian Reformed School Societies in ON requesting societal support.



The Board of Governors of the Teachers' College: l-r, Mr. J. Jonker, Mr. W. Bartels, Mr. C. Tenhage, Mrs. A. Viersen, Mr. H. DeLeeuw, Mr. P. VanderPol, Mr. W. Gortemaker, Treasurer: Mr. J. Gelderman, Mr. K. Brouwer, Mr. C. Hoff, Mr. J. Tillema, Mr. W. VanAssen, Mr. A. Hordyk



The Teachers' College Staff and their spouses: Mrs. W. Horsman, Mr. W. Horsman, Mrs. T. VanderVen, Mr. T. VanderVen, Mrs. A. Witten, Mr. A. Witten

c. A letter to all Free Reformed School Societies in Australia asking for contact and financial support for CRTCA.

6. Secretarial Report to be published in the next newsletter and in *Clarion*.

7. Principal's report:

a. A Diploma Reformed Education evening and/or summer course will be offered.

b. Part-time staff for the 1986/1987 year will be appointed.

c. Secretarial assistance is requested for two days a week as soon as possible. Request granted.

d. An offer to donate the desired video equipment is gratefully accepted.

e. The 1986/1987 College Calendar is approved.

Financial report: J. Gelderman reports that the incoming funds are slowly increasing for the past two months.

The financial statements to date are approved.

Budget 1986/1987: A proposal to increase the salaries for 1986/1987 by 5% is accepted.

An increase in the principal's allowance is also agreed on. Membership fees are established at \$185.00.

Public Relations report: The letter to the Canadian Reformed School Societies in Ontario is expected to have additional financial results.

It is noted that donations have decreased. We urge all church members to consider the Teachers' College for extra donations.

Building Committee: This committee is instructed to continue their search for suitable facilities to rent or buy.

All actions of the Executive Committee from February 9, 1985 to February 7, 1986, are ratified.

Local comments and questions raised are properly dealt with.

W. GORTEMAKER

Chilliwack's new organ

On the evening of January 10, 1986, the congregation at Chilliwack, BC, dedicated their new pipe organ to the praise of the Lord. Mr. Ike Bredenhof, chairman of the Committee of Administration, welcomed everyone present, especially Mr. Ron Dykstra of Cloverdale, our guest organist for the evening. After the congregation glorified the Lord "with song and music blending" (Psalm 92:1 and 2), the chairman read the praises of David in Psalm 147:1-12 and then led in prayer. Mr. Bredenhof thanked Mr. Dykstra and also Mr. Dirk Jan Zwart of Rotterdam, for their invaluable advice and direction, and expressed appreciation for the brotherly manner in which council, Committee of Administration, organists, and the organ builder, Mr. Hugo Spilker of Victoria, BC, all worked together. He gave a report on the preliminary work which was done before our organ was purchased and installed. But all the preparation and work was well worth the effort, for we now have a beautiful organ we can be proud of. We must always remember that the organ is but a tool to help us in our service to God. He then dedicated the organ to the honour and glory of the Lord.

After the congregation sang "a song of joy" (Psalm 81:1, 2 and 3), Mr. Ron Dykstra, assisted by Yvonne Byker at the organ, gave a thorough and very interest-



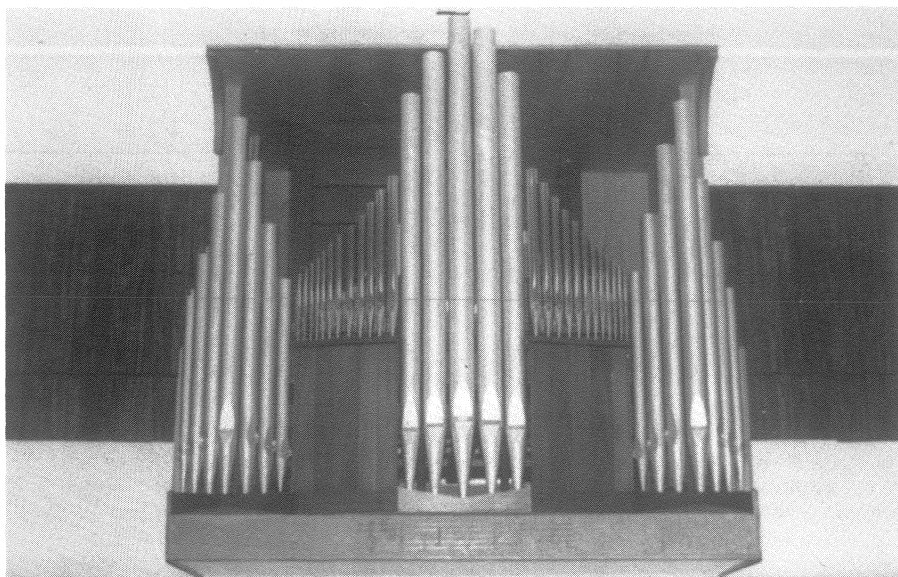
ing explanation and demonstration of the tonal resources of our new organ, which is a 3 manual, pedal, 12 rank with 642 pipes. Mr. K. Tams and Mrs. R. Hoeksema sang a duet called, "The Holy City" accompanied by Liz Tams at the organ. Mr. Dykstra played Psalm 75, accompanied by congregational singing, and variations on Hymn 25, and Psalm 77. Margareth Van-

Ellenberg played "Prelude and Fugue in F" by J.S. Bach, after which the choir sang three selections; "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," accompanied by Lyan VanEllenberg on the flute; a medley on Psalm 116; and "Festival of Praise," accompanied by Mr. D. Byker on trombone, and the congregation singing Psalm 150:1, 2 and 3. Yvonne Byker played "Canon in D" by Johann Pachelbel. Mr. Gordon Huebert thanked Mr. Dykstra for all his advice and direction in acquiring this organ, and presented him with a token of appreciation. Mr. Dykstra played a lively, "toe-tapping" selection at the organ, after which the congregation sang Hymn 59:1, 2, and 3.

Rev. Bouwman stated that he hoped this new organ would encourage more members to develop their musical talents to the praise of the Lord. He closed the evening with thanksgiving prayer.

Afterwards refreshments were served downstairs and there was an opportunity to talk with each other and to examine the console and pipes more closely. If anyone would like to have a copy of the specifications of the organ, they may send their request to the chairman of the Committee of Administration, Mr. I. Bredenhof, 49067 Prairie Central Road, RR 1, Chilliwack, BC V2P 6H3.

L. BREDEHOF



PRESS RELEASE

"Anchor" Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, January 10, 1986

The meeting is opened with prayer after the singing and reading of Psalm 150.

The chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all and wished all a blessed New Year. He noted that much was achieved last year and that we hope to start our home this year.

The minutes were adopted after a minor adjustment. A letter was received from a young church member in Carman. This letter is forwarded to the Summer Camp Committee.

A letter from a local committee member in Burlington West is read with information regarding showers held for "Anchor."

D. Kooiman gives his first report as administrator. He explains what has happened so far in getting the home ready for occupancy.

The administrator's job description is read and after some adjustments accepted.

Details regarding the running of the home are discussed.

The building committee gives a report on appliances and furnishings bought, renovations and improvements done.

The first residents will move in Feb. 3, 1986. Deo Volente.

An official opening will be held later. Summer Camp 1986 will be held July 7-19. D.V. The springtime reunion will be held in the London area.

The advisory committee reports that admission criteria and an admission form have been drawn up.

Some board members will look for a suitable vehicle.

A recommendation is made to hire a part-time counsellor for a couple of evenings a week.

Rules regarding T.V. and smoking are discussed. A notice regarding a welcome evening, to be put in bulletins, is drawn up.

A question period follows.

The meeting is closed in a Christian manner.

E.J. DE JONG

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Dear Sirs:

Our Ontario readers may be interested in a recent development with respect to local improvement charges assessed against the "Bethel" Canadian Reformed Church at Toronto property. As is the case in many jurisdictions, the Bethel Church was exempt from paying real property taxes by virtue of a provision in the Assessment Act (Ontario). However, generally schools and churches have been assessed and have paid their share of local improvements charged to properties under the Local Improvement Act (Ontario).

The Bethel Church recently became the beneficiary of sewers installed under

the Local Improvement Act, and as a result, was required to pay \$8,312.97.

By taking a new look at this legislation, and becoming aware of a recent decision (*Re Baptist Convention of Ontario & Quebec and City of Kanata et al*, 51 O.R. (2d) 400), we were able to persuade the municipality to waive the local improvement charges.

Schools and churches should also be aware of the rebate for taxes available under the Retail Sales Tax Act (Ontario) when building new buildings, or undertaking renovations and additions.

Yours very truly,
LOOPSTRA, NIXON & McLEISH
Per: C. M. Loopstra

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



Hello Busy Beavers,

Who likes Spring?

Did you have a lovely February day that "let Spring peep through?"

What's the first sign of Spring where you live?

What are YOU watching for?

Do you know the nice warm places where things start to grow first?

How about the sunny side of your house, or behind the shed or the barn?

Do you know WHAT will start to grow first?

Maybe you have snowdrops in your garden or early tulips.

How about rhubarb? or chives?

Scout around! See what you can see!

It's fun to be a Spring detective!

Try it!

It's fun with my friends!

by Busy Beaver Betty Bergsma

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1. It's fun to go sliding,
With all my friends,
Down the steep snowdrifts,
Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh! | 2. It's fun to go swinging,
With all my friends,
Back and forth flying,
Swing, swing, swing! | 3. It's fun to go swimming,
With all my friends,
Off the big diving board
Splash, splash, splash! |
|---|---|--|

Happy birthday wishes to all the Busy Beavers celebrating their special day in April. We hope you all have a happy and thankful day with your family and friends. May our heavenly Father bless and keep you in the years ahead.

April

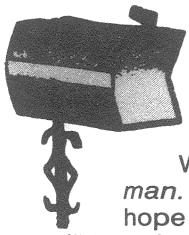
Angela Van Laar	7	Sylvia Van Bodegom	16	Gerard Torenvliet	20
Emily Vegter	11	Margaret Admiraal	17	Marie Hamoen	21
Marion Vandenbos	13	Angela Kippers	18	Cindy Oosterveld	21
Brian Vandenbos	13	Kimberley VanderZwaag	18	Kristy Van Meeteren	23
Henry Sikkema	14	Christine Riemersma	19	Alida Knol	24
Irma Van Ellenberg	15	Chris Van Middelkoop	19	Karen Stam	25
Geoffrey Hoogstra	16			Kerry Roodzant	30

OUR COVER

Mangelum: Irian Jaya

The sago-palm (foreground) provides the people with their staple-food. A village house in the background.

Photo courtesy:
K. Sikkema



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Kelly Kleefman*. I'm glad you had such a good birthday, and I hope you get that pen pal you're looking for! Maybe you'll have lots of letters to answer, Kelly! Thank you for the puzzle.

And a big welcome to you too, *Jonathan Kamphuis*. We are happy to have you join us. Who plays hockey with you, Jonathan? Bye for now.

Welcome to the Club, *Kimberly Kamphuis*. You're a real Busy Beaver already, I see. Thank you very much for the interesting puzzle. Sounds to me as if you had a very nice Christmas holiday, Kimberly, one you won't forget! I liked your family tree, too.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Cristie Bultje*. We hope you'll really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Will you write again and tell us about yourself and how you keep busy, Cristie? Thank you for the picture and the poems and riddles!

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Laura Breukelman*. We are happy to have you join us. Bye for now, Laura. Please write again soon.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Shanna Bartels*. Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver activities! I see you're a good writer and a real Busy Beaver. Write again soon, Shanna.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Alisa Schouten*. Of course you may be a Busy Beaver. We hope you will have lots of fun reading *Our Little Magazine* and doing our puzzles and joining in all our activities. Bye for now, Alisa.

Hello, *Betty Bergsma*. It was nice to hear from you again. Winter can look pretty, too, as you found out, right? What kind of stuffed toy are you crocheting, Betty? Thank you very much for the poem!

Thanks for your "story" and the quizzes *Debby Jagt*. I will save it for next New Year's. That will be soon enough, right Debbie? Bye for now.

Hello, *Jeannette Jansen*. How are your slippers coming along? And what kind of stuffed toy did you make? I hope the double birthday at your house was fun. Thank you for an interesting puzzle, Jeannette.

Thank you for a nice newsy letter *Cornelius Leffers*. I hope your weather will warm up soon so you can enjoy the swing, Cornelius. Be sure to let us know what happens to those calves!

Busy Beavers we need a pen pal for:

Kelly Kleefman (Age 9)
#7 13615 - 76th Avenue
Surrey, BC V3W 8J5

Who will exchange letters with her?

Quiz Time!

BUZZING BE'S

by Busy Beaver *Debbie Jagt*

Fill in the blanks with a word starting with "BE."

1. The gate of the Temple was called "BE_____."
2. John the Baptist was BE_____.
3. In the BE_____ was the Word.
4. BE_____ was the birthplace of Jesus.

(Answers below)

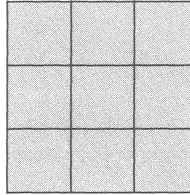
FIND THE SCRAMBLED ANIMALS

from Busy Beaver *Kelly Kleefman*

GUAAJR _____ KNOMYE _____
 PLHEENTA _____ FBUALOF _____
 NRSOERHICO _____ LTGALORIA _____
 RFEFAGI _____ RDOPELA _____

MAGIC SQUARE

by Busy Beaver *Jeannette Jansen*

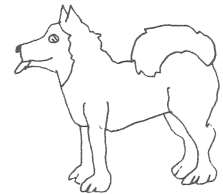


Put all the numbers from 1 through 9 in this square. They must equal 15 both ways! Use each number only once. Have fun!

TO THE DOGS

by Busy Beaver *Kimberly Kamphuis*

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



TERRIER GREYHOUND
 HOUND HUSKY
 BEAGLE BOXER
 SHEPHERD SPANIEL
 COLLIE DACHSHUND

SETTER
 POODLE
 WOLFHOUND
 BULLDOG

Answers:

Buzzing Be's —

1. beautiful 2. beheaded 3. beginning 4. Bethlehem

Scrambled Animals — jaguar, elephant, rhinoceros, giraffe, monkey, buffalo, alligator, leopard.

Magic Square -

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

That's all for today, Busy Beavers. I hope you liked our puzzles! Bye for now. Hope to "see" you all next time!

With love from your Aunt Betty

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