

PERSPECTIVES IN COVENANT EDUCATION

ARTICLES

Featuring our Christian Schools

Principles of Counseling [Lecture I]

Prof. Herman Hanko

Protestant Reformed Education:

Tradition or Conviction

Gerald Kulper

Teaching the Idea of the "Last Time"

In Contemporary History

Peter Vander Schaaf

FALL

1980

PERSPECTIVES IN COVENANT EDUCATION

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

Perspectives In Covenant Education is a journal regulated and published semi-annually, in September and March, 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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From The Editor's Desk

This is the sixth year that the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute is publishing *Perspectives*. We have received many kind comments concerning the value of the magazine. It is our prayer that we may be true to the purpose of the P.R.T.I. namely, "To create a medium through which we may produce materials of a specific Protestant Reformed nature to be used in our own schools and thereby make our schools more distinctive."

This is also the beginning of the twenty-sixth year of the existence of the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute. With the prophet Samuel we say, "Ebenezer, Hitherto hath the LORD (Jehovah) helped us."

In those early days of our existence in the middle 50's we had just come through a difficult period for the Protestant Reformed Churches. There were the two Grand Rapids schools—Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School and Adams Street P.R. Christian School. Now there are almost a dozen schools spread across the United States with nearly 60 teachers and approximately 1,000 students. These are tangible evidences of the Fatherly providence and faithfulness of our Covenant God.

It is our prayer that God will make our parents faithful in the nurturing of the children that God has given us. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Ephesians 6:4."

Let us say with Joshua, "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: *but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.* Joshua 24:14-15."

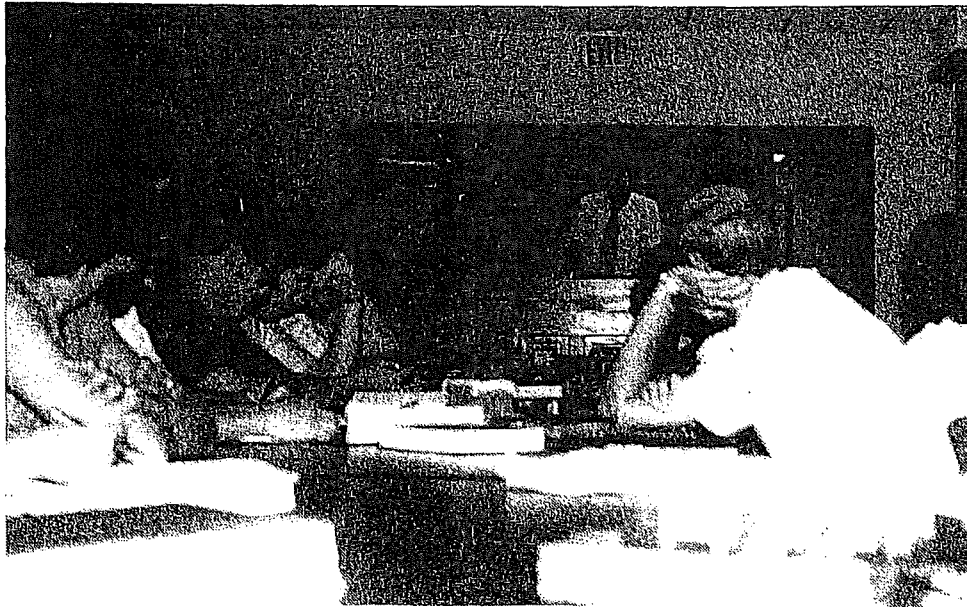
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The Business Manager wishes to inform you that you will be billed for your subscription to the magazine every other year.

Mini-Course, 1974-1980

Teachers in the Protestant Reformed Christian Schools attended the fifth Mini-course during August, 1980. Since 1974 the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools has sponsored such Mini-courses for teachers and prospective teachers. The first Mini-course featured lectures by Professor H. Hanko on "Biblical Psychology as it Relates to the Task of the Teacher." At this first Mini-course papers by Mr. Jon Huiskens and the undersigned were also presented. These two papers have been published in the *Perspectives*, September, 1976. My participation in the Mini-course that summer resulted in a file of notes that numbers approximately 23 pages based on six related lectures on this topic of "Biblical Psychology and the Christian Teacher."

In 1975 the Mini-course featured Rev. David Engelsma who spoke extensively on the general topic of "Instruction of Covenant Children in our Protestant Reformed Christian Schools." His series of five lectures were later printed in a little booklet entitled *Reformed Education*. This booklet is now out of print and should be reprinted. Some of the articles have been reproduced in *Perspectives* but those who are interested in the cause of Reformed Christian instruction would benefit greatly by reading and rereading these lectures now in essay form. The



Mini-course, 1980 participants
at Southwest P. R. Church.

following chapters make up the booklet. 1. The Covenant Basis of Reformed, Christian Education, 2. Scripture in the School, 3. Reformed Education and Culture, 4. The Protestant Reformed Teacher, 5. The Goal of Reformed Education. Incidentally, if anyone has a copy or more than one copy of this booklet and does not desire to retain it, we would be pleased to have it so we can distribute it when we receive requests for it.

In 1978 Rev. C. Hanko presented an interesting series of lectures that we have published in *Perspectives* on the serious problem of motivating young people to learn. Anyone who wishes to refresh his memory will profit greatly by reading these lectures in the Fall, 1978, and Spring, 1979, issues of *Perspectives*.

In 1979 Prof. Robert Decker, Professor of theology in the Protestant Reformed Seminary, was primary lecturer in the Mini-course devoted to the Biblical defining of the discipline of the Covenant child and its application by the Christian teacher. Mr. Lamm Lubbers, principal of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Christian School discussed the practical application of discipline in the Christian classroom. Both Prof. Decker and Mr. L. Lubbers insisted that parents must be cooperatively involved with the discipline given at the school and also maintained that the goal of discipline must be to train the student in Christian discipleship.



Executive Secretary Mr. Peter Vander Schaaf
and 1980 Mini-course lecturer
Prof. H. Hanko conferring.

In August, 1980, Prof. H. Hanko, professor in theology in the Protestant Reformed Seminary, returned to the sessions sponsored by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. This time the topic was concerned with the importance of counselling by the Christian School teacher. In two sessions Prof. Hanko lectured on the Principles of Counselling, and the Practice of Counselling. These lectures stressed the need for scripturally-directed counselling on the part of the teacher. Both of these lectures are published in this issue of *Perspectives*.

* * * * *

Federation of the Protestant Reformed Christian Schools

The Federation of the P.R.C. Schools continues to fund projects that make it possible for the teachers and prospective teachers in these schools to be better qualified to disciple the youth that God gives to the members of His church.

Since February, 1976, a band of teachers have been meeting on a regular basis to prepare materials in the field of historical studies. The teachers that work on this project are Mr. Fred Hanko, Hope Prot. Ref. Chr. School, Mr. Calvin Kalsbeek, principal of Adams St. Chr. School, Mr. Harry Langerak, and Mr. Peter Vander Schaaf, both of Covenant Chr. High School. Director of this workshop is Miss Agatha Lubbers, Covenant Chr. High School.

The first product of this workshop was the Ancient History manual.

The going has been a bit more difficult in the last three years because the members of the workshop are working in an area in which it is a bit more difficult to apply Scriptural principles—i.e. the field of Medieval World History. Nevertheless, four units in Medieval History studies are available to teachers and other interested persons. These units are listed on the inside of the back cover.

Two other units will soon be available. These units will help the teacher understand and teach the history of England and France in the Middle Ages.

These units approach history from a Reformed and Scriptural point and attempt to incorporate as much as is possible a distinctively Reformed interpretation of the history of the Medieval period.

Those who are interested in these units should correspond with:

Mr. Peter Vander Schaaf
Executive Sec'y of Federation of P.R.C. Schools
Covenant Christian High School
1401 Ferndale S.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

* * * * *

Protestant Reformed Teachers Institute Convention
October 16, 17, 1980
Theme: Strategy For Survival

Northwest Iowa was the scene of the twenty-sixth annual P.R.T.I. Convention. The undersigned is one of those who in God's providence has been able to attend all of the meetings of P.R.T.I. Convention since the first meeting of the convention in 1955. Since that day of small beginnings in which the teachers of only the schools in the Grand Rapids area were involved, the Convention has expanded much.

It has been traditional for many years that the convention be held in one of the three Grand Rapids Schools, (Hope P.R.C. School, Adams St. Chr. School, or Covenant Chr. High School) for three years and then on the fourth year that the convention be in South Holland, Illinois. Last year's Convention in Grand Rapids at Adams St. saw a proposal from the teachers of the Hull Protestant Reformed Christian School passed that the convention be held in Northwest Iowa with the schools of Hull and Doon, Iowa serving as hosts to the teachers at the convention.

The Convention in Iowa was an enormous success and we believe that under the blessing of God it will serve to stimulate a deepened interest in Protestant Reformed education in the communities that we visited and it will also help all our teachers to be renewed in their commitment to distinctively Reformed education as that is given by the parents who send their children to our Protestant Reformed Christian Schools.

The convention was unique this year in more ways than one. For the President of the Institute, Mr. Fred Hanko, the convention was unique because it gave him an opportunity to return to the school in Doon, Iowa, that he helped to establish when he was the first principal more than a decade ago. The

convention was also unique this year because the program following the annual banquet on Thursday night was a public lecture by Rev. Jason Kortering. Rev. Kortering had worked hard for the establishment of the Protestant Reformed Christian School in Hull, Iowa, and it was his privilege to speak to a large audience in the Doon Prot. Ref. Church on the topic, "Strategy for Survival and the Standards Required." We hope in a future issue of the *Perspectives* to be able to print the lecture of Rev. Kortering.

The Keynote address given to the teachers in the first session at Hull P.R.C. School was one by Mr. Gerald Kuiper, Covenant Chr. High School. His speech "Protestant Reformed Education: Tradition or Conviction," appears as one of the articles in this issue of *Perspectives*.

Nine interesting and helpful sectionals were presented for the teachers' edification and instruction. Because three sectionals are presented during each time block, a teacher can only attend three of the sectionals during the convention. Along with the many other activities at the convention such a schedule is strenuous enough. If a teacher wishes to learn from another sectional, however, he/she can listen to the presentation by the sectional leader on a tape recording because every speech and every sectional at the convention is tape recorded. These tape-recordings are also available to teachers in the schools that do not find it within their means to send teachers to the convention.

The following sectionals were tape recorded and some of the presentations at these sectionals will be reprinted in forthcoming issues of the *Perspectives*.

Teaching Grammar in Junior High and the High School
by Mr. G. Vander Schaaf, Adams P.R.C. School

Teaching Geography as part of our strategy for survival
by Miss Beverly Hoekstra, Free Christian School,
Edgerton Minnesota

Horticulture in the Classroom, Mr. D. Harbach, Adams
P.R.C. School

Writing and Research in the Elementary Grades, by Mrs.
S. Hunter, Doon Prot. Ref. Chr. School

Continuity of Bible Instruction by Agatha Lubbers,
Covenant Chr. High School

Contemporary History by Mr. Peter Vander Schaaf,
Covenant Chr. High School

Integrating Physical Education with other subjects in Lower
Grades, Mr. R. Noorman, Covenant Chr. High School
Using Momentoes as a Primary Source in the Teaching of
History by Mr. Timothy Orme, South Holland P.R.C.
School
A New Approach to Geometry by Mr. Vern Huber,
Covenant Chr. High School

One of the last group meetings featured the playing of a tape in which Mr. David Gibbs of the Christian Law Association of Ohio spoke on the important topic of "Conviction vs. Reference." In this sectional the teachers were reminded that the survival of the Christian School movement can be extremely tenuous and dangerous for those who do not sincerely live out of the principle of conviction rather than mere preference. Only if it appears to the court that one does that which he does because of his convictions and not merely because he prefers to do it in a certain way can the person, who may be involved in some court case involving his first amendment rights, be assured that he will be able to continue to educate his children as he deems right according to his conscience and the Word of God.

We should repeat the thanks of the executive board of the P.R.T.I. who wrote, "Many thanks go to our Northwest Iowa hosts for making the convention possible in their area this year. We hope all of you have benefited from the speeches and sectionals and that you will be greatly renewed and inspired to return to the classroom, ready to instruct God's covenant children in the light of His truth in our strategy for survival."

We hope too that we will be able to return soon to Northwest Iowa where we were so hospitably received. We hope that those teachers from Loveland, Colorado P.R.C. School, Hope Christian School, Redlands, California, and the Covenant Christian School, Lynden, Washington, will be able to join us in our future conventions.

We pray that God will use the P.R.T.I. to preserve us and to prepare us more fully for the task of the faithful instruction of the Covenant youth of the Prot. Ref. Churches.

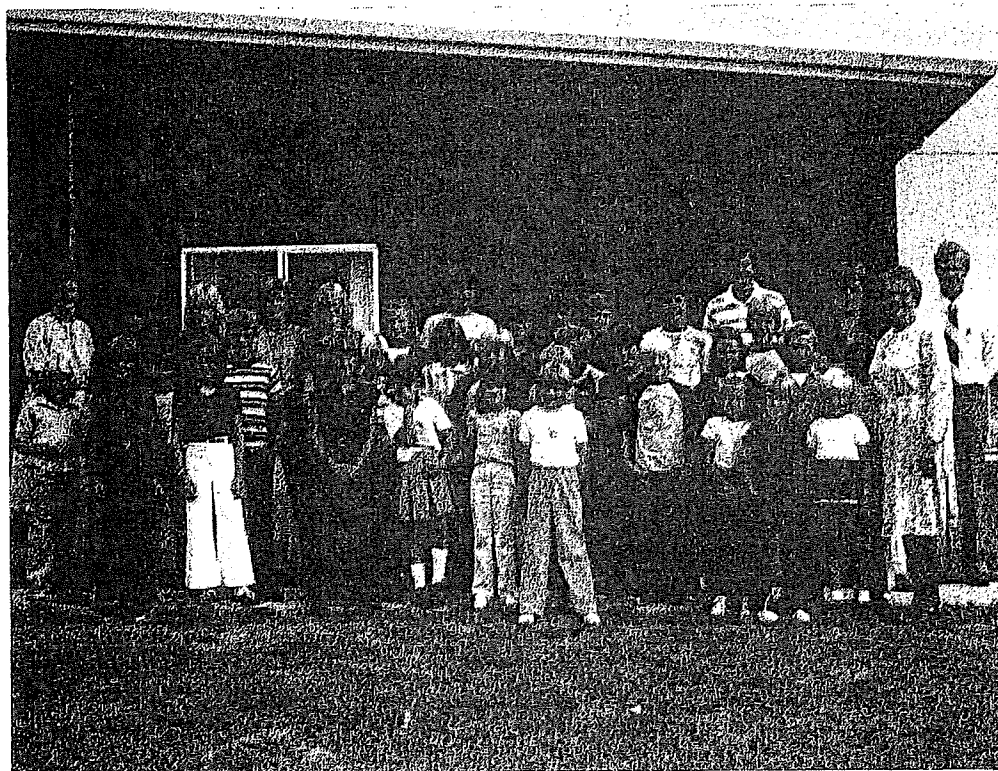
"If only the 'corruptible crown' were a little less attractive to us. If only we could teach our children and demonstrate to them the dedication and sacrifice that are required in order to gain the greater and infinitely more valuable 'incorruptible crown'."

from Wednesday note by Fred Hanko

FEATURING OUR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

In this issue of *Perspectives* we feature two of our Western Christian Schools. These are the schools in Redlands, California, and in Loveland, Colorado.

Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School

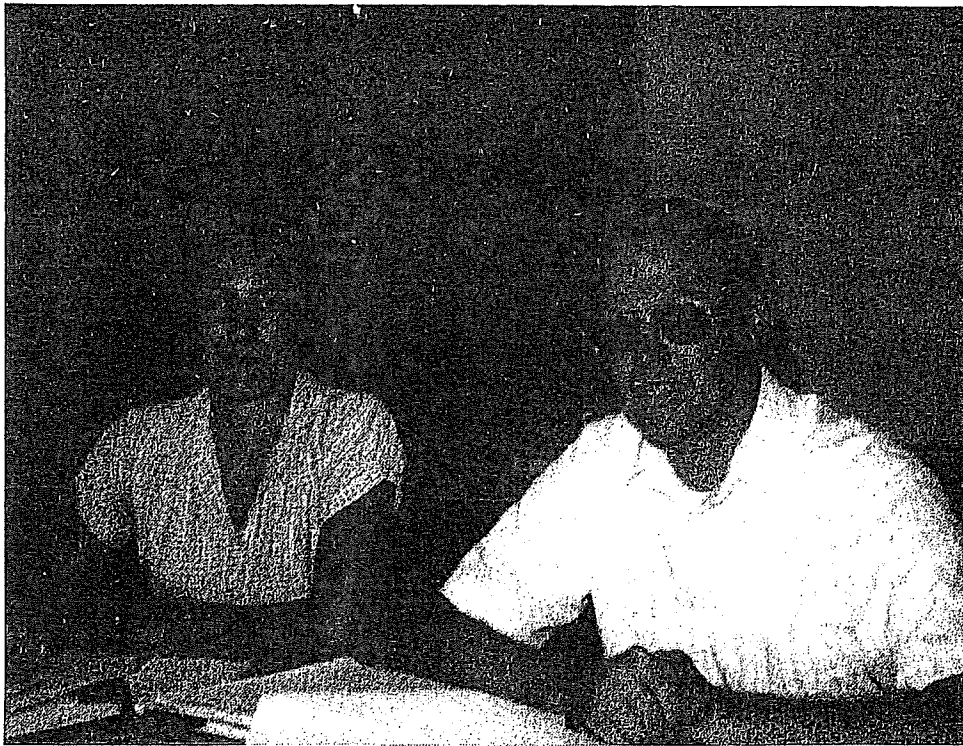


Students and Teachers. Teachers left to right are: Mrs. Jason Kortering, teachers' aide; Mr. Doug De Boer, grades 5-9; Mrs. Postma, Kindergarten; and Mr. Tom De Vries, grades 1-4.

Hope Christian School in Redlands

Back in 1934, shortly after the Redlands congregation was organized, the Hope Christian School first came into existence. For seven years the students received their instruction in the basement of the church. At that time it was the only Protestant Reformed school in the country. In 1941 a new school was constructed and from then until shortly after the controversy in 1953 it was used in the glorious task of giving covenant instruction to the heritage of the Lord. Some of the teachers back then were Miss Alice Reitsma, Mrs. Flossie (Hoekstra) Brunsting, Mrs. Ed Gritters, Mrs. Albert (Vander Werff) Karsemeyer, Mr. R.C. Boerkool, Mrs. Harriet Schipper, Miss Florence Terpstra, and Mr. Pete Zuidema.

In 1953 the congregation in Redlands suffered the severe affliction of the Lord. More than half the membership departed and took with them the church, the parsonage and also the school. For the next twenty-two years the Hope Christian School



Teachers of Hope Christian School, Redlands
Miss Laurie Buiter and Mr. John Kalsbeek

ceased to exist. However, some of the faithful remembered the days of old when they benefited as parents and also as students from their distinctive covenantal instruction and their desire was to reorganize and begin for a second time.

A school society was organized and the work of buying property, drawing up plans, determining the curriculum, hiring teachers and buying supplies began in earnest.

In 1973 everything seemed all set to go. The old school property was rented and two teachers were hired. The constituents were excited about the new beginning being made. But again they were to be disappointed; this time because the group who had agreed to rent them the facilities pulled out at the last moment.

This may have been a blessing in disguise because now the society was determined to go ahead and build their own school instead of renting one. The results were that Redlands opened up its own school on September 16, 1975. Mr. Dennis Van Uffelen writes in the June-July 1977 *Beacon Lights*, "This was a moment of great joy, an answer to the prayers of many parents....We, as parents and members of the School Society were thankful that God in His mercy had blessed our endeavors." There were still some odds and ends that had to be finished up at night by the parents but no matter, school had begun. Parents with cameras, kids with new clothes and smiles, and grandparents with tears in their eyes were welcomed that first morning by the two teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Jon Huisken. I'm sure that all agreed with Rev. M. Kamps' commentary of the event as recorded in the March 1, 1976 *Standard Bearer*, "...we want to make clear to all that our prayers, labors, and the evidence of our labors is solely the fruit of God's irresistible grace. What we did, we did solely because it was the only way of obedience for covenant parents who seek God's blessing."

When one considers the smallness of the Society (some 20 to 30 men), the cost of constructing a school building, and all the physical labor that was put into such an endeavor plus the cost of maintaining such a school, the question immediately comes upon the lips, Why? Why did they spend all that money and do all that work? Why did they want to educate their own children in their own school? Again we quote from Rev. M. Kamps, "The answer, the only answer...is that the believers' faith is a living faith that thankfully appropriates the thrilling testimony of God's Word: For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Acts 2:39."



Students of Hope Christian School, Redlands

Front row left to right. Scott Van Uffelen, Rick Gritters, Jared Huiskens, Jason Kalsbeek, Marlin Feenstra.

Second row - Dawn Van Uffelen, Gwennan Kalsbeek, Michelle Feenstra, Beth Van Meeteren, Brenda Mantel, Laurie Feenstra, Erika Kalsbeek

Third Row - Kelly Mantel, Jason Jabaay, Gerrit Meelker, Bert Meelker, Jordana Kalsbeek

Five years have already passed since that exciting and emotional beginning. Many of the original students have graduated and the original teachers have left. We are experiencing the low point in our student body at this time which has placed a heavy financial burden on the shoulders of the ten parents with children in the school. We are grateful for the generous help given each year by the other society members who contribute liberally to the cause—approximately one-third of the total cost. From now on for the next five years the projection shows a much needed increase in students and new parents. God's promises are sure. He is not slack to those who love Him. He has provided for us in the past and will continue to sustain us in the years ahead. It is in that confidence that the work of Christian instruction will continue here in Redlands.

In 1976 two new teachers took up their work in the Hope Christian School. Miss Neva Doezema—now Mrs. Steven Feenstra—taught grades Kindergarten through four. It was both an exciting but also at times a traumatic experience for a beginning teacher. She continued her work for three years before returning to Michigan. The other teacher was Mr. John Kalsbeek who came with his family from Doon, Iowa, to teach grades five through nine.

In 1979 Miss Laurie Buiter came to us from Loveland, Colorado, to teach in the lower room and will continue her work in the year ahead.

God has been good to us and He has indeed blessed us richly. We are small and in the eyes of the world—a laughing stock. Though the world despises the day of little things, yet we must and will continue to labor to bring up children that God has entrusted to our care and keeping in the fear of His name.

“The transcendent purpose of glorifying God means that the utilitarian demands of society for training in skills by which to earn a living will never be allowed to monopolize the character and content of the curriculum of a truly Christian college or university. The emphasis will always be on giving the student a valid, God-centered view of life as a whole. Courses of utilitarian character may properly be included, of course. But a truly Christian college or university will not allow courses on such subjects as salesmanship, bookkeeping and radio broadcasting to crowd out history, philosophy, literature, pure science, and religion. In other words, the main emphasis will always be on education rather than on training; the attainment of a unified view of life will be given priority over the acquisition of practical skills.”

* * * * *

“In many traditional Christian colleges today the teaching of the Bible has moved so far from orthodoxy that it is actually worse than useless; it is downright harmful, and would better be omitted altogether. Better not teach young people the Bible at all, than to teach them that the Bible is full of contradictions, forgeries and errors, a collection of ancient myths and legends, and so forth. Better leave the Bible out entirely than to teach it in the distorted form required by a non-Christian, evolutionary philosophy.” Dr. J.G. Vos

PRINCIPLES OF COUNSELING

[LECTURE I]

Prof. Herman Hanko

Prof. Hanko, professor of theology in the Protestant Reformed Seminary, presented this paper at the August, 1980, Mini-course sponsored by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools.

(Lecture I)

Counselling has increased markedly in popularity within the last few decades. It is somewhat difficult to decide whether this is due to the fact that there are many more problems with which responsible people have to deal in our stress-filled days, or whether this is because psychology itself has assumed such tremendous importance in our lives that we want also to play the game. Perhaps there is an element of truth in both.

However that may be, if counselling is correctly done, in counselling we will be doing nothing more than many people of God have always done throughout the ages. We have given it a new name, dressed it in a new suit of clothes, added to it certain insights; but it remains, for all that, what the Church of Christ has always been busy with in the problems which confront the people of God. We must not lose sight of this but must sink our roots deeply in the past and recognize that essentially we have nothing new to offer; but what has been characteristic of the Church in all times remains our calling.

It may be that the stresses of modern life create new problems and more problems. It may be that people are much more open to discuss their problems with others than in earlier days. It may also be that we have received some insights into human behavior which others before us did not know. But all of this does not give us an advantage over the work of the Church throughout all time which is of any significant value. It is well to remember this from the outset lest we become unduly enamored with our subject and lest we be attracted to gimmicks and psychiatric tricks which will do the cause of Christ no good.

The subject which we shall be discussing in the next few days is an extensive one, one not without its difficulties. The field is very broad. Implied in this subject is the whole question of the basis for Christian education which must serve as background for our discussion. Implied also are the goals of Reformed education which are in the nature of the case also goals of counselling. But the subject of counselling itself is very broad. As Jay Adam's points out in his book, *Competent to Counsel*, the whole teaching situation in the classroom is really a counselling situation. There is to be sure specific counselling required for individual children who have unique problems, but these problems too are myriad and the reasons for them more than we can count. But even then, we must be careful that we remember that every child needs counselling, for we must not fall into the trap of permitting counselling to become strictly problem-oriented. Added to all this is the fact that you teachers are responsible for the education of children from age five to age seventeen or eighteen—a period in the life of the person when the greatest changes take place in spiritual, physical and psychological development. These changes give rise to different problems and counselling must be directed to these specific needs.

All this requires that we face the grim prospect of sharply curtailing our subject, of recognizing that there are aspects to the whole subject with which we cannot deal, and that there are matters which we shall treat only cursorily.

The general subject however, we are going to divide into two parts, one dealing with principles and the other dealing with practice.

I. The Place of Counselling in the School.

When counselling first became the thing to do such work was understood in a purely psychological context. Under the influence of rather worldly conceptions of psychology the idea was accepted that psychology occupied an area which was independent of religion and pastoral care. It was some kind of esoteric science that stood apart from the religious life of man, had nothing to do with the spiritual calling of the church and the home, and could perform wonders in the treatment of mental illness and in the solutions to life's problems which no other work could ever hope to accomplish. With this notion came also the necessary conclusion that this type of work could only be handled by psychologists who were skilled in the intricacies of the trade.

Countless teachers, ministers and even parents decided that it was essential to take courses in psychology and to gain the expertise of which the experts boasted, for without these skills they could not hope to do well the work assigned to them. Or failing this, it was urged upon us to turn all our problems over to experts who were alone qualified to deal with them.

Jay Adams called us back to our senses when he set forth his principal thesis that counselling is, after all, nothing else but the preaching of the Word of God. Presupposed in this thesis was the assertion that all the problems of life are problems which have their origin in sin. Because only through Christ can sin be removed, so only through the preaching of the Christ revealed in the Scriptures can the problems which result from sin be taken away.

But it is this very position which creates a problem. If the preaching of the Word is the solution to all the problems of life, and counselling is preaching, is not the role of counselling limited to the official preaching by the Church? If this is the case, all counselling must be referred to the Church, and we need deal no longer with the matter.

On the other hand, the question of the role of the school in counselling arises because of the relation of the school to the home. Teachers work *in loco parentis*. In this connection a somewhat erroneous idea has been cultivated among us in recent years. Some have taken the position that parental education means that each parent has a complete say-so concerning his child, the education he receives and any problems which arise in the course of his education. This leads to the idea that each parent has complete control over his child and the teacher only carries out the specific instructions of the parents. This too would seem to leave no room for teacher counselling.

But there are also parents who go to the opposite extreme and turn all responsibilities for education over to the teacher. They show little or no concern for or interest in the education of their child,—at least until their child is in some serious trouble of one sort or another when their complaints can be heard over vast distances. Thus almost all the work of bringing up a child—especially as far as Christian influence is concerned—falls upon the teacher.

And so there is the problem of the relation between the school and the home. It is important that we find the proper balance in the meaning of parental education. On the one hand, we must not be independentistic in our conceptions of Reformed

education, but remember that we work together and that this sometimes means that individual concerns must sometimes be sacrificed for the good of the school as a whole. And yet we must also show a vital concern for the education of our children and parents must work with the teachers in all aspects of the training of their children.

The ideal situation is a school where parents and teachers work together in the whole education of the child and each helps the others also in the area of counselling. It is where this ideal is unattainable that we have problems.

What then is the specific role of the teacher in counselling?

It is at this point that definitions become all important. Jay Adams defines counselling in "the Christian school context (as) concerned with helping students to solve problems God's way." (*Competent to Counsel*, p. 255.) Perhaps we can alter this a bit and define counselling as, "that aspect of the teachers' work in covenantal instruction which concerns itself with the specific application of the Word of God to all the behavior of the child." This is a somewhat broad definition, but the importance of this will, I hope, become apparent presently. What I am saying in this definition is that counselling, in distinction from the ordinary work of the classroom, is an aspect of instruction which deals with *behavior* in a very general sense of the word, and which brings the Word of God to focus upon that behavior. It stands to reason, of course, that the Christian school teacher is not concerned with all the behavior of the child. The sixth grade teacher is not, e.g., concerned particularly with the fact that a girl does not readily wash the dishes at the command of her mother. The teacher is interested in behavior in so far as it directly or indirectly affects the life of the child in school.

In a way, counselling, under the definition offered above, is an inescapable part of the work of a teacher.

That this is true follows from the fact that behavior cannot be separated from the educational work of the school. God created man a unity. While we cannot go into detail on this matter, we may certainly point out that while man has a body through which he lives in this world, a soul which includes his mind, his will and his emotions and a spirit which puts him in an inescapable relation to God. These three can never be separated from each other. Man always functions, in all that he does, as body, soul and spirit. And in this way he functions in the classroom; in this unity of his being he must be educated.

This is not difficult to illustrate. Problems may arise out of any aspect of his God-given nature. He may have problems which are physical in origin such as physical defects, insufficient sleep, poor diet or physical abuse at home. He may have problems which are intellectual in nature: low I.Q., poor memory, difficulty in reading, etc. He may have volitional problems so that he simply does not want to study or finds his desires directed along the lines of breaking rules and disrupting classroom work. He may have emotional problems due to other problems in his life or due to the prevailing notion in our day that mere feeling is all-important: "If it feels good, do it." And he may have spiritual problems which involve all the others. But they all stand related to each other and cannot be separated or categorized neatly. The problem, whatever its chief origin, affects the whole man. And the education of the child is stymied to the extent that these problems remain unsolved. The treatment of them therefore, involves the whole of the child's nature.

The point is that the whole child must be educated by the teacher. No teacher can, even if he wanted to, concern himself with just the development of the intellect while ignoring all the other aspects of the child's God-given nature. It may be that the primary purpose of the educational process is indeed the development of the intellect; but the intellect cannot be reached except the whole man be addressed. The "man of God" must be thoroughly furnished unto all good works and this implies that there is always the moral dimension of a child's life. The education of a child cannot ignore this moral dimension. It lies indeed at the very heart of Reformed education. The will, the emotions, the spiritual aspect of the child's life come under the care of the teacher.

How can this then be fitted into the Reformed conception of preaching? You understand the problem. Problems in our lives arise because of sin. The cure for sin lies in the means of grace which God has ordained: the preaching of the Word of the cross. We have stressed in our Churches, and properly so, that the official preaching is *the* means of grace. But it is just possible that we have done this to the exclusion of the effectiveness of the Word in other areas of life, as, e.g., in the whole area of Christian witnessing.

We must look at the concept of the Word of God in an organic way. Rev. H. Hoeksema, in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, in discussing the means of grace, reminds us that for the child of

God all things are finally means of grace because all things work together for good to them that love God. The organic conception of the preaching surely means that at the very center stands the official preaching of the Word by the Church as a vitalizing power. But under that power, the Word is also powerful in every area in which it functions. Whether that Word is used in the home in personal Bible study or in family devotions or in the covenantal instruction of parents; whether it is a Word spoken in Christian witnessing in the world; whether it is the mutual edification of the saints or whether it is the instruction of Christian school teachers, that Word is a means of grace. Not separated from the official preaching, but vitalized by it and subordinate to it. But it must always be remembered that the Word remains the two-fold power of saving and hardening. It is always a two-edged sword and it always accomplishes God's purpose.

Thus the teacher has a role in bringing that Word. That is, as always in the life of the Christian, the only power which the teacher possesses. You must learn to rely upon that Word in counselling. Nothing else will do what that Word does. Trying to become some sort of psychologist, making yourself adept at psychological techniques, relying upon the wisdom of modern day psychology will finally accomplish nothing. It is that Word alone that will be your means of counselling and you must labor in the full assurance that God will use it. It will function as a means of grace; it will therefore save or harden. But it will alone do what has to be done.

II. The Goal of Counselling.

The goal of counselling cannot be divorced from the goal of Christian education as a whole. What the goal of Reformed education is need not be discussed in detail by us. We need only mention a few points. While the Scriptures define that goal in many different places, it will be sufficient for our purposes to remind you of what Paul writes to Timothy in II Timothy 3:17. If it is true that the Word of God is the only means of counselling, then this text defines precisely the purpose for Paul is speaking here of the Scriptures and tells us that they are "profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." In a booklet prepared by the Propaganda Committee of the Society for Protestant Reformed Education of Adams School

prior to the erection of that school, we find the following:

The more we realize that the main purpose of educating our covenant children is to train them for service in God's kingdom, the more we will realize that this educational training must proceed from specific and distinctive points of view. If our purpose in educating our children is to equip them to meet the world on its own level, to equip them to progress financially and socially in the world in which we live, there is no need for the sacrifice involved in Christian education. The world itself, that is the public schools, are far better equipped to do this work. But if our aim in educating our children is to bring them up in the fear of the Lord and equip them to take their stations in His church, then Christian education is essential. It becomes our calling and our duty and then we do all in our power to provide a specific type of education which will best train them in our distinctive interpretation of God's Word in all spheres of life. (p. 15)

Let it suffice to point out that the fundamental Protestant Reformed principles in which our lives and the lives of our children find their purpose are of necessity bound up in the education we receive and give to our children in the home, in the church and also in the school. To impregnate the minds of our children, to mold their convictions from earliest infancy on, with a distinctive religious view of life, and the world, is our calling and duty as Christian parents. In our lives as Christians while we are in the world, we are constantly behaving and acting from a distinctive motivation. This motivation is necessarily the viewpoint from which we proceed in our evaluation of all of life and our relationships to the world in which we live. This motivating force must be positively and intellectually presented to our children by teachers who are convinced of the specifically Reformed principles which we maintain in our churches. Because we are religiously persuaded of the truth of our world and life view, we want our children trained in it as a personal, as a religious view of life and the world. And if it is to be their personal viewpoint, it must be for them one whose truth is increasingly witnessed by all that they learn as they learn it, by all with which they become acquainted as they make its acquaintance. Religion and truth and the right education unite in this demand. Our children should be trained in so knowing and so acting. (p. 20, 21)

The goal of counselling is subordinate to that main purpose of Reformed education. There is one overriding goal directing education in our schools. But there are many subordinate goals as e.g., the subordinate goal of the teacher in teaching a course in

history. Counselling has also such a subordinate goal as it relates to the behavior of the child and as it concentrates on the moral aspect of education.

So we may be more specific.

The chief and central goal of counselling is, quite obviously, to assist the child in overcoming and solving his problems. There are problems which are barriers to successful education and problems which arise out of education. The problems which are barriers to successful education stand in the way of and hinder the learning process. They are the problems which arise specifically out of the life of the child as he is called to live that life in all the areas in which God calls him to walk. They must be removed if the child is going to be successful in the educational enterprise. It is in this area that there is the greatest need for counselling.

To be yet more specific, Waterink, in his book, "*Opvoeding tot Persoonlijkheid*", speaks of the goal of bringing up a child as that of forming the child into a personality. By forming a child into a personality he means that a child finds his own unique place in all the relationships of life and that a child be equipped to occupy that place. Specifically, says Waterink, that implies three things.

It implies, first of all, an integrated life. An integrated life is a life in which the whole man functions in proper balance. The mind, the will, the emotions, the body—each in its own capacity and function, operates in harmony with the whole without being out of balance. The spiritual aspect of man—his relation to God—functions as the deepest directing principle of the whole of man's life.

Secondly, a regulated life is characteristic of a person who has been formed into a personality. By this Waterink means that the whole man lives an ordered life under the firm control of the person so that he is not moved in his activity by prevailing opinions, by pressures from outside which he does not control, by mere subjective impressions; but that his life is a consciously and deliberately directed life along given and consciously chosen paths.

And finally Waterink speaks in this connection of the need for the development of the conscience. The whole man must be consciously directed by the Scriptures in such a way that he lives his life with spiritual and moral sensitivity.

In that way the child of God functions in his place and calling in a way that is approved of by God.

III. The Qualifications of the Counsellor

As we turn to the qualifications of the counsellor, there are some general remarks which I wish to make first of all.

It is important to understand, above all else, that a teacher in the classroom is, by virtue of his role as teacher, a counsellor. I am not referring now to specific and conscious counselling of an individual pupil, but am referring instead to the very presence of the teacher, his daily work of instruction in the classroom and his entire conduct in relation to the pupils.

It ought not to surprise us that this is so. After all, a parent is also a counsellor in the home every moment whether he wills it or not. An officebearer in his work in the congregation is also constantly a counsellor and he cannot escape that responsibility. It is no different with a teacher.

There are two aspects to this. On the one hand, the teacher, by all his actions in the classroom, is constantly counselling simply by way of example. This is inescapable because the child is made by God in such a way that the child is constantly looking for examples to follow in his life. The teacher constitutes one of the most important examples that a child has. By way of that example, the teacher is, in effect, counselling. The other side of the picture is this: if a teacher does not conduct himself in the whole of his life as a fitting example, there is no possibility of that teacher ever doing any effective counselling in a person-to-person situation. The child will simply not accept it; or, and the danger is greater, the child will accept the example of the teacher rather than the specific instruction.

This is, without question, the most important aspect of counselling and it is in this way that the teacher has the greatest impact upon the child.

There is, I think, no question about it that the teacher's *attitudes* are here the critical thing. What is the teacher's attitude towards material things overagainst spiritual things? Does the teacher who expects the child to be a disciple of Christ, himself live as a disciple, denying himself, taking up his cross and following Christ? What is the teacher's attitude towards sports, towards studies, towards God's Word, towards spiritual exercises of prayer and devotions? Does the teacher always, in the whole of his life, give the emphatic impression of a godly, virtuous, pious and upright servant of the Lord? There is much lacking here in all of us. What I am saying of teachers holds, of course, equally as well for ministers of the gospel. And then I shudder a bit. The virtues which we expect of our children we do not practice

ourselves. There must be, in fact, what can almost be called, an exaggerated virtue—not in the hypocritical sense, but in the sense of extraordinary piety, for the disciple always falls somewhere below the level of his teacher. The teacher must pull the child up to a high level, but cannot do this unless standing there himself. And so the teacher must conduct himself as one of whom the students say: That is the kind of person I would like to be.

More specifically, we have to say just a word about counselling of individuals. There are specific problems which arise directly in the classroom and are part of classroom life and must be dealt with on an individual basis. While, generally speaking, each teacher is able to handle these problems, the more serious ones must be referred elsewhere. It is well, in my judgment, that each school chooses someone to handle this type of work. What I am saying is that each school should have its own counsellor who possesses the necessary qualifications and who can be freed from classroom responsibilities during part of the day to deal with these matters. This is especially necessary in the high school where all the students may have many different teachers in the course of the day.

The qualifications for a counsellor are spelled out by the apostle Paul in II Timothy 2:24-26: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

We ought to take a brief look at some of these qualifications which are listed here.

The servant of the Lord must not fight! Notice the way this is phrased. Undoubtedly the apostle puts it in exactly this form because of the great danger to fall into this pattern. We might consider it necessary, but it is not. Never must the servant of the Lord engage in arguments, disputes, debates, wranglings, shouting matches of any kind. Why not? The answer is that his power is in the Word of God. All he must ever do is bring that Word. And when he brings that Word there is no place for disputes or arguments. The Word stands. It is there as the Word of Christ—of Whom the teacher is but a servant.

The servant of the Lord must be gentle to all. The opposite of gentleness is anger, harshness, coldness, bitterness, stridency, etc. A servant of the Lord must possess a calmness, a spiritual

tranquility and serenity which nothing can breach or destroy. He must be able to deal with others quietly, carefully and in full confidence of the power of the Word. If he attempts to perform his work in his own strength, he will have to resort to all sorts of methods to gain his ends. But when the Word will, through him, do its work with a power inherent in itself, then quietness and calmness are all that are required.

The servant of the Lord must be apt to teach. Once again the emphasis lies upon the Word of God. He must be able to bring the Scriptures to those who must hear this Word. He must be able to teach from the Scriptures, to make it clear what the Scriptures say. This requires special gifts the chief of which are thorough familiarity with the Scriptures on his own part.

The servant of the Lord must be patient. He must be patient because he shall have to bear with ills and wrongs, with opposition and with sin in every form. He must be patient because the Word of God does not always do its work as swiftly as he would like. In impatience the temptation is to lay aside the Word and go his own way.

The servant of the Lord must be meek. He must, in meekness, instruct them who oppose themselves. Those who walk in sin oppose themselves in the sense that they seek that which is really evil for themselves. They choose a path which leads to their own destruction. Humility or meekness arises from the consciousness that this is true of each one of us apart from the sovereign operations of grace. This will always remind the teacher that he must never send a child to the cross, but must rather go with the child.

And so we have the Scriptural picture of the counsellor. All the emphasis falls upon that Word. The teacher who engages in counselling must live a life of diligent and prayerful study of the Word. That Word must be at his finger tips; it must be in his heart and on his lips. It must be the Word which governs and controls all his own life and which functions as a lamp unto his feet and a light upon his pathway. It must be out of that Word that he lives. Then and then only will he be able to bring that Word to those who need it greatly. And then he will be able to counsel in a God-approved and God-blessed manner.

"...And what establishment and stability in the faith might not be produced in the students if every teacher could be depended upon to give any student faithful, sympathetic counsel based upon the Christian view of life?" Dr. J.G. Vos

PROTESTANT REFORMED EDUCATION: TRADITION OR CONVICTION

by Mr. Gerald Kuiper

Mr. Gerald Kuiper is an instructor in Covenant Christian High School and gave this speech as the keynote address to the teachers at the 1980 P.R.T.I. Convention in Northwest Iowa.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak at this convention. When we look about this room at the many teachers, young and old, from several different Protestant Reformed schools, our confession certainly is that God has richly blessed us. I understand that the theme of this convention has to do with the survival of our Protestant Reformed Schools. It seems to me that the survival of any educational institution of today rests in how firmly convinced the members are of the basis of their organization. I'd like to share with you what I consider to be the basis of our schools and also have you spend some time with me examining ourselves concerning our conviction that what we are doing is work for God's sake as His servants. What then is our *basis*?

If we were to ask some Christian and private school administrators what the key to survival of their schools is, we would receive a variety of answers, these answers depending to some extent on the purpose for the existence of these various schools. Their basis, or reasons for existence, are many, but fall under especially the following categories—educational reform, social and moral reform, and a desire to evangelize.

A large number of schools have arisen in recent years as a protest against the weaknesses that have been present in the public school systems of our country for years, but have especially shown themselves in recent times. These schools have

begun, for example, in protest against the debilitating effect of progressive education upon the public schools around us. Those who began these schools saw that so much emphasis had been placed on the ungraded classroom, and on the desire that students be allowed to learn what *they* wanted to learn, at *their* own rate, that in most school systems in our country a student could graduate after having completed the very minimum of requirements. I know of one high school system in a prosperous city in the west that required the following for graduation—three years of English and one year of government. All the rest of the students' courses were electives. The situation in Michigan was so bad about four years ago, that the University of Michigan had to institute a reading test for those who sought admission because they found that many of those applying for admission had only mastered reading skills of the 3rd to 5th grade level. I'm sure that Michigan is not alone in this regard. Since Federal laws requiring admission of a certain number of minorities in order to qualify for federal aid, universities and colleges are complaining that in order to comply they've had to lower their standards to let in these poorly prepared minorities, and at the same time turn away qualified applicants. They were appalled at the apparent lack of preparedness for college. Many private academies and schools, then, have arisen in protest against this and have called for educational reform, spurred on by books like *Why Johnny Can't Read*.

Probably more important in formation of these schools were the moral evils present in the public schools of our day. Not surprisingly, the pleasure seeking craze of our generation has infiltrated the public schools. These concerned parents saw that in many schools authority was flaunted, and immorality of every sort was even condoned. They recognized that these schools were anti-God and, in refusing the Bible and prayer, were at the same time preaching and teaching a new morality, which would work to corrupt American youth. So to set up schools for *moral* and *social* reform they dedicated their schools to *God* by putting the Bible and prayer back in the schools; to *home*, by placing much emphasis on authority and moral instruction; and to *country*, by speaking against communism and advocating reform in government.

Their idea is that graduates who have learned authority and responsibility instilled in them by the private school will be able to go out into society and turn it around. We see this in many of the Baptist Academies and in those controlled by the A.A.C.S.,

where a better kingdom here on earth is sought.

The key to survival, as far as these schools are concerned, varies. Perhaps the key for some of them is federal aid in the form of direct aid or a tuition-voucher system. They argue that under the Bill of Rights they should be allowed to choose the place they can send their children to school, and deserve a piece of the tax pie to pay for their schools. They, therefore, along with the Catholics, lobby for massive federal grants. Some of these schools resist federal aid and instead devote much energy to the promotion and recruitment of new students and supporters. They speak of a "new direction" in education, of a "lasting gift" to your child, and of a generation who will reform and redirect a decadent society. If you would ask many of these people today the purpose or basis of their schools, they would probably not be able to give a clear answer. Yet most of them would probably not give up their schools. They unquestioningly figure that to maintain their school is their duty. It has become a way of life with them, or a status symbol, or a form of protest against the existing order.

Which brings us to our own schools. Our history is relatively young, beginning, I believe, in Redlands, California with a one-room school in about 1940. Now today, forty years later, we have eleven schools with an enrollment of about 1000 students (not large compared to most other school systems, but a worthy beginning, nevertheless). In a certain sense we can say we have survived those early years and are maturing. A convention here in Iowa with all of us here present is evidence that our endeavor is real. But I believe our beginnings have been different from other Christian schools. In most cases, we weren't protesting poor academic standards, we certainly weren't affected by integration laws. Our basis was not to evangelize as the Baptists, or to catechize as the Roman Catholics. But our beginnings were due to a conviction that our basis and reason for education was different from the schools out of which we took our children. Our parents realized that God had blessed, especially the P.R. Church, with an understanding of a basis, a covenant basis, and our fathers were convinced that basis was important enough to warrant our own schools, and for that matter our own *teacher-training* schools. There was much call for that, you know, in the early years of our history. Groups of concerned parents in these areas of the U.S. joined forces to erect and finance school buildings and hire P.R. teachers so that this covenantal idea of education could be espoused. What was that basis which

convinced our forefathers that our own schools were vitally necessary?

It wasn't, as I have earlier stated, due to a desire for educational or social and moral reform. It was a covenant basis. To summarize, allow me to use the main points which Rev. Engelsma uses in his book *Reformed Education* when he discusses the basis.

1. God is our God, and we are his friend-servants. We have a calling to love Jehovah our God, serve Him and glorify Him. Scriptural basis for this can be found in Psalm 19:8-10 & 14, "The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." And we have Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep *His* commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."
2. God's covenant extends beyond us his children to encompass the entire creation of God. Therefore, in the schools, education in *all* facets of creation is important.
3. God has established His covenant with Christ, not only as Head of the elect church, but as Head of creation. Christ is the One by Whom and for Whom all things were created, and by Whom all things consist. God's covenant is with the earth and every living creature. According to Rev. Engelsma, page 43, "This is one solid reason why a Reformed man cannot live a life of the renunciation of the created world and of the cultivation of his soul. Not only is the creation the sphere of operation for God's love and salvation of us and the sphere of operation for our love and service of God, but also there is a relation between God and the creation. God knows and loves His creation, and the creation knows and loves its God—not apart from man, but through *the* man, Jesus Christ."
4. God graciously establishes His covenant with *believers* and their children, in the line of continued generations.

This then is the basis and Scripture commands that we are to teach our children concerning this covenant basis. First from

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 which our Chairman read. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." We read too in Ephesians 6:4, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Psalm 78:1-4 also instructs us concerning our responsibility to teach our children. "Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done."

Although in the early years the basis for our schools may not have been expressed in exactly the same way, I believe these four points were understood clearly by those early supporters, perhaps *better* than they are today.

Rev. Engelsma continues on page 14 in speaking of covenant parents, "On the one hand, this instruction of their children is one of the outstanding covenant responsibilities of parents, i.e., one aspect of their calling as God's friend-servants to love, serve, and glorify God. On the other hand, it is the means by which God brings the reborn covenant child to spiritual maturity, to a developed man or woman of God, capable of a life of good works."

"The Christian school," he continues, "is an association of believing parents carrying out this calling of God to rear the children, through a like-minded believer who is both called of God to this vital task and capable of the instruction that peculiarly pertains to the school."

Our parents were convinced that the Christian school, and more particularly our Protestant Reformed schools were a demand of the covenant. If we look back at the four points of Rev. Engelsma concerning the basis, it is not difficult to understand why Protestant Reformed parents were convinced that we should have our own schools. Regarding point #1 that we are friend-servants of our Creator and that we have a calling to love

Him—the existing Christian schools, or the public schools, whatever the case may have been—were not teaching anymore the truth of a *sovereign* God who created man for His glory, and loved with a particular love His chosen people. This truth had been forgotten in exchange for a God Who loves *all* men, and for a people whose motive to love and serve is not that *God* be glorified, but that *somehow* man though “love” can reform and redirect society.

Regarding points 2 and 3 of the basis, that God would have instruction given in the school in all facets of His creation, and that the end of all things is the glorification of the Creator though salvation of His people in Christ, our fathers saw that instruction in these truths was found sorely wanting in the existing schools. For example, many Christian schools, beginning already in the late 1950's, were teaching Theistic Evolution, as taught by Dr. John De Vries in Calvin College, and in some cases were even propounding a doubt concerning the authenticity of the creation account of Genesis. Their motive for education was beginning to be that our children be social reformers, and that we redeem the creation for man for the sake of an earthly kingdom rather than out of love for God Who would see His own name glorified in that new heavens and new earth, through salvation of His people in Christ.

And regarding point 4 that God has established His covenant for believers and their seed in the line of continued generations, our fathers saw instead of a school whose purpose was outreach into the unbelieving community. And since God loves all men an important purpose of their institution was to evangelize and go beyond God's covenant. The result, of course, was that students were recruited in the community, and that a sovereign God's promises to a peculiar and particular people were hushed up so that the school could serve a broader constituency, often including children of unbelieving parents. Our fathers also saw how the tentacles of common grace all but erased the antithesis and totally clouded the scriptural idea of a cultural mandate.

Our fathers saw these evils growing and were grieved. In many cases they tried the avenue of protest, and found to their dismay that they could not even get to first base, even with appeals to Scripture and to the Confessions. They were instead accused, and are yet, of anabaptism, and of a narrow view of creation and of the covenant. They were accused, and are yet, of being separatistic and of “splitting hairs” over unimportant

issues. Our fathers were convinced that they could no longer use *those* schools for instruction of their children, so they set out on their own. All of us know of the zeal shown by those beloved brothers and sisters in those early years. Much financial sacrifice was necessary. In some cases bitterness arose within families because of this steadfast desire that we have our own schools. I've been privileged to have taught in a couple of these smaller schools and continue to be amazed at the unquestioned zeal and sacrifice shown by our people. Talk to people today, from any of our smaller, struggling schools and you will see the certainty, the conviction, that the cause of P.R. education is all important.

The early years for P.R. education in the Grand Rapids area were exciting ones. Everyone was involved, including the Theological School Committee which was called upon for help. From a 1950 report to the Adams St. P.R. School society in Grand Rapids, we read the following: "The Theological School Committee has been contacted, and they have promised that they will do what they can toward giving the necessary normal training for our teachers and prospective teachers, so that our school may really be a school for Protestant Reformed education, because that of course is our one aim and purpose. The Teachers' Club in the meantime is doing what it can to give this specific training to our teachers." Our fathers desired a unity of instruction as is evident by the conclusion of that same 1950 report: "...the year that lies before us undoubtedly will be of greater importance still, when the doors of our school will be opened to receive our children, and we will have a complete unity of instruction in the home, in the school, and in the church."

A 1953 report to the Adams St. Society reveals that the Board engaged Rev. H. Veldman to write *notes* to "interpret history in the light of the Holy Scriptures in a thoroughly Reformed manner."

From the 1956 report to the Adams St. School society, we have the following:

"During the past year the society's mandate to the board...has been continually before us and we have mutually endeavored to discharge that responsibility in the fear of the Lord and in total dependence upon His mercy and sustaining grace. As we labored together in this blessed task of providing the opportunity to our children of obtaining the rudiments of an education, our prayer has continued to be that we might remain faithful to the basis and the purpose of this work.

Objectively this has always pointed us to the necessity of maintaining a high regard for the most fundamental need our children can have, which is to learn from those that go before, the meaning and obligation all believers have to glorify our Creator, our Covenant God, and to serve Him only. It is our task in this Protestant Reformed Christian School to unfold to our children, in their formative years, a beginning measure of all the wonders of this universe, with its myriad array of arts and sciences in such a way that the purpose and meaning of it all is clearly shown to be God's own revelation of Himself to His church, that He alone might be praised and honored."

I quote these to give us a feeling for those early days in Adams Street. I'm sure that that quiet confidence and zeal was the same elsewhere, and pray that it may continue to be so. This *conviction*, this confidence, I believe is the key to the survival of our schools. I quote again from Rev. Engelsma's book, page 10:

"It is of utmost importance that there be knowledge among us of the basis of Christian education—and by 'knowledge' is meant the **knowledge of conviction**, i.e., the **knowledge of faith**. There is a very practical reason why parents and teachers should know the basis: the entire endeavor of Christian education depends on it! And a large endeavor it is, in terms of time, money, energy, and struggle. Especially when the going gets tough, knowledge of the basis is crucial. It is crucial for parents who must sacrifice to pay tuition. It is crucial for teachers who have heavy workloads, suffer thanklessness and criticism, and in some cases, be paid little besides. It is crucial for Boards when they wrestle with knotty problems and become involved in painful conflicts."

Even though our schools are not very old, I believe that that hearty conviction which accompanied those early years can, and has in some cases become mere tradition. O, tradition is not all that bad, but what I am talking about is a *conviction* that has possibly become a *tradition*, so that the basis is no longer clearly in the forefront, but other things have clouded it over so that the necessity for involvement and knowledge of the basis becomes less vital and urgent. How is this seen?

1. This is seen when School Society meetings, especially of our larger schools are often attended by about half of the membership or when Parent Teacher Conferences are poorly attended. Where is that early excitement and spirit of cooperation?

2. This is seen when parents allow the teachers to take over the education of their children, and when parents see the school as a day-care center for their children to whom they as parents pay a fee for services rendered.
3. A lack of concern with that covenant basis of education is also seen when the other extreme happens—when we as teachers try to take over the schools or our own classroom and leave the parents completely out of the picture, because we say, what do they know about education. We're the educators after all. We like to keep them in their place. Especially in conferences, we use our educational jargon and fail to listen to them when they have suggestions or complaints concerning their child. We forget sometimes that we are servants, and try to be masters. I'm bothered when I see that, especially in the Grand Rapids area, the task of support for Christian schools is being put squarely into the lap of parents only. The baptismal vow through which the whole church pledged and promised to see to it that they intended to instruct these children in the fear of the Lord, now has come to be more particular, and those with school-age children are largely left to support the schools while younger parents, or those with children out of school wash their hands of the affair. And often times our School Boards, instead of educating their school society concerning this problem, will fail to actively seek new members and fail to make school projects or drives an activity that all can participate in. Perhaps a return to Board Propaganda committees is in order in this respect. I believe we can see when we look at some of our small schools, that the more in the congregation that are involved in the school, the stronger the movement for Protestant Reformed Christian education will be, not only financially, but morally and spiritually too.
4. We as teachers sometimes coast along. We don't show conviction when we fail to pray and study God's word daily to hear what God says concerning that awesome responsibility we have to instruct children in the fear of the Lord. We sometimes forget that each day the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions are to be the solid basis for all the instruction we give. When we do fail to diligently search the Scriptures daily, and use them as a basis for all our teaching, then we are, to use Rev. Engelsma's words "building the Sears Tower, but using a chicken coop for a foundation."

I believe we're running on tradition and not by conviction when we teach every year from the same moldy notes, not

bothering to update them, or rethink and re-examine the subject matter we are to teach. We should, as a matter of fact, grow, not only in our knowledge of the subject matter, but also in the ability to bring the Scriptures to bear on it. If we are stagnant, and are running on the gasses of stagnancy, then we have ourselves to blame, when interest wanes in our schools. We shouldn't forget that *to be Reformed is to be constantly Reforming*.

We have seen Teacher's Clubs and Seminars come and go. We can give reasons why they weren't the answer. But what are we doing today when we fail to continue actively to move forward with other study and new challenges such as continued work on P.R. textbooks or toward P.R. training for our teachers? Do we think we are at a stage in our history when we have arrived: Or have we lost our energy and decided to coast along for awhile? Or do we think we have more understanding and are wiser than those who came before us, so therefore there is no need in this area? I doubt that that is the case.

Furthermore, a conviction for the cause of P.R. education demands a unity of mind among teachers, but also in the constituency. I believe that among our constituency there are many groups with their own private interests and prejudices. Take the Grand Rapids area, for example. There have been in the past several "sectional rivalries." Hope society began and built their school prior to 1947 with little support and cooperation as far as I know from the east side of town or from the Hudsonville-Holland area. Later Hudsonville and Holland sent their children to Hope and in 1950 Adams Street completed their school. But surprisingly, even today, as in the past, there are yet some parents and even teachers who carry some kind of grudge against one of the two schools. It used to be that Hope was the "hick" school and Adams was the "city slicker" school. Then when Adams Street prospered and Hope struggled, some in Hope were envious and were calling for cooperation, meaning, I guess, that they felt Adams should share some of their prosperity with Hope. Now, when the situation, at least number wise is reversed, there are those from the east side of town who are bitter and who do not like to see the rapid growth toward the western part of the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. There are those today who claim with supposed authority that Adams St. is the place to send your children because they obviously can do a better job because of their smaller class size. Then there are those from the other side of town who wouldn't send their kids to Adams Street because it's in the "ghetto area." We can *ignore* these kinds of

statements when we hear them, or we can *speak up*. We should ask ourselves whether we as teachers, as leaders, are doing all we can to get rid of this type of animosity. I wonder sometimes, where our schools in the Grand Rapids area would be today if petty jealousies were put aside and all worked together at the task of educating the covenant seed. We have to understand too, that if we can't cooperate over small things now, what will happen if we are forced to work together in adversity? We are after all *not for schools*, for particular schools, but for P.R. education.

The story of education here in Hull and Doon is equally dismal, I think. The early years here in Iowa showed little cooperation between these two towns, but for a few exceptions. I remember about 13 or 14 years ago, when the decision was made in N.W. Iowa to build a school in Doon, not two weeks later men in Hull were complaining that since the school would be built in Doon, obviously Doon wanted nothing to do with Hull. There of course are many factors that entered in, but the fact of the matter is that *all* those interested in P.R. education were invited to those early meetings, and for some reason only some showed up. Practically speaking, maybe two schools in this area are better than one, but where is the harmony? I think in this area of the country also, too many prejudices and misunderstandings exist. I'm encouraged that in both areas this animosity is dying down, but there is much to be done as far as real unity is concerned. With a unified effort here in N.W. Iowa I can envision one school plant with a k-12 program, but separately, is that possible?

The story of the location of Covenant Christian High in G.R. involved the same type of wrangling, and to this day there are those that are bitter about that. It seems to me that if our schools are to survive we are going to have to do more than we have done in the past to bury these bones of contention for good.

Remember when you first entered the profession? I remember when I did. I had all kinds of dreams about cooperation between teacher and parent, teacher and board, teacher and staff. Although most of these dreams turned out to be true ones, there were always incidents that really discouraged me. There did not always seem to be a unity of purpose, a real dedication! We didn't always speak the same language.

Disagreements with parents over treatment of their children have occurred. Often times conferences would straighten out difficulties but sometimes both parents and I went away frustrated. Sometimes teachers and school boards seem to be adversaries instead of those working in harmony toward the

glorification of God through proper nurture of God's children. There seems to be a growing mistrust between many of the teachers and the parents and the school boards. We sometimes let ourselves lose our cool, for example, when we hear someone talking about those overpaid, underworked teachers. We then loudly proclaim our underpaid status and say a bit more than we should have. As a result the mistrust is not removed—it is maintained. It's time we learn that if we have a personal problem concerning finances we should go to the School Board and speak there. Then if we cannot in good conscience feel we can continue, maybe it's time to move on quietly rather than make louder noises. I think sometimes when we speak about the respect we deserve and the pay we should get, we end up looking to our friends much like a spoiled child asking for two peppermints instead of one. Times are going to change, and it may well be that we will be forced to sacrifice much much more than we do now. Let's work to gain added respect of the parents, rather than fight with them. We are, after all, servants for God's sake. And let's remember too that the teachers are the "publicity departments", the "symbols" of the schools. Let's have the attitude of one teacher who said recently when talking about teacher strikes in Grand Rapids—"My contract is with God!"

There are many bright spots in P.R. education. We have never had more capable and well trained teachers than we have now. The Lord is blessing us with numerical growth. We have material prosperity. In recent years Covenant, Lynden, Hull, and



"...Our schools are Christian, e.g., having to do with Christ, with Christ Jesus. They are centered around Christ! They are devoted to Christ! There is nothing there that is unrelated to Christ, or that is related in some other way than being on its knees to Him! For the message of Scripture: God glorified in Christ! Man's whole duty, according to the same Scripture, is: fear God by believing on Christ, and obey God by bowing the knee to the Lord Jesus.

Such teaching is the task of the Christian schoolteacher. It is work, hard work—by the sweat of your face. God demands it; the Boards demand it; the parents demand it. *The work of the teacher is not so much marking papers, as it is teaching Scripture thus.*" *Reformed Education*, p. 37, by Rev. David Engelsma

others have *added* teachers with full support of the societies. Hope just recently decided to go ahead with a ten room satellite school. Those of you who were at the meeting can witness to the faith in God shown by the members present. God has blessed us too with the Federation—we have our workshops, our new materials, our mini-courses. There is talk of teacher training under Protestant Reformed instructors.

But the future will not be easy for the Protestant Reformed Schools in America. Prof. H. Hanko wrote in the Sept 1, 1975 issue of the *Standard Bearer* (p. 469) in his article “Christian Schools and the Law” the following:

“Hence if we soberly evaluate recent trends, we ought to be able to see that storm clouds are gathering on the horizons of history, and that presently the storm will break in all its fury against the church and against our covenant schools. What ought we to do? First of all, we ought to condemn sharply such practices of the government at every opportunity. Secondly, we ought to be doubly thankful for our schools, and we ought to support them with every means at our disposal as long as the Lord gives them to us. And finally, we ought to prepare now for the evil days which are soon to come. We ought to work while it is yet day, ere the night cometh in which no man can labor.”

In a very real sense, we teachers are the schools. We can't be content to blame parents or the school society when the conviction is not present. We are, with all that is in us, to live in the knowledge that God's promise is sure, and with renewed zeal we can go forward in conviction of heart that His will will be done through our schools. May this Convention be an instrument through which we may be strengthened and encouraged in our work.

I close with a final quote from *Reformed Education*, page 88, concerning our calling as teachers:

“But it is God's work. Here, Christian teachers and parents rest. The covenant is God's. The covenant and the covenant promises are gracious. They depend on no man. God makes covenant children; God brings them to spiritual manhood; God works in them to will and to do the life and labor of the Kingdom.

Therefore Christian teachers, like the parents in whose place we stand, we ought to work praying nothing doubting. Jehovah, God of the covenant in the Lord Jesus, save the covenant children, and glorify Thy name through them.”

TEACHING THE IDEA OF THE "LAST TIME" IN CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

by Mr. Peter Vander Schaaf

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Contemporary history is a period often neglected in our teaching. This is true, I suppose, because it is chronologically last. Those things that are chronologically earlier, like the Revolution in American history or the French Revolution in world history, are taught in the fall when our energy is greatest and when the school year stretches out before us, seemingly an endless length of time. By May we begin to realize that time is growing short, and that we must hurry if we hope to make it to World War II. June usually comes and goes with contemporary history having received only a lick and a promise.

Contemporary history ought not to be so neglected. It is the period of history in which both we and our students are called to do the work of Christ's church and live as pilgrims and strangers. Some understanding of the contemporary situation is essential to that calling. Also, God's counsel has continued to unfold. Those things which God has foretold concerning the last times appear clearly to anyone who is observant. The child of God who is a student must learn to recognize those signs of the times. He must learn to see in the age in which he lives, the truth of the statement found in I John 2:18, "Little children, it is the last time."

It is, then, necessary for the covenant child to understand what is meant by the term "last time" and to recognize basic characteristics of the present age in order for him to see the fulfillment of Scripture's prophecies. He must be able to see the signs of Christ's coming in the age in which he lives.

We have to begin with a definition of terms. The last time is that age between Pentecost and the final day of judgement. During this age Christ sits at the right hand of the Father and prepares all things for the appearance of His kingdom. In the last time God pours His Spirit out into the hearts of His people and dwells among them. The people of God see by faith that the types and shadows, the prophets have all been fulfilled in Christ. Our risen Lord now reigns in heaven and from there gathers, defends, and preserves His church. All that remains is the gathering in of the last of God's people and the final deliverance of the church through the judgement of the world.

Contemporary history is less easily defined. It cannot be taken to be that history that has taken place during our lifetimes. That is different for each one of us. History is not as precise as we would like it to be in its trends and directions, and so we must accept a certain amount of ambiguity in any attempted periodization. I think that it would be sufficient for our purposes to say that contemporary history begins when the elements or problems that exist in the world today first take visible shape.¹ Some of these elements are: industrialization and advanced technology, scientific or rational social and economic planning on the part of governments, the decline of Europe and the development of a world wide politics. We will say that contemporary history begins with the Industrial Revolution of the late nineteenth century.

When we teach contemporary history, as with all of our teaching, we must use Scripture often. Protestant Reformed teachers must be able to explain to their students the specific things that characterize the last time and the things that are characteristic of the contemporary period. Our students must learn that if they are to understand the present age, they must begin with Scripture.

Scripture gives us several characteristics of the last times. First, during the last time men will hate God and His church. We find this in several texts. Matthew 24:9-12 reads,

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

With this hatred of God and His people we must include the apostasy of which the Scripture informs us in I Timothy 4:1-2. We read there,

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron;...”

In Matthew 24:24-25 Christ warns the church,

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible they will deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.”

That brings us to the second point. During the last times anti-christs will arise. This we see in I John 2:18.

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that anti-christ shall come, even now are there many anti-christs; whereby we know that it is the last time.”

The idea of the anti-christ is one that our students should well understand. We cannot now give an exposition of the several texts that refer to anti-christ. For now Revelation 13 will be enough. You may want to refer to that chapter. We see there that the anti-christ will have great authority and power over men, and that he receives his power from the devil. We read that he will blaspheme God and put himself in the place of God by receiving worship of all men. The anti-christ will perform lying wonders. He will demand obedience and place his mark upon all. Those who refuse the mark will have no right to buy or sell. They will have no place on the earth. The anti-christ will receive power when his head, the head “as it were wounded to death” is healed. In other words, the anti-christ is held back, restricted until the Lord’s appointed time. But until then the spirit of anti-christ will be in the world. There will be men and nations throughout the last time who will attempt to do what the anti-christ will finally accomplish. The spirit of anti-christ opposes God and seeks for itself a dominion over the hearts and minds of men. It seeks a dominion in which men will marvel at the power and wisdom of the one who can work wonders, and will obey.

Third, God will gather His church and at the same time judge the nations until the time appointed for the coming of the beast. This is evident in the apostle John's vision of the four horsemen in Revelation 6. These four horsemen ride throughout the world until the day of anti-christ in order to foil the work of the old dragon, Satan, who would give all authority to the beast. You remember that the vision of the horsemen consisted of the riders of the white horse, the red horse, the black horse, and the pale horse. By the rider of the white horse, the Word of God goes out conquering and to conquer. Those ordained to life are called to life, those to death given over to death. These revile God, devise heresies and cultic doctrines, despise God's people. They harden themselves and seek the false security of an earthly kingdom. By the red horse the nations are afflicted by war and rumors of war. Nations are pitted against each other, and thereby men receive God's judgement on their pride and covetousness. For example, Vietnam and Cambodia presently war with each other. Vietnam, once again united, is strong enough to assert itself over its old enemies. The victims are the Cambodian people. Iraq and Iran are fighting because Iraq seeks to avenge old grudges and because it seeks power among the Middle East nations. The rider of the black horse creates economic imbalance² —the difference between rich and poor men, rich and poor nations. Men are moved by envy to hate, kill, steal, and make war. Societies are torn (or motivated) by class hatred and nations war to take from each other. By way of example, the poor nations of our day band together in the United Nations, the Organization of African States, or the Non-Aligned Nations Conference and berate the industrial powers for "imperialism" and "racism" and demand for themselves a more equal share of the world's abundance. The pale horse reaps the harvest of death and feeds hell who follows after him. His tools are war, hunger, the beasts of the earth, and natural disasters. This rider inflicts God's judgement on man's sin. He cuts man down who would otherwise increase in wickedness and hatred for God and His church. The most recent example of the work of this horseman is the earthquake in Algeria which is reported to have caused the death of 20,000 people, injured 50,000 and left 250,000 homeless.

In summary, the last time is the era in which the spirit of anti-christ will manifest itself. Men will hate God and follow every evil thought. Nations will rise to seek dominion and the wealth of other nations. Anti-christs will attempt to take God's

place as the objects of faith and obedience. These efforts God will foil until His appointed time. The Word will go out and God's people will be gathered. War, envy and strife will divide men and nations. Death will cut short the sin of men and will fill their cups of iniquity in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

I think it is worthwhile to discuss briefly the problems involved in using Scripture in the teaching of history. Two things must be avoided. The first danger is that Scripture is held to be an authoritative guide in the study of history, but only in its intent—that which concerns the salvation and walk of the people of God, not in the specific content of Scripture's prophesy concerning the last time. As an example of what I mean, I refer you to an article in the book *A Christian View of History?*, edited by George Marsden and Frank Roberts (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1975). The article is by Prof. Marsden. It is entitled, "A Christian Perspective for the Teaching of History." Under the section entitled "Our Knowledge of God's Actions in History" Marsden explains that we know that God acts in history and that there will be a final day of judgement. But that is about all that we can know. Marsden writes,

We know first of all that God is our creator and that he acts in history. He is not merely a first principle of a transcendent abstraction, but a personal God who has decisively entered into and changed human history. We know of God's actions particularly in the history of redemption recorded in Scripture and centering in Christ. We know also that God will continue his redemptive work through the workings of the Holy Spirit in the church, and hence that the highest value and the most meaningful experience for men is knowing and loving God. We know also that human history will end in judgment. We can say therefore that there is meaning in the most fundamental developments in history and that there is a general progression defined by the actions of God in our history. However, to say that there is meaningful general progression does not necessarily mean that there is steady progress (in the sense of improvement). Men's own sinful actions often work against the purposes of God. We cannot say with any assurance, therefore, that the world is generally getting better (an implicit assumption in almost all standard histories, which almost glorify change): nor can we assume that things are generally getting worse. All we do know is that God has worked in our history and is continuing to work, but outside of biblical revelation we do not know clearly his precise purposes in permitting particular historical developments. ³

Now it is true that we cannot know precisely what God's purpose is in permitting particular historical developments. But it is necessary to believe that God has told us in His Word those things that are going to happen and that are significant for the church of Christ. The Scripture gives us an overview, so to speak, of the New Dispensation. It explains how history will move up until the final judgement. If we do not believe this, then the entire book of Revelation as well as important parts of the Gospels and of the Epistles lose their significance. The Christian history teacher must reflect in his work, the faith that Scripture has given the church the basic elements of the New Dispensation.

The second danger to be avoided is that of reading isolated historical events into the Scriptural prophesies. For instance, in a comic book which is supposed to make the book of Revelation plain to young readers, Hal Lindsey reads into the description of the first woe of Revelation 9 the prophesy of the development of the modern war helicopter. The author of *Haley's Bible Handbook* claims to find in Revelation the prophesy of the invention of gunpowder. Both this approach to Scripture and the one described above destroy most of the importance of God's prophetic Word for the church. It must be understood, and we must teach our students, that God's Word gives to the church, as she exists in every century of the New Dispensation, that which she needs to know in order to be faithful to her calling, and to watch for the coming of Christ.

Admittedly, it is not easy work to apply the Scripture to our teaching of history. Part of the problem is that almost all history books have a secular viewpoint. These portray the history of the modern world as the history of progress—progress in terms of technological advance, improved standards of living, and increased cooperation among the nations. We must work hard to clear ourselves of this bias. It can be accomplished with a thorough knowledge of Scripture and with wide reading in those authors who do attempt to give a Christian interpretation of events. We have to use our discernment even with most of these, but there are several that are worthwhile. One of these is *How Shall We Then Live?* by Francis Schaeffer which offers a Christian evaluation of the philosophy of each age of the New Dispensation. Schaeffer emphasizes the modern period. There are two books by Jacques Ellul that are worth reading. *The Betrayal of the West* (Seabury Press, New York, 1978) explains the importance of the Christian tradition in Western civilization and

devastating effects of the denial of that tradition. *The New Demons* (Seabury Press, New York, 1975) portrays the religious nature of our ostensibly secular culture. Ellul explains what are the gods of our day and what things are accepted as infallible authorities by contemporary man.

I will state the basic elements of contemporary history in six categories. Certainly no claims to exclusive authority are made for this list. Each teacher should use it simply as a guide.

The first element is the decline of Europe and the appearance of a world-wide politics. Beginning with the outbreak of World War I, and obviously so since World War II, Europe has lost the deciding role in world politics that she has held since the Renaissance. Since World War II there has existed, first, a bi-polar world with its centers in Washington D.C. and in Moscow. This has given way to a multi-polar world with several foci. These foci are nations and national blocks with economic or military strength, or both. The most important are the United States, the Soviet Union and Soviet Block, China, Western Europe, and the Middle East, Arab nations. None of these dominate others. None are self-sufficient. Each is dependent on some of the others for security and for stable economic growth.

For example, the European Economic Community has only token military strength, but it is an important source of capital and technology for communist and for Third World nations. Its power is economic. But here also the giant has clay feet. Europe is heavily dependent on OPEC (the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) for its oil and increasingly dependent on the Warsaw Pact nations for trade. Consequently, it must tread lightly in the turbulent Middle East, and Europe frets at the renewal of Soviet-American rivalries as detente wears thin. The Soviet Union is primarily a military power. It appears increasingly able to dominate the small nations on its borders and to exert its influence in Africa and the Middle East. But the Soviets seem to move in small advances, possibly to avoid a strong American reaction. The Soviet leadership realizes that another arms race would severely strain their economy and their technology. The Soviet Union depends on imported grain to feed its population and on Western technology for further development of its industry and, we read in the papers, of its military hardware.

The second element is the rise of the Asian and African nations. This has its roots in the imperialism of the nineteenth century. Peoples with ancient and proud cultures were

subjugated by European powers. The subject peoples learned that they had to abandon or radically alter their traditional ways of life if they hoped to throw off foreign domination. They learned to adopt western ways in order to compete with western nations. Typically, these nations, classified as underdeveloped or Third World nations, have adopted western technology, industrial organization, methods of economic and social development and control, and western military techniques. They have largely reflected western ideals of freedom and democracy as unworkable in a time when rapid industrial expansion is needed or as out of step with their needs for national self assertion. Cuba is one example; Vietnam is another. The Peoples' Republic of China is the prototype of the backward Asian nation that threw off foreign influences, achieved internal order, and made rapid economic gains under communism.

The third element is the ideological struggle between communist nations and the western democracies. This has been muted somewhat since the days of detente, but it is still very real. Another way to state the idea would be that there is a struggle for control of the aspirations of men and for the economic and political power that goes with that control. Democracy grew up in nations with liberal traditions, including a strong feeling for the rights of the individual. Both democracy and capitalism have needed a strong middle class and long periods of relative internal peace. Not every nation has been able to meet these conditions. On the other hand, communism has appealed to less developed nations. Some of the reasons for this are: the communist giants, the Soviet Union and China, have achieved remarkable gains in education and in social equality, they have brought about industrial advances at rates much greater than the capitalist nations. The communist program offers a coherent plan for social and economic development. Finally, the Soviet Union and China have, until recently, avoided the opprobrium of imperialism. They have been able to present themselves as the friends of oppressed peoples.⁴ In short, communism has appealed to the need of Third World nations for rapid economic and social advance, unity, and national pride. This appeal has been strengthened by the apparent inability of the western powers to protect their interests and the prestige of their ideals in their rivalry with the Soviet Union.

Let me illustrate that last point. In 1975 the Soviet Union used Cuban surrogate forces to overcome the American backed faction in Angola. Since then there has been an increased

presence of Cuban and East German troops in southern Africa and Ethiopia, but the United States has not responded with any effort of its own (in the form of a propaganda campaign, increased aid to allies, offers of aid to potential friends). In the Middle East the Soviet Union exerts an increasingly powerful influence. The Soviets have invaded Afganistan, backed an invasion of South Yemen (an American friend) by North Yemen, and recently signed a military aid treaty with Syria. Our allies in that area become nervous as American influence wains. Third World nations observe and associate the United States with weakness, the Soviet Union with strength.

Our students must not be taught to identify the cause of the democratic nations with the cause of Christ. Nor must they learn to identify democracy and capitalism with truth. The point is simply that the church of Christ has been able to live and preach in those nations with more liberal traditions. Communist countries have at best tolerated the church and, at worst, tried to drive her out of existence. The spread of communism represents a threat to the peace of God's people in many parts of the world.

The fourth element of the modern world is the adoration given to technology and the state. It is not exaggerating to say that throughout the world, these are the gods of our age.⁵ By technology is meant here any effort to control and exploit creation as well as the regulation of social and economic activities to specific goals. The state is that governing authority which organizes, coerces, motivates, and propagandizes society. The authority and activity of the modern state is characterized by an all comprehensiveness. It can and does direct entire populations to the goals set by the ruling group. This is as true of the democratic nations as of the totalitarian governments.

For example, in Soviet Russia income levels are regulated in order to maintain a relative equality of wealth compared to the capitalist nations. All citizens are declared to be equal before the law. The spirit of all education, from the day care center to the university, emphasizes cooperation in service to society and the state. All must work together for the good of the people. Dissenters from this faith are decisively dealt with. I recently read in the weekly magazine *National Review* (July 11, 1980), that the daughters of a Russian couple that had just converted to the Baptist faith were kidnapped by the KGB (the Soviet intelligence service) and sent to an orphanage. After an escape they were returned. Their parents were separated from the other children and the mother sent to a labor camp. Their only crime

was an active faith. 8 In our country education stresses social acclamation. "We must respect the rights of others" read a poster that I saw in a classroom of a public school. Every classroom in the school had signs that said much the same thing. Our income tax and welfare systems are meant to create as much economic equality as is politically feasible. Citizens are instructed in several federal laws that evil consists in social and economic inequality. Affirmative action programs exalt equality over merit, and justice. Christian schools are increasingly suspect as holdouts of racism and must more frequently resist the efforts of the federal government to impose its definition of equality on them.

Technology and the state are held to be the sources, the givers, of salvation. Technology will cure diseases, end shortages, improve living standards, make life good. The state will remove every inequality, end all poverty, stop every injustice. In our day, every problem is a problem for scientific study and, it is expected, will be solved politically.

The analogy with religion can be carried further. Industry and the demands of commerce regulate time and the cycle of life more rigidly than any liturgical calendar. We see in several nations that national leaders are adored as gods. This is true of Lenin in the Soviet Union. In China the works of Mao Tse-tung were meditated upon and exegeted like a scripture. The national holiday is a time set aside in every modern nation to honor the nation or state. May Day and the Fourth of July are both examples.

The October, 1980 issue of *National Geographic* has in it an article on the small, communist nation of Albania. The article is entitled "Albania, Alone Against the World", and it illustrates the point that national leaders and the state begin to replace God as the objects of worship in modern life. The article states in one place,

Albania's new generation knows only atheism. Marxist-leninist faith replaces religious faith. Enver Hoxha's (the Albanian dictator) books, serialized in newspapers, quoted on the radio, gleaned for slogans, serve as a New Testament. Hoxha is hailed as a messiah—infinately wise, farsighted, and benevolent, but also implacable toward his foes.

Living apart from his people in a heavily guarded compound off Fallen Heroes Boulevard, and riding in a curtained Mercedes, Enver Hoxha is omnipresent. His portrait looks down from walls everywhere, even from truck and tractor. His name is carved on hillsides in letters hundreds of feet high. His birthplace...is a national shrine. (p. 554)

The fifth element of contemporary history has to do with those things which are regarded in our age as infallible authorities. No man has ever lived his life without some reference point or some guide. No society can exist without a standard on which to make judgements. Since the Scripture is no longer regarded as authoritative in a formerly Christian nation, and since other cultures have given up their traditional values, the contemporary world has turned to other points of reference. These are science and history.⁷

Both science and history are used to justify, to make legitimate. History makes legitimate the state and its policies. It is used to show the progression of events culminating in the present. It justifies the actions of the state which are always progressive and in line with the trend of things. Those who oppose the state oppose history. They are "reactionary." History glorifies the dizzy heights of progress that the world has attained through technology. Science gives us the facts. It tells us that only human observation and human judgement are reliable. All other sources of knowledge are myth. Something is true if it can be seen, proved, or is rational. Anything else is illusory.

Jacques Ellul writes in *The New Demons* that science and history "tell men of their origin, justify the present, and assure the future."⁸ Together they inform our values and our goals. They admit of no other authority. Science and history tell us that what is better than what has been, and that the difference between right and wrong is really the difference between what works and what is ineffective. They tell us, for example, that population growth ought to be controlled, that all men must be economically equal if any real equality is to be achieved, that children may be killed before birth without incurring guilt. To oppose these things is to buck the trend of history. It is to be backward. Science and history assure us that if we continue to trust technology and continue to have faith in the state, we will achieve heaven on earth.

The sixth element is the falling away of the church. In our time this manifests itself in a division between the spiritual deadness of modernism and the false life of unbiblical revival. Denominations that previously held to Reformed or Lutheran confessions now allow their theologians to deny Christ's divinity or the infallibility of Scripture. As a consequence, there is nothing to preach, and spiritual life wanes. Churches stand empty or waste their remaining energies on social programs.

Those who feel that something is wrong turn to the radio ministers or, at best, to the arminian fundamentalism of Billy Graham. The emphasis is on being "born again" or "coming under the blood." One's life is made full and his problems solved when he accepts Jesus as his savior, but few talk of the repentance from sin and a sanctified walk. Some turn to cults. Jim Jones and his group represent the most bizarre of these. The more traditional Mormons are one of the fastest growing cults in the world.

The Roman Catholic world also seems to be dividing over the issues between modern, liberal trends and the traditional instincts of the pope. We should not be fooled by John Paul II. He has called American youth back to spiritual values, and he discouraged the theology of revolution of the South American bishops. But he has also re-affirmed clerical celibacy to the African clergy. He has instructed Dutch Catholics to pray more regularly to Mary. And he deposed the German theologian Hans Küng largely for his questioning of the importance of the priesthood. John Paul's revival is that of traditional catholicism. It is a renewal of idolatry.

In summary, we see that in the contemporary age nations vie with each other for security and prosperity, for power and for national preeminence. There is war and rumor of war. At the same time all realize that a general war would destroy what every nation seeks. Cooperation is observed mainly in the breach, but remains the spirit of the age. In modern society it is assumed that science will reveal every truth, and the state solve every problem. The gospel is seldom heard in all the preaching that is done. Men are called good or evil on the basis of their willingness to serve social policies that are set by the state. In all of this, our students must learn to recognize the signs of the times.

If history has any use at all for the covenant child, it is to help him live his life in service to God. In the study of history the student must improve his ability to say no to the world and to sin and say yes to God. The covenant child must learn wisdom as Revelation 13:18 counts wisdom. The verse reads, "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six."

If we Protestant Reformed history teachers do our work as it should be done, the covenant student will learn to pray with greater understanding, "Come, Lord Jesus. Yea, come quickly."

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- 3 George Marsden and Frank Roberts eds., **A Christian View of History?** (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 38.
- 4 Barraclough, p. 222.
- 5 Jacques Ellul, **The New Demons** (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975).
- 6 William F. Buckley, **National Review** 32, (July 11, 1980): 822.
- 7 Ellul.
- 8 *ibid.*

"...In the school which the students judged to have the highest level of operational spiritual clout, there was wide student agreement that the most important factor in making theirs a *Christian* high school was the personal interest in and availability of teachers to individual students, especially before, after, and outside of class, and before and after school. Conversation with the faculty in this school was marked by clear articulation and broad agreement, from the most hard-nosed academic English teacher as well as from the most non-academic vocational skills teacher, that they were engaged in shaping productive, committed citizens of God's Kingdom and that their subject matter, both in its mastery and in its interpretation, was *instrumental* to that shared primary goal.

"In contrast, the Christian high school judged by its students to have the least spiritual clout, students unanimously agreed that their teachers did indeed consistently talk about the relationship of the Christian faith to their subject matter in the classroom. But they also agreed that it wasn't catching on among the students primarily because the teachers showed no real interest in them personally outside the classroom, and they believed their teachers clearly demonstrated this disinterest by seldom being available to and personally approachable outside of the formal classroom setting."

quoted from *Christian Home and School*, March, 1980.

"Spiritual Clout in our Christian High Schools—Who Has it? What Controls It?"

by Dr. Dennis Hoekstra, Executive Director of the Barnabas Foundation

JOHN CALVIN ON THE QUESTION OF NATURAL LIGHT

One of the important doctrines maintained by Reformed believers is the doctrine of natural light—i.e. what does natural man know in his sin-darkened state?

Article 4, Canons III-IV, says,

There remain, however, in man since the fall, the glimmerings of natural light, whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the differences between good and evil, and discovers some regard for virtue, good order in society, and for maintaining an orderly external deportment. But so far is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God, and to true conversion, that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil. Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and holds it in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God.

More than fifty years earlier Calvin had written concerning this same doctrine in his exposition of John 1:9-10, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."

The following is the exposition of John Calvin.

"The Evangelist was not contrasting the true light with a false; he wanted to differentiate Christ from all others lest any should think that He was what is called light in common with angels or men. The difference is that heavenly and earthly light has only a derivative brightness; but Christ is light, reflecting from Himself and through Himself and thence shining brightly upon the whole world. There is no other source or cause of its brightness anywhere. And so he calls Him the true light whose own nature is to be light.

"Which lighteth every man. The Evangelist emphasizes this that we may learn that Christ is the light from the effect which each of us feels in himself. He could have argued more subtly that inasmuch as Christ is eternal light, He has native and underived brightness. But instead, he recalls us to the experience we all have. For, since Christ makes us all partakers of His brightness, it must be acknowledged that to Him alone accords strictly the dignity of being called light. For the rest, the verse is

commonly explained in one of two ways. Some limit the universal term to those who, begotten again by the Spirit of God, are made partakers of the life-giving light. Augustine uses the simile of a schoolmaster who, if his is the only school in the town, will be called the master of all even though many do not attend his school. Therefore, they regard this phrase relatively: all are enlightened by Christ, since none can boast that he has obtained the light of life otherwise than through His grace. But as the Evangelist mentions in general 'every man coming into the world', I prefer the other meaning—that beams from this light are shed upon the whole race of men, as I said before. For we know that men have this unique quality above the other animals, that they are endowed with reason and intelligence and that they bear the distinction between right and wrong engraven in their conscience. Thus there is no man to whom some awareness of the eternal light does not penetrate. But, since fanatics eagerly seize on this verse and twist it into saying that the grace of illumination is offered to all without distinction, let us remember that it is only referring to the common light of nature, a far lowlier thing than faith. For no man will penetrate into the kingdom of God by the cleverness and perspicuity of his own mind; the Spirit of God alone opens the gate of heaven to His elect. Moreover, we must remember that the light of reason which God imparted to men has been so darkened by sin that scarcely a few meagre sparks still shine unquenched in this intense darkness or rather dreadful ignorance and abyss of errors.

"He was in the world. He accuses the men of ingratitude in that they were, so to say, voluntarily blinded; blinded in such a way that they did not know how the light they enjoyed was caused. And this is true of every age. Even before Christ was manifest in the flesh he revealed His power everywhere. Therefore those daily effects ought to correct men's sluggishness; for what could be more unreasonable than to draw water from a running stream and never think of the stream it flows from? Accordingly, the world cannot plead ignorance as a legitimate excuse for not knowing Christ before He was manifest in the flesh. For it came from slackness and a sort of malignant dulness in those who always had Him present in His power. The sum of it is that Christ was never so absent from the world that men ought not to have been awakened by His rays and to have looked up to Him. Whence it follows that they are guilty."

(quoted from *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries*,
St. John, p. 14-16)

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)
Teacher's Manual for Ancient World History (1977)
Suffer Little Children (Bible manuals 1,2 &3)
Workbooks for *Suffer Little Children* (at a cost)
Science Notes — Unit on Water

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 VI. The Crusades
(Units IV and V are in the process of being completed and should soon be available.)
Unit IV. England and the Middle Ages
Unit V. France in the Middle Ages

* * * * *

"There can be therefore no true education without moral culture and no true moral culture without Christianity. The very power of the teacher in schoolroom is either moral or it is a degrading brute force. But he can show the child no other moral basis for it than the Bible."

R. L. Dabney

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