

# Do We Need a Protestant Reformed Teacher Training School?

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Does the subject of the title strike you as a strange question? Do we really have a need for such an institution? Do you really understand what it takes to be a Protestant Reformed teacher? I think that there is more involved than we may first think. I had not given the subject much thought until I had opportunity to visit with a young man from one of our congregations who was considering going into Christian Education. This young man related to me some of the soul vexing experiences that he had gone through at one of the existing Christian colleges. The question that pressed this young man was "Can we expect to have truly Protestant Reformed teachers if they are trained in apostatizing Christian colleges or in secular, antichristian, state colleges?" I became conscious that we were talking about a very important subject, a subject that may have the very continuation of our schools, as truly Protestant Reformed schools, at stake. I asked myself, "May we continue to have our Protestant Reformed teachers trained as they now are and expect the Lord's blessing on our schools?"

The first question that we face is, "What is the condition of the colleges of our day?" Can they prepare prospective Protestant Reformed teachers, from both a spiritual point of view and an academic point of view, to teach in the Protestant Reformed classroom?

I do not profess to be able to give a thorough evaluation of the conditions in the various colleges that our prospective teachers use. However, from my own experience, and from talking with others, I know that the conditions are bad. I see conscientious young people vexing their souls in the existing colleges. Not only do they find that the instruction is a perversion of the Truth of God's Word, but they also find them academically unsuitable to prepare them to teach in a Protestant Reformed classroom.

Someone may say, "Don't be so critical! Don't get so excited! I went to college 15 or 20 years ago and things were not intolerable." This may be exactly our problem. We have failed to take into account the fact that colleges change. Especially in our day of modern educational "advances" and of spiritual and moral decay we see changes, great and rapid. Nor ought that surprise us. We have before us the important matter of Christian education, and the Devil is zealously

desirous to take that away from God's people. He will have all our children trained in the public school where he has built the foundation for education which will serve to establish his Antichristian kingdom.

But against this raging torrent of antichristian humanism our schools must stand! We must have teachers who have a Biblical view of life in this world, and they must be able to teach from that proper Biblical perspective so that in *all* the subjects our children are prepared to fulfill their calling and place in the world.

If our teachers never learn to teach from a truly Biblical world and life view, then our schools will become, at best, "public schools" plus Bible. Or we will be able to distinguish a certain number of secular subjects from other religious subjects. If this ever happens then we have lost our schools. We have lost them in the sense that they no longer fulfill their role as an indispensable help to our parents. We have lost our schools in the sense that they simply become private Protestant Reformed educational institutions but have really lost their primary reason for existence.

I am not saying that our schools are lost, but I am saying that good teachers are inseparably connected with good schools. By God's grace we have had and still do have good teachers. But I am saying that if we want to keep our schools, then it is time to begin considering a place where prospective teachers can learn to become truly Protestant Reformed teachers. This matter is very important to the very future of our schools. We would not think of having our preachers trained in the apostatizing seminaries of our day. That truly would be the death of our churches! But we expect our teachers to go to any college of our day and come out equipped to teach in Protestant Reformed classrooms. Will that not be the death of our schools?

Someone may object that a Protestant Reformed Teachers Training School would be a financial impossibility. Indeed, it would cost money, but we should make it a matter of considering priorities. Should we expand our present school buildings or should we take steps to provide good education for prospective teachers to teach in the schools that we already have?

Someone else may maintain that a Protestant Reformed Teacher Training School is not necessary because we have good grade schools and a good high school, and prospective teachers can gain an adequate foundation there. The fact is that our present schools are simply not geared to prepare future teachers. Furthermore, not all of our people have the advantage; of using Protestant Reformed grade schools and high schools.

There is no doubt about it there would be many problems and difficulties in such a venture, but we must not be turned back because of foreseeable or unforeseeable difficulties. We must continue to train our children to the best of our ability, and that takes dedication and faith.

As a step toward our own Teacher Training School perhaps we could set up a structured program designed to prepare future teachers for our schools. The prospective teachers would still have to pursue a regular course at an existing accredited college in order to be qualified for certification by the state. What I am proposing would have to be added to and worked along side of a regular college course. In order to guide aspiring teachers through the proposed program, perhaps a well qualified man from our churches could be hired. The work of this man would be that of a "curriculum coordinator" or an "educational counselor." He would help the prospective teachers chart the best course in the existing colleges. He would serve as a counselor to help the future teachers gain a proper perspective and to help them become prepared to teach in a Protestant Reformed classroom. He could do that by teaching or arranging to be taught certain courses

especially designed to help teachers, to attain their goal. Perhaps some of our well qualified and experienced teachers could participate in such; a way that the prospective teachers could benefit from their experience. In this connection, perhaps: we could have a more extensive practice teaching program than is presently used with our aspiring, teachers. The prospective teachers could work in the classrooms of our present teachers, as teachers' aides.

Well, what do you think about this? These are simply my thoughts on the matter. I would like to see our people seriously consider this important matter and then to give their reactions. If you would like to express your views, either pro or con, send your comments to the editor of the *Standard Bearer* so that we can profit from them.

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