PERSPECTIVES IN COVENANT EDUCATION

ARTICLES

Covenant

Special Education

Special Education, Protestant Reformed, Why?

Slow Learner

Special Education for the Gifted

Teaching Children to Read: the Parents' Role

An Open Letter Concerning Reformed Higher Education

FALL 1983

PERSPECTIVES IN COVENANT EDUCATION

VOLUME IX Fall, 1983 NUMBER 1

Published tri-annually in the fall, winter, and spring by the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute.

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Perspectives in Covenant Education is a journal regulated and published tri-annually, in September, January, and May by the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute. The purpose of this magazine, in most general terms, is to advance the cause of distinctively Christian education as it is conceived in the Protestant Reformed community. More specifically, the magazine is intended to serve as an encouragement and an inducement toward individual scholarship, and a medium for the development of distinctive principles and methods of teaching. The journal is meant to be a vehicle of communication: a vehicle of communication, not only within the profession, but within the Protestant Reformed community and within the Christian community in general.

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BACKGROUND BRIEFS

by Agatha Lubbers

There's something special about this issue of *Perspectives.* It's special because we begin the ninth publishing year of this journal. We trust that it has been a fruitful venture and we only wish that more of those who love and support Christian education would also subscribe and support this venture.

There is reader response betimes to our endeavors. Recently a Dordt College student who is a member of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa, wrote and said, "My parents and I have been receiving *Perspectives* for some time now and I would like to express our appreciation to you for the interesting and informative articles. Many thanks." So for those of you who have contributed and have not received a personal "thank you" for your efforts, here is your "thank you" from a young reader who hopes some day to be a Christian school teacher because she also asked me for the names of all our Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. School Board members, are you reading?

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There is something very special about this issue of *Perspectives* because several of the articles published in this issue concern themselves with the special children that the Lord in His Covenant faithfulness sends into our families and our churches. We often do not count these blessings nor do we capture the opportunities that we have for Christian service in these important areas. We hope that you will enjoy the articles that have been written by the Board for the Society for Special Education, and a very timely article by Mrs. Gertrude Hoeksema on "Special Education, Protestant Reformed, Why?"

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Another of the special features of this issue is the Open Letter from "Conference on Reformed Higher Education." The purpose of this letter is to give the readers of this periodical an opportunity to hear of the efforts of this Conference to begin work in the area of college-level instruction.

I also wish to take this opportunity to inform our readers that the faculty, the student body, the board, the society, and all those who support Covenant Christian High School gratefully announce that the school begins this fall its 16th year of Christian instruction having completed 15 years in June of 1983. A special celebration to commemorate this happy occasion was held at Covenant Christian High School on Saturday, October 8, 1983. One of the products of that commemoration was the publishing of a booklet containing many interesting facts about the history of the school, past graduates, past and present board members, and also short articles from past and present administrators. This attractive and informative booklet is available by writing the school:

Covenant Christian High School
1401 Ferndale S.W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49504

Cost is $3.00.

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I am the fortunate recipient of several mailings by the Association of Christian Schools International. Although our doctrinal bias is not the same as many of the schools associated with the Association of Christian Schools International, (not to be confused with the Christian Schools International formerly called the National Union of Christian Schools) we nevertheless have many common concerns. Some of these relate to issues regarding our relationship to the secular government — Federal and State. I focus on several of these concerns in this issue.

Editorials:

SOCIAL SECURITY MADE MANDATORY

The ACSI strongly advocates the separation of state and religion as practiced by private and church schools and churches. William Bentley Ball, a partner in the law offices of Ball & Skelly of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, is the legal counsel for the ACSI. In a memorandum to Dr. Paul A. Kienel, Executive Director of ACSI, Ball indicates the basic position of the ACSI, particularly as this relates to the social security requirements being enforced beginning in January, 1984. Writes Attorney Ball:

> Starting January 1, 1984, all churches and schools which are exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code will be required to pay FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act) taxes for each employee who is paid $100.00 or more in a calendar year.
>
> This change was made by the Congress virtually without opposition. Some churches took a position supporting the amendment on the ground of its benefit to their employees. It was also argued that the new tax is necessary to keep the Social Security program in existence. Further, churches and schools in many states already pay sales and excise taxes.

Now notice the essential prejudice of Attorney Ball:

> The principle involved is plainly a *tax on religion* (italics mine, A.L.). Churches and religious schools are not afforded an option to pay, or not to pay, for an insurance program for their employees. The relatively small size of the tax is irrelevant (though to some the burden may be substantial). *If religion may be taxed a little, why not greatly? The tax imposes obligations upon religious bodies in respect to the use and management of their own resources and with respect to the personnel of their ministries* (italics mine, A.L.).

Attorney Ball, who clearly opposes this kind of intervention by the government and its agencies into the Christian School affairs, suggests the following as a solution to director Kienel:

> It is our opinion that a test litigation would fail. Without spelling out detailed reasons, it is clear to us that the Supreme Court would not strike down the amended law. The only remedy we see is through the Congress. Corrective legislation should be prepared and introduced at a very early date.

This memorandum dated September 13, 1983, will no doubt result in some immediate work by the legal advisors of the ACSI. ACSI leaders obviously want to assist member schools in avoiding such FICA taxation. Nevertheless it is obvious that the bill has become law having been signed by President Reagan. Beginning January 1, 1984, therefore, Christian schools will be required to withhold 6.7% from each employee's salary for social security payments. The Christian school (and/or church) will, in addition, pay 7% of each employee's salary to social security as well. "Many Christian schools that have not been making such payments will need to raise their tuition approximately 5% in January to compensate for this additional expense," says director Paul Kienel.

For many of us who read this journal this may not seem to be newsworthy because for many years teachers, board members, and parents have systematically paid this FICA tax. However, a few of our schools have exercised the right to withhold such payment. Now the right to refrain will be taken from us.

IRS MUST IMPOSE RACIAL RULES ON CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Another item appearing in the literature I receive from the ACSI is the report concerning a newly written *Religious Liberty Amendment* being prepared for presentation to the U.S. Congress to prohibit the Federal government from implementing IRS (Internal Revenue Service) racial rules on Christian Schools. I quote from Volume 14, No. 2, of "Christian School Comment," a leaflet edited by Dr. Paul A. Kienel, and published monthly by the ACSI.

> U.S. District Court Judge George Hart ruled July 8 in Washington, D.C., that the Internal Revenue Service must impose racial rules on Christian Schools. At the present time, his order applies only to the private and religious schools in Mississippi because of a private school racial discrimination case originating there in 1969. Obviously, a U.S. federal court judge cannot establish a federal court ruling that applies to one state only. His decree for Mississippi will, in short order, become the law in every state. Judge Hart has ordered the IRS to impose stiff affirmative action guidelines on Christian schools that have come into existence or have increased in their student enrollments from the time the public schools began racial desegration – a time frame that may be different in each area of the country. Judge Hart's affirmative action guidelines would generally not apply to those Christian schools established prior to the mid-fifties which have not increased in enrollment since that time – a rare Christian school indeed. Judge Hart has, in effect, decreed that all Christian schools that have come into existence since public school desegregation are presumed "guilty" of racial discrimination. The "guilty" Christian school may have a clear non-racial discrimination policy but this alone is not adequate. The new affirmative action guidelines will establish a government formula for racially balancing the student body, the faculty, the school board and/or church board. Failure to comply will mean the loss of tax-exemption. Contributions will no longer be tax-deductible. If the school is under corporate auspices of a church (80% of our schools are church sponsored), the entire church will lose its tax-exemption. This is a very serious matter. It is also a serious matter for independent religious schools.
>
> Judge Hart is ignoring the religious liberty implications in his ruling. The Green vs. Regan case as it is called, makes no distinction between private schools and religious ministry schools. The case originated in 1969 when a black family in Mississippi sued the IRS for granting tax-exemption to a private school (not Christian) that practices racial discrimination in student enrollment. The case worked its way up to the federal court level without religious school or church ministry implications being considered. In 1980, ACSI asked Attorney William Ball to represent ACSI member Clarksdale Baptist Church School as an "intervener" in the Green/Regan case. The "intervention" was reluctantly granted by Judge George Hart. In effect, Clarksdale Baptist Church School became a part of the case in behalf of all Christian schools so that religious liberty issues will be considered as the case moves up to the U.S. Supreme Court. The case

was delayed for a considerable time waiting for the Bob Jones decision. Now that the Bob Jones case has been decided, the Green/Regan case has been activated by Judge Hart with considerable speed. A few days ago Attorney Ball appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for a delay of Judge Hart's directive to the IRS to impose their racial rules on Mississippi schools. His appeal to the higher court was denied. It will be a year or more before the Green/Regan case reaches the Supreme Court. To date, it is one of the longest cases on record. In the meantime, the IRS will be forced to implement the affirmative action program in Mississippi. Undoubtedly, civil rights groups will demand that IRS rules in Mississippi be expanded to all states.

The real issue is religious liberty. ACSI takes a strong stand against racially segregated schools. Schools joining ACSI must affirm annually that they do not discriminate racially in their enrollment policy. Racial discrimination clearly violates Biblical principles. The issue is not racial. But a serious problem arises when the government forces Christian Schools (in order to gain a prescribed racial balance) to go out into the community and compel minorities to send their children to our religious schools. To do so means we are forcing our religious beliefs on them. It has been demonstrated in numerous federal courts that Christian schools are pervasively religious (Praise the Lord!). To *compel* minority students (by means of free tuition as the guidelines require) to attend our schools violates *their* freedom to accept or reject our Christ-centered education and it violates *our* religious freedom to select only those students, regardless of race, whose parents truly want Bible-centered education. We want studetns who want Christian education. The skin color the Lord has given them is not our concern. It is a religious issue – not a racial issue.

In the "LEGAL/LEGISLATIVE UPDATE," another newsletter-type publication of the ACSI this complaint of the ACSI is reported and the following paragraph appears.

The ACSI is the only association that provided legal defense funds for the Clarksdale Baptist Church School's legal effort. The costs are heavy. It has been necessary to involve two law firms. We can easily meet those expenses if member schools of ACSI and non-member schools will assess themselves annually at the rate of $1.00 per student.

The *Religious Liberty Amendment* referred to in the preceding report from the ACSI is prepared and ready for presentation to the Congress. Here is this amendment as it has been prepared.

None of the funds available under this Resolution may be used to carry out proposed revenue procedure 4830-01-M of the Internal Revenue Service entitled "Proposed Revenue Procedure on Private Tax-Exempt Schools" (44 F.F. 9451 through 9455, February 13, 1979, F.R. Document 79-4801), and proposed revenue procedure 4830-01 of the Internal Revenue Service entitled "Proposed Revenue Procedure on Private Tax-Exempt Schools" (43 F.R. 37296 through 37298, August 22, 1978, F.R. Document 78-23515), or parts thereof.

None of the funds available under this Resolution may be used to formulate or carry out any regulation or requirement which places

any private, religious, or church-operated school under a presumption of guilt of racial discrimination and compels the school to prove its innocence.

None of the funds made available pursuant to the provisions of this resolution shall be used to formulate or carry out any rule, policy, procedure, guideline, regulation, standard, court order, or measure causing the loss of tax-exempt status to schools that have open admissions policies unless the court order or any other of the aforementioned requirements was fully in effect prior to August 22, 1978.

The ACSI Executive Director concludes by saying there are several ways the Christian school supporter can help. One way is to write letters to your U.S. Senators and your U.S. Representative in Washington, D.C., and urge them to support the *Religious Liberty Amendment.* This amendment stated above asks Congress to amend the annual Treasury Appropriations Bill to cut off federal funds for IRS affirmative action guidelines directed toward churches and religious schools. Director Kienel provides the addresses one needs to write the congressmen. The second way one can help is to contribute to the ACSI Legal Defense Fund.

I fear that we are often unaware of the things that are happening around us. I know that the schools in which we educate our children (Protestant Reformed Christian Schools) have had seemingly little interference from the state. Perhaps such interference is closer than we might know.

CHANGES IN COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS IN COLORADO

The "Legal/Legislative Update" of October, 1983, also reports that the State of Colorado has greatly reduced compulsory school attendance requirements for Christian schools. On June 3, 1983, Colorado's Governor Richard Lamm signed into law sweeping changes that greatly benefit Christian schools. Under "Jurisdiction – board of education" the new law reads: "Nothing in this article, except for the provisions of section 22-33-104 (2) (b) and the attendance records required under section 22-1-114, shall be construed to give the state board of education or any board of education jurisdiction over the internal affairs of any nonstate independent or parochial school in this state."

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Covenant

by Sue Looyenga

"Behold, I will establish," speaks Jehovah God.
And through all ages His decree remains.
The Covenant, eternal and unchanging as its Source
From generation unto generation He in faithfulness maintains.

We and our children, dwelling in a sweet communion
With Jehovah God, seed of the woman – sanctified
By Blood into the covenant in which first Adam dwelled –
God's friend and servant – 'til through disobedience he died.

And we with him, partaking of the sin, the guilt,
The shame of violating this most blessed harmony
Stand in the garden, as God speaks unto His Own,
"Between the serpent and thy seed I will put enmity."

And enmity becomes the blessed promise of His friendship;
Unchanged nor yet destroyed, it reaches still a higher plane.
Through Jesus Christ, Incarnate Word of God, and Mediator of the Covenant,
We are received into the presence of His grace again.

Believers and their seed – through all the ages we have walked with Him.
Partaking of His promise as the ages onward go
Receiving at baptism's font the sign and seal of mercies ever sure
E'en as we bring by faith the children that He does bestow.

The lines are fallen unto us in places pleasant
Our goodly heritage apportioned by His gracious Hand.
What shall we render but a sacrifice of praise to Him,
Jehovah, our own God, Who makes His covenant promise stand.

This poem was written as a response to the anticipated celebration of the first 15 years of the existence of Covenant Christian High School. The message of the poem is of such a general nature in its confession of the Covenant faithfulness of God, that we include it for your edification and enjoyment as its author has requested.

Special Education

The Board for
The Society of Protestant Reformed Special Education

God has richly blessed us and given us the means to provide Christ-centered education for our children. Even so, we have been neglecting a small, but very important, number of His children; those born with special needs. As a result our mentally handicapped children have been attending schools that do not teach the truth. This is a concern for the parents of these children.

In past years there were not very many handicapped children in our midst. From a practical standpoint it may not have been possible to provide Protestant Reformed education. However, our denomination has grown and has a greater number of children with special needs. Being members of the covenant, these children also must be educated in the fear of His Name.

A movement has begun to accomplish this undertaking. It was initially spearheaded by the consistory of Hudsonville Church. For some time they had been concerned about the lack of spiritual training for the handicapped children in their congregation. With the help of Mrs. Gertrude Hoeksema as teacher, the consistory initiated weekly Bible study classes. Instruction was given on a one to one basis for four of their special children.

Enthused with the progress the children made in these weekly sessions, the consistory believed it was time to expand this teaching to include godly academic training. The Hudsonville Consistory concluded that this training should not be exclusive to their children, but should include all special children in the area of Protestant Reformed Churches.

Hudsonville's Consistory held a meeting at the church on March 16, 1983, for all parents, relatives, and friends of mentally handicapped children. After some discussion, it was the consensus of this group to proceed and lay the groundwork for achieving special education.

On April 20, 1983, a second meeting was held. At this time a constitution was adopted, a society was formed and school board members were elected. This new society requested the board to achieve Protestant Reformed special education as soon as it was feasible.

For several months the board has been working to complete items that must be accomplished prior to beginning formal education. An im-

portant task is the accurate evaluation of potential students. This is necessary to determine the individual needs of our children. It is also required to ascertain class size and the number of teachers which will be needed. The board is being assisted in this activity by one of our church members, Miss Jessie Dykstra, who is qualified in special education by training and experience. The board is also presently involved in evaluating prospective teachers, obtaining funds to meet expenses, and purchasing teaching materials.

Much discussion has taken place as to where this school should be located and options are presently being pursued. It is the desire of many of the parents involved that this school be operated in conjunction with one of our existing schools. This appears to be the most ideal situation in that facilities would be shared and social interaction with other students could occur. Also, some of our special students with near normal ability would have the opportunity to participate in a regular classroom environment.

With God's help the board for special education will continue to labor, anticipating the education of His special children in the near future.

We covet your prayers and your support.

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Is not the great defect of our education today – a defect traceable through all the disquieting symptoms of trouble that I have mentioned – that although we often succeed in teaching our pupils "subjects," we fail lamentably on the whole in teaching them how to think: they learn everything except the art of learning. It is as though we had taught a child, mechanically and by rule of thumb, to play "The Harmonious Blacksmith" upon the piano, but had never taught him the scale or how to read music; so that, having memorized "The Harmonious Blacksmith," he still had not the faintest notion how to proceed from that to tackle "The Last Rose of Summer." Why do I say, "as though"? In certain of the arts and crafts we sometimes do precisely this – requiring a child to "express himself" in paint before we teach him how to handle the colors and the brush. There is a school of thought which believes this to be the right way to set about the job. But observe: it is not the way in which a trained craftsman will go about to teach himself a new medium. He, having learned by experience the best way to economize labor and take the thing by the right end, will start off by doodling about on an odd piece of material, in order to "give himself the feel of the tool."

"The Lost Tools of Learning" by Dorothy Sayers
National Review, January 19, 1979

Special Education, Protestant Reformed, Why?

by Gertrude Hoeksema

Note: During the past year I have been giving Bible instruction to some of the handicapped children who belong to my home congregation of Hudsonville. As a result of this small beginning, the consistory of Hudsonville took the initiative in calling a meeting for the purpose of organizing a society for Protestant Reformed Special Education. The society was organized this past spring and now has a seven-member board. Under their leadership, I have been preparing principles for special education, and materials and methods for a proposed covenant school for our own handicapped children.

At a "picnic-meeting," sponsored by the Publicity Committee of the board and held at Spring Grove Park in Jamestown on August 6, a panel discussion was given on the topic: Special Education, Protestant Reformed, Why? *After the presentation, the editor of* Perspectives *asked me to "write something up" for the magazine. I have prepared an expanded version of the necessarily short one at the picnic.*

INTRODUCTION

Protestant Reformed education is covenant education. Protestant Reformed education for our special children, the mentally impaired, is covenant education, too. We as God's covenant people are seeking — and it is more than time that we are — to establish a covenant school for the rather severely handicapped children in our churches. As we contemplate opening the doors of such a school in the near future, we realize that we need a solid foundation, a philosophy of covenant education for our handicapped pupils. In our panel discussion we did not presume to establish a complete philosophy nor foundation, for that takes time, study, reflection, and a certain amount of experience.

Rather, we scratched the surface; and we did it by turning to our beautiful Form for the Administration of Baptism, stressing three things as they applied to our handicapped children: Our Covenant Obligation; The Receptivity of our Covenant Special Children; and Our Covenant Calling.

OUR COVENANT OBLIGATION

When one reads the Baptism Form and thinks of our average, normal children, he is struck each time by its simple beauty and its great comfort. When one reads it with our mentally handicapped children in mind, it takes on a special measure of depth and assurance; for the Form keeps reminding us that our God is a *covenant* God. Read the following quotation with a handicapped child in mind: "For when we are baptized in the name of the Father, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us, that he doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for his children and heirs, and therefore will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil or turn it to our profit."

Remember, our covenant God made that covenant with us and with our handicapped children. In fact, in His wisdom, He *gave* us handicapped covenant children, some of whom will never on this earth be able to grasp more than the simplest concepts about our Father's covenant blessings. He adopted our *special children,* too, as His heirs; and His promise to provide every good thing and avert all evil or turn it to our profit is for *them,* too.

Those are the beautiful promises of our God. But He gave us more than promises. Our covenant God gave us our *obligations* – our part of the covenant, if you will – and the Baptism Form goes on to instruct us about those obligations: that we are "admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in him, and love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life."

However, our Father saw fit to give those obligations not merely to ourselves, to those who have already reached maturity. Those obligations are for our children, too; for God has told us, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." That seed includes our handicapped children. They, too, are obliged to a new obedience, obliged to trust in Him and love Him, and to forsake the world and walk in a new and holy life. How is that possible when many of them cannot fully grasp all these concepts? The Baptism Form helps us out on that, too.

Have you ever been struck by this phrase in the Form? "And although our young children do not understand these things. . . ." Ever since I have worked with handicapped children, I have. These children will never fully understand the riches of their covenant blessings on this

side of heaven, but they, too, as well as normal infants, may be "received unto grace in Christ."

What, then, are the covenant obligations of parents, of their families, and of the church of Christ regarding our handicapped children? We will be obedient to our part of the covenant. According to their capacities, we will teach our special children about "this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." We will teach them the simple truths of God's wonders and greatness in creation and in salvation. We will teach them the law, and remind them over and over to obey it, to be sorry when they disobey, and to seek God's forgiveness. We will teach them to trust in Him, to pray to Him, to love Him, and to walk in His ways; for our Baptism Form admonishes us to "instruct our children herein, when they shall arrive to years of discretion."

THEIR RECEPTIVITY

We have the promise of God's Word that our covenant children will be *receptive* to the truths He has taught them in His revelation; and His promise is to *all* His children, also those whose minds cannot comprehend His revelation in all its riches. For God calls them "my children" in Ezekiel 16:21, and says "they are holy" in I Corinthians 7:14. The Baptism Form puts it this way in the first question asked of parents: "Whether you acknowledge. . .that they are *sanctified* in Christ. . . ."

The rich meaning of this phrase is that His children, His sanctified children, are receptive to the teachings of Scripture and they will respond according to their abilities.

Have you ever watched the receptivity of a mentally handicapped child as he is engaged in functional learning? Usually he is much more eager, much more responsive and enthusiastic than the average child, who soon learns how to hide his feelings. The handicapped child often "bubbles." He is affectionate. He wants to please. So he listens well to the reading lesson and he tries hard to spell the words. He is receptive to the teaching he is receiving. Sometimes he has success and spells the words correctly, and more often he does not. In learning, he keeps trying even though he often fails.

Now let us look at that receptivity from a spiritual point of view. In the realm of the spiritual, these handicapped children must cope with abstract concepts: faith, grace, rebirth, atonement. . . . Will they fail there, too? Before I answer the question, let me make a confession. Before I started teaching Bible studies to handicapped children last year, I was scared. I was *nervous* when I entered the classroom for the first lesson. Why? I was afraid I could not get them to understand

spiritual realities. Now I know why I was scared. I was trying to do the teaching all by myself; and was completely underestimating the work of the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of these His special children. I had forgotten to do my homework before I came to class: I did not read this sentence "In like manner, when we are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost assures us, by this holy sacrament, that he will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ. . . ." As I met that first session with each child individually, and in every session thereafter, we all experienced the sanctifying power of the Spirit in little Room 3 in Hudsonville Church. No, handicapped children do not fail when Christ's Spirit is their teacher. They cannot fail, for they have the promise that He will guide them into the truth.

Let me share with you the beautiful receptivity of our covenant handicapped children. After the stories of the Pharisees complaining about Jesus' healing the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda on the sabbath, after they argued about the disciples plucking corn and eating it on the sabbath, I went on to tell about the healing of the man with the withered hand on the sabbath, and started, "Then the Pharisees. . ." and that's as far as I got. I had a flood of tears and a blocking of the ears as my little girl wailed, "I *hate* them! Don't talk about them! They did that to my Jesus!" In her simple way, she understood the antithesis.

Another handicapped pupil listened intently to the story of Jesus' visit to the home of Mary and Martha, meanwhile rocking back and forth incessantly on her chair. After we had finished the part about Mary choosing "that good part," she suddenly stopped rocking, sat very still, and said in a disappointed voice, "Oh, I'm not like Mary. Sure, I like to listen to Jesus. But I never was very good at sitting still. And I'm sorry, Mrs. Hoeksema, but I'm more like Martha. I'd much rather *do* some nice things for Jesus." This dear girl recognized her limitations and wanted to show her love through *service.*

And how does one teach the mysteries of the kingdom to a deaf child, mentally impaired, and mostly mute? How would I teach her about sin and repentance? I didn't. She taught me. When she saw the word *sin* she wrote, *bad, mad;* and when I pointed to *repent,* she wrote *sorry,* meanwhile making motions of tears coursing down her cheeks and pointing to her heart. She not only understood it. She experienced it. This same child was enthralled by the story of Jesus stilling the tempest. When I told her that the disciples in the boat were still afraid *after* Jesus said, "Peace, be still," and the sea was calm, because they knew that the holy God was there in the boat with them, I asked her, "Would you have been afraid, too?"

She motioned for time to think. Then she wrote:

God is love.
Jesus is God.
I not afraid.

Yes, we saw the Spirit working there in Room 3, making these handicapped children receptive to His work in their hearts, so that they would giggle with joy when I asked them, "Where do *you* find the water of life?" and they would point to the open Bible or to their receptive hearts.

OUR COVENANT CALLING

It follows, then, from the covenant obligations which God has placed upon the parents and from the spiritual receptivity which He affords to the children, that the parents of our special children have a lifelong *calling* to fulfil their obligations, often a more burdensome task than that of most other parents. When these children were baptized we heard, from our beautiful Baptism Form, that "parents are in duty bound, further to instruct their children herein, when they shall arrive to years of discretion." Then the parents stood and answered the third question that the pastor solemnly asked them: "Whether you promise and intend to see these children, when come to the years of discretion instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause them to be instructed therein to the utmost of your power?"

But. . .their children were handicapped – mentally. How *could* they fulfil that calling with these special children when they came to years of discretion? We understand that years of discretion differ with individual children and differ greatly in handicapped children, but we know that the term generally means "years of understanding," and as soon as they can understand, we begin instructing them in the truths of God and of His revelation, according to their abilities.

These burdened parents need help in training their children in God's ways, and a covenant school will help them.

Will you take a look with me, then, at our special children: what *can* they learn, what *should* they learn in a covenant school?

1. Knowledge of God's Word. This includes Bible history, Bible knowledge, such as the truths of creation, God's dealings with His people, all the way to the story of salvation in Christ, and the way God gives us faith to embrace it. Along with Bible studies goes music: rhythm and singing, so that our children can sing the songs of Zion.

2. Reading. A teacher of special children whom I highly respect

once told me that "almost any handicapped child can learn to read." I believe that. Reading is not a goal in itself, but in a covenant school the class will be busy with the mechanics and with comprehension so that, if possible, they can read by themselves for enjoyment. That, however, is not the most important reason for learning reading. The most important reason is that it is a tool for living along with the life of the church: these children will be able to read Bible stories, and the Bible, if they have the ability; they will learn an expanded spiritual vocabulary so they can understand some of the terms in the preaching—faith, grace, repentance; they will be able to join their fellow saints in singing praise by following in the *Psalter* during services; they can read and learn Bible texts to keep in their hearts as their own treasures. That is our calling before God in teaching reading.

3. Math, or Numbers. Many parents and educators have told me their special children cannot comprehend math concepts. One educator went so far as to say that *no* mentally impaired child can go beyond simple math concepts. Have you ever thought of asking why? I have. I wonder whether the Lord made it that way because they will never need those in-depth math concepts. These children will never enter the complicated math life, the computer-mind, of the world. Their work will always be simple, simple enough to allow them to use their few basic concepts. Instead, God let these children advance in skills — verbal and reading — that will help and enhance their spiritual lives.

4. Nature study, or simple science. A covenant school will teach these children as much as they can understand about the wonders of God's world, always from the point of view of the marvels of His creation. It will also teach them to live happily with as much knowledge as they can assimilate in His world.

5. Christian living. This could probably be better termed Christian responsibility in the sphere of their social life. They will learn how to get along with their fellow Christians in love, learn what God's law has to say about it, and learn to know that they cannot live as God's children in this world without His abundant grace.

In all these areas, each special child will advance and comprehend according to his own capacity. Most of them understand and function at simple levels all their lives. Our *calling* in a covenant school is to work in all these areas, to keep them reaching, and never say, "That's all he can learn. That's all he can do."

That is our calling. But you may ask, "*Why* is that our calling? What is the *purpose* of educating them in a covenant school? Obviously, the answer is not to get them a job in the busy marketplace. The

most these children will do is get a simple manual job. Others will not be able to take even that responsibility. They will live along, learn the simple details of life, help with simple tasks, and be as useful and occupied and as happy as they can be, according to their capabilities.

It is much more important to train them to live along with the church, participate in worship, to have fellowship with God's people and have God's people have fellowship with them. In this area, I think many of us fail. We do not seek fellowship with these special children. Talk to them, people of God, smile at them, communicate with them. We miss a great joy when we don't. And the role of the covenant school in all this will be to help the parents to train them in obedience to their baptismal vows to live as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. There is nothing more important.

Finally, what does all this mean concretely for our proposed school for handicapped children? Why is it so necessary? Why is it so necessary soon? What will we do there?

1. We will teach academics as much as possible: reading, language skills, math, and general knowledge, adapting to the needs and capabilities at the level of each child's ability.

2. We will teach them to get along with fellow students, teachers, playmates; and we will teach them the basis: to love God first, and their neighbor as themselves. And the covenant teachers must needs be examples of love, patience, and diligence, always seeking the good of the child.

3. We will teach them to live along in God's world: to try to stay well – and to give physical exercises and therapy if they need it; to learn to improve the use of their hands with arts and crafts; and to learn the wonders of creation in various ways, according to their capacities.

4. We will try to fill them with the main goal of a covenant school for special children, a goal which is stated in the last part of the second question asked of the parents at baptism: to teach them the true and perfect doctrine of salvation.

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Slow Learner

by Sue Looyenga

The poem "Slow Learner" was contributed by Sue Terpstra Looyenga, a former student in the Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. Sue wrote this poem as an expression of her feelings for a child whom she was tutoring. Sue writes: "Never have I witnessed such patient diligence in a child who must struggle daily to make a hardly passable grade." Sue graduated from Covenant Christian High School in 1972. She has attended Grand Valley State College and has attended banking school. She is the wife of David Looyenga, and a mother of three. (Reprinted from *Perspectives,* March, 1976.)

You sit beside me, and your pen is poised.
Your face, a study in determination,
Turns to me, searching for an answer.
And I, — I am amazed at this young determination.

Time and again you have known failure,
And tried once more, and failed again.
And still you will not bury that small talent.
I marvel at your will to try again.

You count your gains, content, in inches,
While others count them mile by mile.
And how you beam upon "just passing,"
And winning Teacher's special smile.

How many times in anger you could find me,
Disturbed that I again had failed to make
A big success of some small undertaking.
Oh, what a lesson I from you could take!

Would that I had your faith and patience
That discontent could not within me rise!
But, child, I am the slowest learner
When it comes to being wise.

1976

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Special Education for the Gifted

by Janice Westra

Miss Janice Westra is a student at Dordt College. She wrote this article as a part of her course requirement. It is an abbreviated version of her original. Janice is a member of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church, Hull, Iowa.

We are overlooking a part of the student body which needs special help. Remedial programs are provided for those who lag behind in certain areas. Special schools and classes are available for the retarded. A teacher gives special aid to students who have been absent for a few days. Whom are we overlooking? It's that small part of a classroom of students who are gifted.

You may say "Why do the gifted need extra help? They already have so many advantages." I say "Not true!" Regular school activities and standard curricula are often highly inappropriate and restrictive for the gifted child.

If these special children are not given every chance for development early in life they may be academically stunted. The student's motivation to learn may be dulled and he may join the ranks of the underachievers. Why should he have to conquer boredom and wait for the rest of the class to catch up? Parents and teachers alike have the responsibility to see that their covenant children are given a challenging program throughout their schooling before problems of boredom and dulled motivation set in.

For the gifted child to reach his or her fullest potential he may need special classroom arrangements, instructional techniques, materials, and teachers.

Developing a program for the gifted student requires much dedication and commitment of a teacher. Whether the teacher is a special teacher, a private tutor, or the regular classroom teacher he or she must possess certain qualities.

The teacher needs to have a high level of energy and must enjoy teaching the gifted. Sensitivity to individual differences, a variety of interests, and a sense of humor are also desirable. A teacher must be well prepared in instructional techniques and in content area.

Don't forget the child's most important teacher. The *parent* is probably the best teacher a gifted student has! Motivation, self-image, and attitudes all stem from the home. Parents need to cooperate and work with the school to create a healthy attitude in their child. Who better knows the special needs of a child than his parent? A parent can respect and encourage a child. Individuality in the home must be permitted and the home environment needs to be stimulating and rewarding. *All* parents *must* spend time with their children. Converse with them, listen to them, respond to their many questions, and join in their activities! We all know how a child wants his parent there when he plays ball or reaches some hard-won goal. When a parent verbally shows approval to a child it means more than anything to them. Parents, take time and involve yourselves in your children's education!

What specifically can a teacher do for her gifted student? There are a wide variety of programs available. No one program is said to be any better than any other. Which program employed must be decided by looking at the individual needs of the student.

The enrichment program is accomplished within a regular classroom. It allows the student to investigate topics of interest in much greater detail than the normal classroom situation would allow. The child is allowed to go beyond the limits of day-to-day activities. The projects a child undertakes must have purpose, direction, and specified outcomes. It is not a time to give the child "busywork" nor is it a "do your own thing" idea. An enrichment program needs the structure and guidance of the teacher. Some possibilities for enrichment include:

1. Independent study,
2. Accelerated coverage of regular material,
3. Mini-courses,
4. Learning centers,
5. Special interest groups, and
6. Interest development centers.

A second type of program involves the resource room or special class. It involves many of the same practices as the enrichment program, however, the child has a special teacher for a few periods of the day. This incorporates even more special and personal attention.

Acceleration is a program which provides experiences normally given to older children. It speeds up the movement at which a child encounters a given content or particular sequence. Included among acceleration practices are:

1. Early admission to school,
2. Grade skipping,

3. Concurrent enrollment in high school or college,
4. Content acceleration,
5. Advanced placement tests,
6. Early admission to college.

There are many more possibilities and programs available for the gifted child. This is only intended as a light overview of possibilities.

Note that the gifted child need not be bright in all areas or be a "straight A" student. There may be only one area of interest or special talent.

We as Christians have a special calling toward these covenant children. We must bring them up so they will honor and glorify His name. We must do all in our power to enhance their learning experience. In humility, knowing that He controls all, we need to ask God's guidance in this precious calling.

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Teaching Children to Read: The Parents' Role

by Elaine Faber

Mrs. Elaine Faber, a former teacher and now mother, is a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church, Wyoming, Michigan.

Learning to read. What a major accomplishment this is for young children. We expect children to learn to read and to read well. Often we hear statements such as, "In first grade you will learn to read." And so we imply that the responsibility of the teaching of reading belongs to the schools. But what should parents know about reading and why should we as covenant parents be interested in and concerned with this topic?

Many books and articles have been written and continue to be written on the subject of reading. Many of these are published because there is an awareness that many children fail to read well. Statistics of reading achievement are periodically compared on local and national levels. Often children do not measure up to that expected of them and it is said that Johnny can't read. Schools and teachers are blamed for not doing their job. It is said that standards are too low and incorrect

methods are taught. Educators advocate one method and then another. For example, some say that the phonics approach is the only way reading should be taught. Even though children become fluent readers, there is concern that comprehension is lacking. There is much disagreement as to how to teach reading, but it is recognized that knowing how to read well is very important for education and life.

Recently a report was released by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The report is concerned with our country's status among other nations because its leadership is being severely challenged by the competence of other nations in commerce, in industry, in science, and in future technological advances. The reason for this, according to the report, is that society has become content with mediocre education. Standards have been lowered so that graduates of high schools and colleges do not now meet achievement levels of students in past years. Many young people and adults are illiterate. And so the schools are at fault. Yet the report also has a word for parents:

> As surely as you are your child's first and most influential teacher, your child's ideas about education and its significance begin with you. You must be a *living* example of what you expect your children to honor and to emulate. Moreover, you bear a responsibility to participate actively in your child's education.[1]

The above report is concerned with educational excellence for the benefit of our democratic society. National goals and objectives would be reached. Everyone would have a better life as citizens in this country. Yet surely, as covenant parents, our objectives are not and may not be the same. Our reason to strive for high achievement in education is much more important. We are concerned with the leadership in our homes and in our churches. We want our children to be literate and learned so that they may be able to refute that which errs from the truth of God's Word.

Reading plays a very important role in the educational process. Most of the school's curriculum requires some degree of accomplishment in reading. What is reading? Reading has been defined as:

> . . .a process whereby the individual makes meaningful interpretation of verbal symbols.[2]

Reading is more than looking at a word and saying it aloud. It is more than vocalizing the printed page. As people witness an event or a certain set of circumstances and relate it to others, they often tell different and sometimes even conflicting stories. They do so because of their individual differences. Their background, emotions, intelligence,

physical factors, and even spiritual maturity determine what is told. So too, as children learn to read, they bring with them their own individuality. No two children learn to read in exactly the same way. The skills that are easy for one child may be difficult for another child. It has been found that:

> There are more than thirty separate processes of seeing, perceiving, understanding, and reacting involved in the total process of reading.[3]

As children learn to read the printed word, they see the letter symbols. They must also find meaning in them. They must learn to evaluate and interpret. The whole process becomes very complex.

Realizing the importance of reading and its complex nature, what do we as parents then do? We usually feel that our schools have high standards, our students do well on achievement tests, our teachers are qualified and competent to teach reading skills. Our teachers even teach all the subjects in the light of God's Word, helping our children learn attitudes and values which we feel are desirable. So often we shift our responsibility to the school. We must realize that the attitudes children form towards reading and education begin in the home while they are very young. These attitudes are carried over into the school. The attitudes and values children learn at school will hardly ever be stronger than those developed in our homes.

To develop positive attitudes and values towards reading we must first of all look at ourselves. Are we readers? What do we read and how often? It's easy to spend time with the daily newspaper but what about more important literature? Do we use dictionaries, encyclopedias, Bible commentaries, and other study aids? Children recognize early in their lives the atmosphere set in the home towards learning. Children learn that reading is important and it becomes important to them.

Parents begin early in the teaching of reading, while their children are still infants. Parents talk to their children and they respond. Langauge skills begin to develop. As children explore their environment, they learn to identify objects by their shape. Later they identify words by their configuration. Children learn to recognize sounds. They often know that certain sounds go with certain letter symbols. As parents we will try to learn as much as possible about how children learn and what pre-reading activities and reading readiness experiences are important and necessary for children to learn before they enter school.

There are many things we can do to promote reading readiness experiences. We can surround our children with books. Books should

be within reach in every room of the house. Books can be placed in the car so that they are available when children are confined in a small area while going on trips or going about town with mother on those boring errands. We should read daily to our children in an expressive manner, showing that reading is an enjoyable experience. We discuss the pictures and stories, helping them comprehend and evaluate. Early in life we help them learn to be selective, recognizing that many books have ideas contrary to God's law. Do our pre-school children have a Bible? They are often delighted in trying to read portions they have memorized. We can provide the smaller *Psalter* so that they can follow along in congregational singing. Their Bibles and *Psalters* become very special to them and also help them develop some reading readiness skills.

Books are important for pre-school children, but many other activities and experiences are necessary before formal reading instruction can begin. Children must have a certain degree of coordination of their large and small muscles. Auditory and visual discrimination and perception is important. A large background of experiences in the neighborhood and community is very helpful. As parents with young children we are not always aware of what we can do to help in these reading readiness areas. Local libraries and bookstores offer books with many suggestions, and we should take advantage of them. They also provide a variety of records and tapes. Many simple toys and games can be made in the home. Empty cereal boxes provide cardboard on which pictures can be pasted with letters or words printed beneath. Other educational toys and games can be purchased such as "Speak 'n Spell." Often we may be reluctant to spend our money on toys, but if they are such that they motivate and stimulate learning among young children, their use should be encouraged. Pre-school children have the capability of learning so much, but we often fail to recognize it and neglect their learning needs.

Although many of the reading readiness activities are learned in an incidental or informal manner, as parents we must still be very conscious of what a child must be able to do before sending him off to school. Often we must be very patient, offering much encouragement, particularly to some children who have difficulty in mastering certain skills. Sometimes as mothers with young children we become too busy with household tasks and family duties, forgetting to take careful note of the educational needs of our children. We quickly respond to their physical needs but not their intellectual. We must spend time *with* our children in accomplishing reading readiness.

Having spent much time in various and many learning activities with our children, we know our children well. As parents we have been their teachers. We know when they are ready to go to school to begin more formal instruction. Often parents think that because their child is five years old by a certain date, he is ready to begin kindergarten. Research has been done on this subject:

> Early studies of the relation of age to success in beginning reading indicate that a child of normal intelligence learns most successfully at the age of six and one-half. For some, even six and one-half is too early.[4]

In many countries, children begin school at a later age. If we know our children well, we will not send them too soon. If there is pressure to learn that for which they are not ready, anxieties and problems may develop. Learning to read is work, hard work for children.

When children begin to read at school, we as parents must continue to be involved with our children's progress. We should talk to the teacher soon after school begins, or even before, to learn how reading is taught. We learn what materials are used and how we can help at home. After children begin school we have very few hours to spend with them, especially if they ride the school bus. A routine should be established so that some time, perhaps immediately after the supper hour, can be spent reviewing skills taught at school. We continue to give praise and encouragement for each small accomplishment. As our children become independent readers, we continue to read to them and with them. We also check to see what they are reading, helping them evaluate articles, magazines, and books in the light of Scripture.

The reading readiness experiences provided in the home, along with formal reading instruction in the primary grades help set a solid foundation for effective reading and instruction for years to follow. Because so much of the school's curriculum requires reading, as parents we are concerned with quality education at the elementary level. We encourage the school board to provide small classes so that children can receive as much individual instruction as possible. Teachers must be qualified and committed. Provisions should be made for them so that they may be able to attend classes or seminars which keep them up-to-date on the changing educational scene, especially as new methods and materials become available in this computer age. Often we spend much on the physical aspects of our schools, but neglect to purchase instructional tools and materials which help students academically. We must encourage tutoring and remedial reading programs, even volunteering our time, making it possible for more children to receive more help in mastering reading skills. We make sure that the school has a good

library with a variety of materials. We can help in the suggesting and/or purchasing of books that we have read. Because there is so much to learn and know in this technological age, we should examine the possibility of shorter summer vacations with perhaps extending the vacations during the school year. Teachers often lament the fact that so much time, six weeks or more, must be spent in review of that which was taught the previous spring. This is unnecessary and says something about us as parents. We should not be content with this. For concrete learning to take place, there must be continuity in the educational process.

The role of parents in the teaching of reading is that of active participation from early childhood through the teenage years. As parents, we know the backgrounds, personalities, interests, and needs of our children best. We must provide guidance in their reading because through reading children learn to communicate and make better judgments to face their responsibility and work in life.

We face a great task in the teaching of reading to our children. Let us often pray that the Lord may give us the patience, diligence, and wisdom necessary to perform our responsibility in this work. As we see our children master reading skills, may we also see them develop spiritual maturity in their reading habits. It is our goal and objective that they become, above all, diligent readers of God's Holy Word so that they may teach our continuing generations His truth. May the Bible become their most precious book as it directs and guides them through life. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" Psalm 119:105.

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An Open Letter Concerning Reformed Higher Education

by David Engelsma, James Lanting, Lamm Lubbers

This open letter is addressed to all members of the Protestant Reformed Churches and to all others who have a concern for the instruction of the children of the covenant in all aspects of earthly science on the basis of the truth of the Reformed Faith as set forth in the Reformed Creeds.

It concerns Reformed higher education, i.e., college-level instruction.

It is sent on behalf of a group of Protestant Reformed men that calls itself the "Conference on Reformed Higher Education." At a meeting held in South Holland, Illinois on March 4, 1983, the group decided "to have a committee of Rev. D. Engelsma, J. Lanting, and L. Lubbers draft. . .an article for publication in *The Standard Bearer* and other periodicals." It was stipulated that, among other things, the article should outline "the purpose and provisional structure of our Conference group."

The history of the "Conference" is quickly told. The immediate cause was conversation among men who were gathered for a meeting of Classis West, mostly laymen. Contact was made with other laymen who shared the concern for Reformed higher education and who would be able to attend meetings, for a day or two, to explore the idea and its possibilities. The result was that a number of Protestant Reformed men from the eastern and western sections of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the U.S. and from Canada met in South Holland, Illinois on January 12 - 13, 1982. A second meeting was held in Grand Rapids on June 8, 1982. The third, and most recent meeting, was held in South Holland on March 4, 1983. The Conference has recently distributed a "Newsletter" in all the Protestant Reformed Churches.

These meetings reflect a longstanding concern of Protestant Reformed people for Reformed higher education, especially the training of prospective Protestant Reformed school teachers. Oddly enough, in the light of our traditional opposition to church-schools, this concern surfaced at the Protestant Reformed Synods of 1948, 1949, and 1950. The Theological School Committee brought to the Synod of 1948 a letter from "The Society for Protestant Reformed Education," asking "to what extent the facilities of the Theological School can be made

available to prepare persons interested in the teaching profession to qualify them for teaching in schools of our own" (*Acts*, p. 63). Synod advised the Society "that we have no facilities for a complete normal course. However, that we can supply, we hope, the very necessary Protestant Reformed point of view by having prospective teachers take Principles of Education and read specified outside literature upon educational subjects, as produced by our men and others" (*Acts*, pp. 65, 68).

The T.S.C. returned to the Synod of 1949 with another letter from the Society for Protestant Reformed Education. This letter asked that "a normal course be added to the curriculum of our Theological School this coming year." The motivation was the need for "teachers, able and equipped, to teach our children the required subjects permeated by the Protestant Reformed life view" (*Acts*, pp. 64, 65). Also at the Synod of 1949 was an overture from the Consistory of Randolph, Wisconsin, that Synod "consider ways and means of establishing our own Normal Training School to train prospective teachers in our own Christian Schools" (*Acts*, pp. 67, 68). Synod decided to place this matter before the faculty and the T.S.C. for study and possible execution (*Acts*, p. 68).

The Synod of 1950 received for information a report from the T.S.C. that Rev. H. Hoeksema had drawn up an outline of "Principles of Education" and that Rev. G. Ophoff was teaching a course along these lines, under the auspices of a Teachers' Club in Grand Rapids (*Acts*, pp. 29, 30). Here, apparently, the matter rested.

The Conference has no official standing, whether ecclesiastical, educational, or otherwise. Nor does it seek this. It has been a free association of some who thought that the possibility of giving Reformed instruction at the college level, especially to prospective Protestant Reformed teachers, was worth looking into. As part of its investigation, the Conference has studied the history of Reformed higher education; curriculum; accreditation; organization; finances; and other areas. We have conferred with our teachers. It is this purpose, this cause, and some of the fruit of our study that we now lay before you and ask you to consider.

The purpose of the Conference is indicated in the brief, working "Statement" which the participants drew up and signed at their first meeting: "We believe that higher education based on Reformed principles as set forth in the Reformed Creeds is a legitimate concern for Reformed people. We. . .resolve that in order to preserve Reformed higher education in our age, especially as it relates to teacher training,

we will promote the cause of a Reformed teacher-education program. We agree to form committees to study the possibility, and the ways and means, of reaching these goals."

The agenda for the first meeting ambitiously called for an investigation of the possibility of a Protestant Reformed Teachers' College. The difficulties of establishing a full college were seen to be so great as to daunt even the most hopeful. Therefore, without losing sight of the ultimate goal, the Conference has concentrated on realistic beginnings. An able, interested Protestant Reformed teacher could be called, full-time, to give instruction to college students in certain, fundamental subjects. These courses, although of special value for the would-be teacher, would also be beneficial for other college students. Investigation has shown that such courses could be accredited through existing Christian colleges. While giving these courses, the teacher could also work at developing a more complete program. In time, yet another teacher could be added to the staff.

To enable such a teacher to give this instruction, it was thought desirable, if not necessary, to send him, or her, to a graduate school for advanced study and a degree. A Christian college has expressed its willingness to set up a summer course, taught by qualified professors, which interested Protestant Reformed teachers, and others, could take for credit towards a master's degree.

It is our conviction that college-level instruction of prospective Protestant Reformed Christian school teachers in the truth set forth in the Reformed Creeds, as maintained by the Protestant Reformed Churches, is part of our calling in the covenant, to the extent that God enables us to provide it. This faith is God's own truth that must be the foundation of all teaching.

The education of our teachers in State universities and colleges is unsatisfactory, since the Word of God is not the light in which these schools teach the students to see light. The teaching of existing Christian colleges is widely and seriously weakened by the errors of the doubt and denial of the infallible inspiration and full authority of Scripture ("higher criticism"); of theistic evolution; of the philosophy of the A.A.C.S.; of common grace; of socialism, if not Marxism; of the current "liberal" dogmas of revolution, feminism, pacifism, and sexual permissiveness; and of the lack of zeal for godliness of life.

Our desire is college-training that is excellent, both academically and spiritually. Qualified professors, themselves trained and competent in their own fields, would not merely pay lip-service to the great doctrines of the Reformed Faith, much less busy themselves to call

these doctrines into question and to undermine them, as they teach future teachers, but would teach their subjects in the light of these doctrines – the inerrant inspiration of Holy Scripture; creation and providence; the fall of the human race in a real Adam; God's curse upon fallen man and his world, outside of Christ; the Divine judgment of a universal flood; the antithesis between elect church and reprobate world; the Lordship of the risen Son of God; the binding Law of God in Holy Scripture for marriage, family, labor, economy, government, and personal behavior; and the end of the world. Surely, this is a worthy and a thrilling concern.

No one ought to dismiss the matter out of hand as no concern of his, on the ground that it is a matter of college-training and his children do not attend college. Since it is training of those who will be teaching Protestant Reformed children in the grade schools and the high schools, it is a concern of us all. Those without children as well as those with children can embrace and support this cause, as a cause of God's covenant and truth. Nor do we see even the first courses that might be offered as limited to prospective teachers. Other college students would benefit as well. Indeed, students from churches other than the Protestant Reformed might well enroll, if they are desirous of the perspective of the Reformed Faith.

All of this, we repeat, is only the thinking of the Conference and is, of course, not binding on any future organization.

It is the intention, now, of the Conference to hold public meetings in various areas of the U.S. and Canada, where there are Protestant Reformed Churches, in order to present this cause to our people, and to others who may be interested, so that they may take steps, if they are so inclined, to organize as an association, to carry out this work. Already, men in various locations are advised to speak to school and church groups. A public meeting was scheduled in the N.W. Iowa-Minnesota area on September 6, 1983, in connection with the meeting of Classis West. We ask that you attend the meeting that may be held in your area and give the matter a careful hearing. Our hope is that Consistories, School Boards, and others will promote the cause, as they have opportunity. All who desire more information, have suggestions, care to comment, or desire a meeting in their area can write the Conference in care of our secretary:

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The task is large; the cost is high; our resources are small. But the need is also great; and the benefits are precious – the welfare of the children of the covenant and the glory of God's Name in the knowledge of His truth. Let us make a beginning, trusting in the Lord, Whose we are and Whom we serve, to bless the small beginning, as He has done before.

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. . .look at the mediaeval scheme of education – the syllabus of the Schools. It does not matter, for the moment, whether it was devised for small children or for older students, or how long people were supposed to take over it. What matters is the light it throws upon what the men of the Middle Ages supposed to be the object and the right order of the educative process.

The syllabus was divided into two parts: The trivium and Quadrivium. The second part – the Quadrivium – consisted of "subjects," and need not for the moment concern us. The interesting thing for us is the composition of the Trivium, which preceded the Quadrivium and was the preliminary discipline for it. It consisted of three parts: Grammar, Dialectic, and Rhetoric, in that order.

Now the first thing we notice is that two at any rate of these "subjects" are not what we should call "subjects" at all: they are only methods of dealing with subjects. Grammar, indeed, is a "subject," in the sense that it does mean definitely learning a language – at that period it meant learning Latin. But language itself is simply the medium in which thought is expressed. The whole of the Trivium was, in fact, intended to teach the pupil the proper use of the tools of learning, before he began to apply them to "subjects" at all. First, he learned a language; not just how to order a meal in a foreign language, but the structure of a language, and hence language itself – what it was, how it was put together, and how it worked. Secondly, he learned how to use language: how to define his terms and make accurate statements; how to construct an argument and how to detect fallacies in argument. Dialectic, that is to say, embraced Logic and Disputation. Thirdly, he learned to express himself in language – how to say what he had to say elegantly and persuasively.

from "The Lost Tools of Learning" by Dorothy Sayers
National Review, January 19, 1979.

FOR THE SLOW LEARNER

Oh, Father,
this child is so slow,
and I am so impatient.
We are both trying hard,
and I desperately need to see some success.

If only I could see a little progress –
slow, plodding progress.
But the word he read yesterday
he can't read today.
The math concept he seemed to grasp yesterday
has slipped away today.

And somewhere inside me
Discouragement is moaning, "Give up."

Help me not to listen.

Help me instead to listen for your voice
reminding me of all the good and true things
I've learned about teaching.

Remind me that progress is more a spiral staircase
than a straight flight of steps;
that learning rarely moves at a heartening pace;
it is more likely to dip and double back,
and move on in little spurts of growth.

So help me, Father,
not to give up when we move so slowly,
or stand still,
or even seem to slip backwards.
Give to me, and to this child,
the sure and steady faith to keep on trying.

But, Father,
when I grit my teeth and try so hard
that I am overcome with impatience,
let me hear your still, small voice saying,
"Relax!"

taken from *Christian Educators Journal*
October/November, 1980

The following is a list of the manuals for teachers that have been produced by teachers at summer workshops and through personal study. These educational helps have been funded in part or totally by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. Copies of these are available:

Biblical Perspectives in the Social Sciences (1971)
A Writing Program for the Covenant Child (1972)
Suffer Little Children (Bible manuals 1, 2, & 3), at cost
Workbooks for *Suffer Little Children,* at cost
Teachers' Manual for Ancient World History (1977)
History Units on Medieval World History (1979) on the following topics:

Unit I. The Barbarian Migrations
Unit II. The Eastern or Byzantine Empire
Unit III. The Rise and Spread of Islam
Unit IV. England and the Middle Ages
Unit V. France in the Middle Ages
Unit VI. The Crusades
Unit VII. Feudalism and the Manor

Reformed Education by Rev. D. Engelsma. (Orders should be sent to Reformed Education, 4190 Burton S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506. Send $1.50 plus $.60 for postage and handling.)

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Freeborn Sons of Sarah, An Exposition of Galatians, by Rev. George C. Lubbers, $5.00

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Published tri-annually in the fall, winter, and spring by the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute.