

PERSPECTIVES IN COVENANT EDUCATION

ARTICLES

Rearing Covenant Children
for Life in the End-Time

Educational Pluralism:
A Threat or an Ally

Sing ye Praise with Understanding

One Heaping Cup of Love;
Mix Well with Firmness
and Understanding

Promotion and Retention

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

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

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BACKGROUND BRIEFS

by Agatha Lubbers

The spring issue of the 1982-83 publishing season arrives a bit later than we wish for it to arrive. We hope that you missed it and that you have not given up hope. Our intention is to publish three issues a year and you have a right to expect *Perspectives* three times each year. With this issue of *Perspectives* we fulfill this commitment. The editor-in-chief assumes the full responsibility for the tardiness of this issue.

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One of the continuing problems that every magazine has is that it needs manuscripts if the periodical is to be published. One has no periodical without material and manuscripts. We obtain material for publication because we directly contact and solicit manuscripts from writers or we republish materials that have previously appeared in print. The latter we hesitate to do because we believe that the magazine should be a medium to publish fresh and current writing. *As editor-in-chief, I issue an urgent call for manuscripts.* Writing is a difficult but rewarding discipline. Teachers, parents, and friends of Christian education are hereby encouraged to submit manuscripts for publication.

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The issue this time contains several articles that are current in their importance. One of these is the article by Rev. David Engelsma, "Rearing Covenant Children for Life in the End-Time." This article was a speech delivered by the pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois, to the teachers assembled in the South Holland Protestant Reformed Christian School for the annual Protestant Reformed Teachers' Convention during the fall of 1982.

Another article is one written by the editor. This article was given first as a speech to those gathered for a dinner supporting Protestant Reformed Christian education in South Holland, Illinois.

Eunice Kuiper and Candace Hoeksema are sisters and both have an interest in Protestant Reformed Christian Education. Eunice Kuiper no longer is a full-time teacher but often serves in the position of substitute teacher. She writes from her perceptions as a classroom teacher. Candace Hoeksema teaches in the intermediate grades in the Protestant Reformed Christian School, South Holland, Illinois.

At this time of the year we think of promotion and retention. For this reason we decided to reprint an article that appeared first in the *Reflector* of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Christian School. Mr. Lamm Lubbers, principal, is the author of this article.

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God must be the major premise of every textbook. God must be the great assumption in every classroom. God must be the Person Whose handiwork is investigated in every laboratory. This means, of course, not some vague or distorted idea of God, but the living and true God, the God of the Bible. "In the beginning God" must be the watchword of all truly Christian education. In textbook, classroom, and laboratory the student will learn to think God's thoughts after Him. Unlike the student in a non-Christian institution, he will learn that human thought is never really creative in the strict sense, but always derived from the prior thought of God — that human "creative" thought is really the unfolding, in man's intellect, of God's eternal decree by which He has, from all eternity, fore-ordained all that comes to pass in time. What is new to the mind of man is as old as eternity to the mind of God.

"What is Christian Education?"

J.G. Vos

Rearing Covenant Children for Life in the End-Time

by Rev. David Engelsma

Introduction

My esteemed co-workers in the great calling of rearing the children of Christ!

My original intention, upon being asked to address you on the instruction and preparation of covenant children for life at the end of the ages, was to marshall the evidence that the end is near, in order to impress on us all that the task of Christian education is urgent.

There is the evidence from the brute creation: its multi-voiced groanings in earthquake, volcano, and storm.

There is the evidence from society: the abounding of its lawlessness; its love of pleasure; its thorough-going man-centeredness, in which the number, 666, is writ large.

There is the evidence from the nations. There are wars and rumors of wars. At the same time, there is the nations' susceptibility to, and deep yearning for, oneness and the peace and prosperity that oneness can provide. Thus, the nations can be delivered from the terror of mutual, mass destruction. Thus, they can share the various resources of the earth, if not equitably, at least so as to ensure survival. Thus, the "nobler" aspirations of mankind for brotherhood can be realized. In the language of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13, the turbulent seas throw up the Beast. In this connection, there is evidence from political developments — socialism, communism, totalitarianism, and the welfare state; evidence from economics; evidence from international alliances; and more.

There is the evidence from this world's thought and philosophy, both educated, e.g., evolution, and popular, e.g., that the sole standard of human morality is man.

Not least, there is the evidence from the church. There is apostasy. There is the gradual fixing of the church's duty, and construing of her message, as a duty, and message, concerning earthly justice and peace in the here-and-now. There are the alliances of the churches and religions, not only the mergers, but also the co-operation in what is

considered the church's really important task. The Beast that is like a lamb — the false prophet — of Revelation 13 serves the first Beast — Antichrist — and teaches all men and nations to worship the Beast.

On second thought, I decided not to treat the subject this way. It is not that these things, these evidences, do not bear on the appropriate and vital subject. They do. Scripture predicted them. What our Belgic Confession declares in Article 5, in support of its doctrine of the Bible's authority, holds true here: "the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are fulfilling." Scripture predicted them for us to recognize, as signs of the end; and Scripture predicted them so that Protestant Reformed parents, teachers, and preachers would rear covenant children with some degree of urgency.

Nevertheless, I will not come to you in this way. For one thing, world events are always subject to personal interpretation: what one regards as a loud footfall of the Antichrist, another may view as merely the personal folly of a president or judge.

For another thing, the kind of approach that I have sketched is subject to the warning, that the saints have always noted disasters and disobedience as harbingers of the end of the world in the very near future. Amidst the uproar of his day, Luther prophesied the end, if not quite in his lifetime, then soon thereafter. I myself heard a minister suggest the end in 20 years — 30 years ago.

Also, incitement to an urgent task by way of a vivid representation of the evils in the world has a way of dissipating with the good food and enjoyable fellowship of the banquet that very evening. It is difficult to keep this stimulation. The shenanigans at the U.N. are far removed from the daily routine in South Holland, Loveland, and Grand Rapids.

In addition, the call to Christian educational arms with the alarums of the evils of our time can so easily make Christian education a grim and gloomy business. There are Christian schools set up on account of socialism, communism, and liberalism, where the teachers are cold-eyed; the teaching is an almost anxious preparation of children for the impending conflict; and the gym classes, a training of boys and girls to handle rifles and grenades. This is not what the raising of covenant children should be.

Let us adopt a different viewpoint, that of Holy Scripture in I Corinthians 7:29-31: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they pos-

sessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.” This approach is not less radical, but more radical; it does not make life today less serious, but more serious; it does not make teaching less effective, but more effective.

LIFE IN THE END-TIME

The apostle is concerned in the passage with earthly life — the earthly life of believers and their children. He refers to several of the most basic of human activities and relationships. Marriage is mentioned first: “they that have wives. . . .” This is an institution that is fundamental for church and society. It is a relationship of crucial significance for the married person himself and every other aspect of his life. Included are the home and the family.

Next, he refers to the entire human effort to enjoy pleasure, comfort, security, and success; on the national and international level, this is the endeavor for peace and prosperity: “they that rejoice. . . .” He has earthly pleasure in mind. In itself, you understand, this is innocent: we want a house; we try to be healthy; we like to be good at our job; we desire to sit, peacefully, of a Friday evening, in front of the fire, with a good book, without creditors banging on our door and without a toothache. The disappointment of this is the weeping of the passage — the suffering of all kinds of earthly pains: no lodging; loss of job; sickness; bills; and what not.

Third, he brings up the economic aspect of life: “they that buy. . . .” We are to think of labor; business; finances; property — the marketplace. We really did not need Karl Marx to inform us that this has a large place in the life of a man, including the Christian man.

Lest anything escape the sweep of his net, the apostle adds, “and they that use this world. . . .” The “world” here is not the wicked world of men who are enslaved by the Devil and whose culture and civilization are impressed with his mark; but it is the cosmos that God created in the beginning — the earthly creation. It is the earth, the waters, and space; it is the raw materials and the earthly products made of them; it is the various ordinances established in the creation by God. The subject is nothing less than our use of the earthly creation — any use, and all use: breathing the air; feeding the body; plowing the field; driving a car; climbing the mountains.

Besides the all-embracing reference to the activities of men in the creation, there is mention of two fundamental, earthly forms of these activities. The first is time: “the time is short.” This is the time of our own personal life. It is also the time of the existence of the world

itself — what we call history. The second is “the fashion of this world.” This is the way in which creation is set up for human life and the way it appears. Our world is such a world that there *must* be marrying; pleasure and sorrow; buying and selling; and all the rest of ordinary human life.

So, the subject is the big subject: the life of man on this big ball — the life of your students and of you yourself.

Our lives are being lived in the end-time. This is a fact, altogether apart from any and all “signs of the time,” in nature, society, and the church. It was the end-time, and Christians had to live consciously in the end-time, in the apostle’s day, almost 2000 years ago, when there was no apostasy as we see today and when there **was** no Communism. No doubt, it is true that the very end is closer **now** than then; but to say so is really to miss the point and to overlook what really makes the present time, the end-time.

Two great truths make the present, the end-time — the last days. First, the “time is short.” “The time” is the period of time from the ascension and exaltation of the Lord Jesus to His second coming; it is the history of our careering globe, *anno Domine*. This time has been shortened! From the ascension to the second coming, the line of time is a straight line. It must not, however, be thought of as a dead line, but as a taut tendon that is pulling us and the world towards the End with the greatest pressure. Everything necessary has been packed into this “time”; there is not one unnecessary, wasted moment. John expresses this by saying that Jesus “comes quickly.”

What is true of history is also true of each Christian. The time of the life of each of us has been shortened. This means more than that, really, none of us lives very long. It means that God has made the life of every one of us as short as possible, with a view to each one’s attaining to Christ and his own share in Christ’s glory. There is not a wasted moment! The life of each is just that long, as is demanded by his preparation for the End. Think of that, when you teach your children. Nor does it hurt, now and then, to remember that some of your students may never reach 50, or even 20.

The great truth here is that there is a Goal of time, towards which history and the believers are straining: the Day of the public, universal glorification of Jesus Christ the Lord and, by the mercy of God, of all who are His.

The second truth that makes the present time, the end-time, is that the fashion of this world is passing away, is perishing. The entire cosmos in its present set-up and appearance will be destroyed; it is not

going to last forever. Peter tells us when and how this will happen: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10). Since this is timed according to the Goal of time — the second coming, this will happen quickly, as soon as possible. Everything is rushing towards the destruction of the fashion of the world.

In fact, the fashion of the world is passing away continually. It is perishing right now, while we are using it and struggling to get a little chunk of it. This is true in two ways. First, God in judgment is destroying the fashion of the world. This is the deepest meaning of the pollution; the trouble in marriage and family; social strife; economic distress; war; and catastrophes in nature. Judgment is not the one, sudden stroke at the End, but an ongoing, ever-increasing act of God that culminates in the conflagration and earthquake of the End.

The other way is our own passing away from the fashion of the world. When I die, the fashion of this world passes away, for *me*. And I am always in the process of dying.

We and our children live in the end-time. We live in the end-time in A.D. 1982, just as the saints lived in the end-time in A.D. 60. We live in the end-time, whether we live in earthly peace and freedom, or in war and slavery. We live in the end-time in such a fundamental way, that the truth of it is at hand, day in and day out.

We need instruction in this. We need instruction that this is indeed the truth about our time. It is so easy to forget and ignore it. It is so easy to regard time apart from the Goal, i.e., Jesus Christ, with the result that I regard time as an opportunity for me to get a name, to become rich, or merely to live an easy life. It is so easy to view the fashion of the world as permanent and stable, for me to depend on and settle into.

We need instruction, how to live in the world in light of this awesome truth of the end-time.

It is required of Christian school teachers that they instruct the covenant children in this. You teach about the world and about life in the world. You must teach life in the world *in the end-time*. You must teach what kind of life is demanded by this, and follows from this.

This is, in face, the burden of the passage: how to live in the world, and how to use it, *in light of the end-time*. The *consequence* of the shortening of time is the concern of verse 29: "*it remaineth that. . .*"

What follows from the passing away of the fashion of the world is the concern of verse 31: "And they that use this world, as not abusing it: *for. . .*"

If I may lapse, for a moment, into the language of theology, the Word cries out, "Live eschatologically!"

THE APPROPRIATE REARING

It is striking that the kind of life demanded by the end-time, and, therefore, the appropriate rearing for life in the end-time, is not that the children abstain from immorality — rebellion, fornication, drunkenness, drugs, and the like. Paul does not say, "Since the time is short, do not fornicate, or divorce and remarry, or have an affair"; but he says, "Have a wife, as not having a wife." He does not say, "Do not steal"; but he says, "Buy, as not possessing." We may not content ourselves with admonishing the children not to be immoral.

Life appropriate to the end-time is human life that "sits loose" to the world and to every aspect of earthly life in the world. This is the explanation of the paradox: have a wife, as not having one; weep, as not weeping; buy, as not possessing. Having a wife, being comfortable, being uncomfortable, owning real estate, and every other earthly condition are of no real importance. It is not of ultimate importance whether one is married, or unmarried; whether one's earthly life is weeping or rejoicing; whether one is a "has" or a "has not"; or even whether one is a slave or a freeman, as the apostle has said in verses 21, 22.

This is the holiness of indifference to the world. It is what Calvin called "contempt. . .for the present life." Describing the Christian life, in Book III, Chapter IX, of the *Institutes*, Calvin wrote: "For there is no medium between the two things: the earth must either be worthless in our estimation, or keep us enslaved by an intemperate love of it." We must, said Calvin, "hasten to despise the world, and aspire with our whole heart to the future life."

The life that is fitting for the end of time is a life that runs the risk of being charged with carelessness towards earthly things: world-flight! other-worldliness! pie-in-the-sky Christianity! In fact, the charge is false. But you can certainly understand why those "Whose portion is below/ Who, with life's treasures satisfied/ No better portion know," as *The Psalter* puts it, raise this charge against the life of the man who takes seriously the apostle's exhortation in I Corinthians 7, and practices it.

Such a life, and such a life only, escapes the fatal danger of laying

up treasures for ourselves on earth and having our heart in the earth (Matt. 6:19, 21); of loving this present world, as did Demas (II Tim. 4:10); of having the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word in us, so that we become unfruitful (Matt. 13:22); of saving our lives and gaining the whole world, only to lose our own souls (Matt. 16:24-26).

This kind of life spares us from many destructive evils: covetousness; envy; ambition; drunkenness.

Our Great Teacher forewarned us that the danger in the end-time would be earthlimindedness. He used the object-lessons of the time of Noah and the time of Lot. What was the evil of the world before the flood and of Sodom before the fire? It was not the violence and perversion that we immediately think of. But:

They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

(Luke 17:27-30)

They were wrapped up in this world: they had wives, as having them; they rejoiced, as rejoicing; they bought, as possessing; they used this world, as abusing it.

When Jesus, in a parallel passage, Matthew 24:42ff., says, "Watch," He is saying: "Watch, that you never put too much stock in the present life."

This attitude of heart and fundamental posture of soul will show itself in sobriety and moderation in earthly life. This is a recurring theme in Calvin. The British poet, Davies, summed up the Reformed style of life in earlier days this way: "simplicity, sobriety, and measure." Holy indifference to this world is a foe of excess, luxury, and extravagance, whether in eating and drinking; in dress; in house; or in recreation. It is a foe of that which is called "abusing" (the world), in I Corinthians 7:31. Literally, it is an "overmuch-using." "Overmuch-using" is, primarily, a use of the world with one's heart set squarely on the world. Invariably, it is also an immoderate use.

Let us teach the children *this* in the end-time. This may seem strange, even paradoxical: as you teach them the world and its fashion (and you must!), you teach them to "sit loose" to the world, because

it has no ultimate worth; indeed, in itself, apart from the Goal, it is worthless, and life in it, vanity. This instruction is never so effective as it is when it comes from you, the teachers, who know the world and devote your life to instruction about the world. The students cannot so lightly dismiss this teaching coming from you, as they do when it comes from the preachers, by saying, "Well, they don't know anything about the world anyhow." As with all instruction that is effective, however, it must be seen in your life; and for that, you yourselves must believe it.

This does not make Christian education a gloomy task, but a joyful, hopeful one, even as the life of holy indifference to the world is a joyful, hopeful life.

EDUCATION WITH ETERNITY IN VIEW

The apostle of Christ is not advocating world-flight, or even carelessness of earthly life. No schoolboy may respond enthusiastically to your instruction about life in the end-time, by shouting: "Hooray! This creation and earthly life in it really do not matter; and, therefore, I need not study my math, or even go to school."

Paul does not conclude, "Have no wife"; "Do not buy"; and "Try not to use the world, or use it as little as possible." Rather, he commands: "Have a wife! Buy! Use the world!" That he intends a careful use, a heart-felt, hearty use, is plain from all the rest of his writings, including this very chapter, particularly as regards having a wife. Calvin understood this well enough. Having exhorted "contempt. . .for the present life," he continues, in the *Institutes*: "Still the contempt which believers should train themselves to feel for the present life must not be of a kind to beget hatred of it or ingratitude to God."

The command is not to flee the world, but to use it in a certain way; and this way is, not for itself, but for the Goal of it all: the Lord Christ, His coming Kingdom, and the re-fashioned world.

Into this Kingdom, we and the children whom we educate have already been translated. Our hearts are on it; and we seek it first.

The present time must usher us into eternity. We use the world in its present fashion for the sake of the world in its future fashion. All earthly things and relationships are used and enjoyed, or suffered, on behalf of the heavenly Christ. Nothing in time is permitted to deflect from eternity; and nothing in the world, to compete with Christ.

Exactly this invests the present world, and our life in it, with meaning and purpose — real significance. Even this poor, perishing

world is important, for although the fashion of it passes away, the world itself shall be re-formed in the fashion of Christ. It is eternity, the eternity of the coming Christ, that makes having a wife, weeping, rejoicing, buying, and use of the world significant. It is eternity, the eternity of the coming Kingdom of God, that makes instruction concerning this world, and life in it, significant.

We live and rear our children with a view to eternity.

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Educational Pluralism: A Threat or an Ally

by Agatha Lubbers

We are met here tonight as believers who have covenanted to support Protestant Reformed Christian Education with our love, our time, our money, and all our resources. Several vocal and active Reformed Christians advocating a philosophy of life called Pluralism have developed a carefully argued appeal that says we should most certainly support Christian Schools with our love and our time. However, they also assert that we can legitimately petition for more financial support from the state and federal government than we have received thus far in the history of the independent, non-public Christian school movement in the United States. This movement advocating a philosophy known as "Pluralism" says that now is the time for Reformed Christians and all others who support non-government schools to work for the *disestablishment* of sole and primary monetary support for monopolistic system of education known as public education. They would argue, I am sure, that a meeting and fund-raising activity, such as we enjoy here tonight, is good. We should be concerned with methods for engendering and promoting among ourselves more support for Christian Schools. But they believe we also should be attempting to find ways to retrieve the tax dollars we pay for education, so that some of these taxes come to Christian Schools. Rockne McCarthy, one of the chief advocates of Pluralism, writes in a recent *Christian Home and School* article that "There is a pressing need throughout Canada

and the United States for a more just public policy that will insure that the funds collected from everyone are distributed in a non-discriminatory fashion to all accredited schools that genuinely do 'serve all.' "

In a book published in 1981 by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., entitled *Society, State and Schools: A Case for Structural and Confessional Pluralism*, the authors Rockne McCarthy, Donald Oppewal, Walfred Peterson, and Gordon Spykman (all fellows of the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship, Calvin College) argue most enthusiastically for such conduct as I have just described. In this book the writers state that Christians committed to the cause of Christian education should work at this time for an amendment to the federal Constitution. Currently the Constitution is interpreted so that individuals have religious rights as guaranteed by the First and Fourteenth Amendments but *associations of individuals* do not have these same rights. The writers claim that now is the time to develop greater clarity regarding the nature of associations so that rights of individuals in relation to rights of different associations can be balanced. These spokesmen claim that this is the time to work toward such an amendment because Anti-abortionists and Equal Rights advocates are already in the field and "just possibly, a convergence of unrelated forces might make the amending process much more open than it has been" (p. 208, *Society, State, and Schools*).

A book published by the Christian College Consortium in 1982 entitled *Disestablishment a Second Time: Genuine Pluralism for American Schools* is essentially the manuscript of Rockne M. McCarthy, professor in the Dordt Studies Center at Dordt College. He is joined in this effort by James W. Skillen, Executive Director of the Association for Public Justice, Washington, D.C., and William A. Harper, professor of Political Science and Chairman of the Department of Political Science at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts. These proponents for pluralism write as follows:

...if justice is to be achieved for educational freedom and diversity, for parental choice and societal pluralism, then governments must assume real responsibility for shaping a just republic that is structured differently than it has been to date. . . . We are convinced that part of what justice requires is the recognition and encouragement of healthy pluralism in the public arena. Government can assume its full responsibility for public justice and for training of good citizens without having to control and favor a single public school system to the unjust disadvantage of other schools (pp. 128-129 *Disestablishment a Second Time*).

I. PLURALISM — WHAT IS IT?

Pluralism is a philosophical position held by the authors of the two books I have cited. Although the last word has not been said or written on this, these writers are forging a challenging appeal for a system of government in relationship to schools that will disestablish the public school movement and re-enfranchise the non-public schools as they were in the 17th century and the early 18th century before the days of Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann. (In order to accomplish this these writers advocate the use of the courts and litigation.)

Pluralism is a philosophical position held by many educators and theorists in Reformed circles and by scholars in Roman Catholic schools. These theorists maintain that the current policy, which locates school authority exclusively in the *State*, violates “prior rights” parents have for their children. These writers cite the pronouncements of Pope Pius XI who gave official formulation for the Roman Catholic Church to the “doctrine of multiple sources” of school sponsorship in his 1936 encyclical on “Christian Education of Youth.” Pius XI wrote, “. . . in the matter of education it is the right, or to speak more correctly, it is the duty of the State to protect in its legislation, the prior rights, already described, of the family as regards the Christian education of its offspring. . . .”

For Reformed Pluralists and Roman Catholics to have a common cause seems strange to our ears but more strange yet is the use made by these Reformed thinkers of expressions found in the “United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” which declares that “parents shall have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given their children.” They also cite the European Convention on Human Rights and Freedoms, which is even more specific: “. . . in relation to education and teaching, the state shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.”

Those who advocate the Pluralist ideology are the chief leaders of a movement that will attempt to disestablish the financial monopoly of the state schools in our country. Dr. Marion Snapper has argued in a pamphlet, “. . . our reason for saying yes to government support is that justice demands it, and the Christian School needs it.”

II. AN ILLUSTRATION OF PLURALISM IN ACTION

Let me illustrate how those who advocate pluralism think the system should operate by referring to a system of education that operates in the Netherlands.

The history of the modern Dutch educational system goes back to the 19th century. After the Reformation, education in the Netherlands was predominantly Christian. Slowly, however, it became secularized, culminating in the institutionalization of the monopolistic centralized state school system of the late 19th century. In 1840, Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer had described the root of the problem when he said in Parliament:

Parents who, with or without sufficient grounds, are convinced that the religious orientation of the teaching in a particular school is un-christian, must not, either directly or indirectly be hindered from giving their children the kind of education that they feel is necessary before God. Such coercion, I say it plainly, is intolerable and must cease. It is presumption that springs from the doctrine of the French Revolution which views the children as the property of the state (*Society, State, and Schools*, p. 142).

The pivotal issue in the theories of the Pluralists is family rights versus state control of education. This pivotal issue was to remain at the center of the dispute between the free school supporters in the Netherlands and the state school supporters for years.

In 1888 a coalition of Roman Catholics and Protestants came into power in the Dutch parliament. In 1889 the legislature placed the free schools on a basis similar to that of state schools. Although full financial parity was not yet accomplished, state schools were no longer officially assumed to be suitable for all people.

Some funds were now available for free schools but they were woefully insufficient and caused Prime Minister Abraham Kuyper to argue that the right to establish a free school was a practice available only to the rich, for only they could afford it. The school struggle continued for another thirty years until complete equity both in funds and in recognition was established.

In 1917 an amendment to the constitution of the Netherlands made it possible to implement the Primary Education Act of 1920. This Act abolished the traditional distinction between public and private schools. It also abolished the distinction between state and free education. Today *all* schools in the Netherlands are *considered to be part of the public (common) effort to provide education*. The Dutch constitution now states that the parents have the "natural right and duty" to determine the kind of schooling that their children will have. In addition, the Constitution assured financial parity between the free schools and the state schools.

The Dutch constitution states:

Private general elementary education fulfilling conditions to be imposed by law shall be defrayed from public funds according to the same standards as public education.

The present educational system in the Netherlands operates in this way: Any group of parents may form a school association providing they have at least 50 students for a city whose population is up to 50,000, or at least 100 students for a city whose population is between 50,000 and 125,000 or more. If according to state regulations there are not sufficient children to form a new school, the parents may send their children to the school of their choice in a neighboring town. The government will pay for the transportation costs. If a proposed school is approved, the government pays the entire cost of the building and its furnishings. The government also pays for lighting, heating, cleaning, books, and maintenance. Each year the school board draws up a budget that must be approved by the local authorities. (This does not include teachers' salaries. These are paid by the national government.) The yearly financial need is determined by comparison with state-run schools. If the budget is approved the city pays for all costs (pp. 142-142, *Society, State, and Schools*).

Thus, the national and local governments in the Netherlands pay equally for all schools, whether they be state or non-state.

Schools that receive financial support must meet certain conditions and standards. Government inspectors of various faiths have free access to classrooms to check on the following:

- 1/ Teacher-pupil ratios.
- 2/ Teacher certification, qualifications, and health.
- 3/ Basic curriculum design. (This means certain core subjects must be taught.)
- 4/ Building safety.
- 5/ Minimum number of classes per year for each student.

These conditions are necessary to insure proper academic and health standards and wise use of tax money.

Complete freedom remains in:

- 1/ The appointment of all personnel.
- 2/ The nature and orientation of instruction.
- 3/ Teaching methodology.
- 4/ The admission and retention of pupils.

The advocates of a form of pluralism for American schools similar to the pattern of the schools in the Netherlands claim that "it is safe to say that non-state schools in the Netherlands enjoy complete freedom in the essential matters of education." They think it significant that whereas in 1850, 73% of primary school students attended state schools, now 73% of primary students attend non-state schools.

III. THE CONCLUSION OF SPYKMAN, McCARTHY, & ASSOCIATES

Spykman, McCarthy, and allies concluded that because educational pluralism exists and works in other democratic countries such as parts of Canada, Israel, Belgium, and the Netherlands, we should attempt to change things in the U.S. so that the non-state schools in our country get a share of the financial pie.

The advocates for pluralism claim that countries like Canada, Israel, Belgium, and the Netherlands provide direct aid to independent non-state schools and yet they place no greater regulations on independent education than the regulations placed on independent education in America where no financial aid is given.

The advocates of pluralism conclude as follows:

1/ The adage that increased aid to independent education necessarily brings with it increased government control is not supported by their comparative data.

2/ Pluralism is not a utopian ideal but is a plausible and realistic goal because it works in countries like Canada, Israel, England, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

3/ Independent schools are not divisive but make unique contributions to society. They also offer strength, diversity, and healthy competition to other schools. In these and in other ways independent schools build up a culture.

4/ Independent schools in a pluralistic framework are more democratic than the present American unified and monopolistic educational system. Under the present American system this freedom cannot be realized by all, for there is only one real choice: state-run education. In this sense, say the pluralists, we are more like totalitarian Russia and other totalitarian countries than like our neighbors in the free world.

5/ Government schools do not suffer under the pluralistic view of society. The purpose of educational pluralism is not to usurp government schools, but to give all schools a fair chance in order that rich and poor alike may experience true justice and freedom in education.

Spykman, McCarthy, *et. al.* writing in *Society, State, and Schools* say,

In our vision of educational pluralism each system of schools would work out its educational ideology as freely and as clearly as it wished, with all having equal status and rights before the law. No American family, theist, nontheist, humanist, or agnostic would be denied the right to choose, without fear of economic penalty, a school most clearly reflecting its own value system (p. 135).

IV. A RESPONSE TO PLURALISM

My task tonight is not only to describe the movement advocated by McCarthy and Spykman but also to answer the movement – to react to the goals of this movement. Can we, Protestant Reformed Christians, go along with such a movement?

In order to respond properly, permit me to quote again from the article by Rockne McCarthy found in the January, 1983, *Christian Home and School*. The article entitled “Funding: The Christian School Serves All” begins as follows:

Christian Schools International and each of its member schools have a two-fold commitment. The first is to assist parents in providing a Christian education for their children. The second is a commitment to the general public, to uphold schools that are characterized by excellence in education. This double commitment stands at the heart of the argument that since “Christian schools serve all,” they ought to receive a proportional share of the public funds allocated by government for education.

This beginning to McCarthy’s article advocating public funding for Christian education signals the point to which the pluralistic ideology has led McCarthy and his allies. All schools in the Netherlands are considered to be part of the public (common) effort to provide education. The same must be true, when viewed from the pluralistic view point, for education here in the U.S.

What has happened?

Christian education is common – it is for all – it is public.

Christian schools and other non-government schools are simply public schools because they offer a public service and this entitles them to support equivalent to that given to state schools.

McCarthy asserts that, because his claim is not widely recognized, independent schools in the U.S. and certain parts of Canada are treated as second-class institutions – institutions not worthy of standing alongside government schools to receive a proportional share of public funds allocated for education.

My initial response to such an assertion is: “So What?”

The complaint of McCarthy is dangerous and self-serving. Although we know the distinction between public and private schools was not well established in our country until the middle of the 19th century – the days of Horace Mann – that distinction does exist today. It is a distinction that we ought to cherish and not complain against. The courts have indeed said that there is a form of education that they define as secular and there is a form of education that they define as religious. *For this I am glad*. What the courts meant by these terms can

certainly be debated but the terms “secular” and “religious” — terms disliked by Pluralists — do define the kind of teaching that Reformed Christians do in the Christian Schools. *Christian instruction in the nature of the case is religious instruction.* With this the pluralists like McCarthy and Spykman have no quarrel but they want religious instruction and state support too.

It is my contention that the work of the Christian School is religious in the sense that it cannot and should not be supported by public monies. Religious freedom for the school and freedom to instruct freely means freedom from the support of the State.

McCarthy and his allies wish to redefine the meaning of the terms so that Christian education and Secular education are both religious and are therefore both public because they both serve the common good. Therefore both deserve a share of the public funds.

This will never work!!

The pluralist in this way destroys the very thing that he hopes to preserve. He believes that Christian education cannot long endure if *it does not get a certain* share of the public monies. In my judgment, the Christian school will not long endure if it gets its seemingly legitimate share.

The Pluralist is right when he says that public education is not genuinely secular or irreligious but is instead a religious ideology — a state-supported religion. Richard Neuhaus has shown that the defenders of the public school admit that the public school is an expression of religious vision. In an article entitled “No More Bootleg Religion” Neuhaus quotes Sidney Mead, an American religious historian, who says,

...of necessity the state in its public-education systems is and always has been teaching religion. It does so because the well-being of the nation and the state demands this foundation of shared beliefs. . . . *In this sense the public-school system of the United States is its established church* (italics, A.L.) (*Society, State, and Schools*, p. 113).

All this is true and we have said the same thing for many years ourselves and therefore we erected our own Christian Schools. It is for this very reason that I contend that the pluralist destroys the strength and singular purpose of Christian education by his pluralist design. Although the freedom that Abraham Kuyper gained for schools might not have been accomplished except through a kind of coalition with the Roman Catholics of the Netherlands, he did not want to see the school bound by the secular state.

I am not unmoved by the desire of McCarthy and his associates.

I presume that his motivation is only financial. Financial considerations are not per se evil but can have an unwanted and unexpected result. I have seen Christian parents during the thirty years I have taught in our Christian Schools struggle to maintain schools that would and could provide an education that was soundly Reformed and at the same time academically excellent. I know what it is like to be paid extremely low wages. I am sensitive to the argument that public schools having unlimited access to state funds will outstrip the Christian School in the quality of education. I am particularly sensitive to that argument in today's world when so much education seems to depend on a complex knowledge in a computerized and mechanized world.

At the same time I see the great danger of pluralism — a danger that the advocates of the theory do not seem to want to recognize. I fear that the goals and intent of the pluralists will result in the ultimate destruction of the strength and distinctiveness of Christian education as we have learned to know it and to love it. What is that strength? It is a Covenant Christian School where Covenant parents and Christian teachers work as believers in the nurturing and rearing of the seed of the Covenant.

Christian Education, my dear friends, is *not Public Education* and it must never become such!!! If it does, the cause is lost.

Christian Education is for our children — it is not for all children in the sense that it is common. Although this may seem to make Christian education exclusive, it is that because Christian education is for those who can use it — it is for those who are children of the promise — the spiritual seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In the Christian school we must supervise the instruction. To do this we must support it financially — not the state. Scripture teaches that such is the rule.

In Deuteronomy 6:7 we read: “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children. . . .” In Ephesians 6:4 we read: “And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” The whole book of Proverbs speaks to the issue but particularly Proverbs 1:8, “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.”

Pluralists may argue that they have a Biblical case for structural and confessional pluralism in which the State and society are clearly distinguished and where all can live together separately but in peace. This peace will include the kind of tolerance that will make it possible for all kinds of schools to coexist and receive support from the state equally. This cannot be!!

This society includes Protestant Reformed parents and supporters of

Protestant Reformed Christian Schools who consider the educational task so important and so exclusive that the state cannot be asked to assist in this education by financially supporting the schools. This spells disaster. The task of rearing children and young people so that they become men and women of God is an exclusive task and is one to which we willingly give ourselves and all our resources. We do not whimper and complain because we do not get a share of the educational dollars set aside by the state for the established schools. Multimillion dollar school complexes are not good enough for our children.

We are happy to assert with these Reformed pluralists that our children are not the State's children. We agree with Groen von Prinsterer who said, "It is presumption that springs from the doctrine of the French Revolution which views the children as the property of the state."

We appreciate the efforts of Abraham Kuyper who played such a massive role in organizing an alternative school movement in the Netherlands that became a model for similar school movements here in the United States. He argued the cause of public justice and educational equity for all, regardless of who should benefit by it, be they humanists, Roman Catholics, Jews, or Calvinists. I am certain, however, that he was most interested in arguing freedom so that free Reformed Education might be the rule without intrusions by the state.

Standing on the shoulders of the freedom for which Kuyper and other Reformed men have stood we do not invite the intrusions of the state into our educational systems. Here in the U.S., in the middle of the 19th century the State transgressed the bounds set for government by God in Scriptures (cf. Rom. 13, etc.). The result of this transgression is a vast godless, humanistic educational monopoly and monolith that today fails to educate. Were we to permit ourselves to be swept along with the arguments of the Pluralists we could legitimately fear that our schools for which we have struggled hard and long would be swept along in the unstoppable tide of humanism and godlessness.

Although Pluralists claim the opposite, the cost of receiving money from the government is the eventual secularization of instruction in our schools. Rev. Engelsma in his article "The Danger of Government Funding of the Christian School" — *Perspectives*, December, 1981, sounds the warning:

Because the Christian school is religious it is constitutionally unable to accept much of the State aid that is available. To accept the aid, the Christian School would have to deny itself.

Pluralists claim that all education is religious and therefore State

money given to State schools should be given to none of the schools or should be given to all of the schools. We agree wholeheartedly that the State should not be in the business of education. Although the State claims that it is necessary to fund public education so there will be an educated citizenry, it remains true that it is not the task of the State to fund such education. Christians cannot permit this.

Consistories shall see to it that parents erect good Christian schools and hire good Christian School teachers. For this reason it is principally wrong for Christian School Associations to receive state aid or to seek such aid. The acceptance of government funding, which is principally wrong will lead to the practical problem of taking the instruction of the youth out of the control of those who should control education. We must remain completely in control of our schools.

The proponents for state aid to education think that those who oppose state aid are frozen into inactivity in this regard by an inordinate fear of state control. They claim that this fear is not substantiated by any real proof that state control follows state funding. We agree with Rev. Engelsma when he says, "We are not psychologically disordered but we are justifiably afraid because of the stark realities of life in the U.S. today. Government is a creature of God, but the State oversteps its God-ordained bounds and usurps power in every sphere."

We do not need the power of the State in the realm of education in any greater measure than we now experience it. If we accept or seek state aid, we shall surely have such greater power of the State in education.

We have seen what State aid has done in the public schools. Government support results in an environment that is hostile to the true religion. The school becomes evolutionistic, lawless, and Godless. This is Anti-Christ.

We do not have the time to cite the many examples of situations in which the state through the Courts have warned those who have attempted to seek state aid saying that such aid will result in unwarranted entanglement of the state in the affairs of religion. Past litigation of the kind proposed by McCarthy, *et. al.*, has only proved that the Court has argued against aid to non-government schools unless they could prove as in the case of aid to colleges that they were giving solely secular education. This we could never say and would never say — not even if our schools were colleges. The very stones of the buildings in which we teach would cry out against us.

It is true that in a 1975 Pennsylvania case (Meek, *et. al.*, vs. Pittinger), Justice Burger examined the establishment clause of the First

Amendment and said, "One can only hope that, at some future date, the Court will come to a more enlightened and tolerant view of the First Amendment's guarantee of the free exercise of religion thus eliminating the denial of equal protection to children in church-sponsored schools, and take a more realistic view that carefully limited aid to children is not a step toward establishing a state religion — at least while this Court sits."

Such arguments seem to give hope to the cause of the pluralists that now may be the time to seek a change in the rules concerning government funding through constitutional amendments. I cannot accept this contention.

I believe the argument remains that we must resist the encroachments of government that are certain to come with government aid for such things as buildings, teachers' salaries, books, and other instructional materials.

(For a more documented treatment of this aspect of the problem I recommend that you reread the article of Rev. Engelsma in the *Perspectives*, December, 1981.)

It would be unrealistic for us not to admit that we do join with those who correctly complain of the injustice in the system of education in our land which creates financial hardship for the supporter of the Christian School and for the School as well. We do not join the pluralists in their drive and call for litigation for educational equity on the basis of an equal share for the finances. We might petition for tax relief because we educate our own children and should not be forced to pay the tax used to educate another man's children. This certainly will not succeed. Even if it does not succeed, we also call the State to release control of education and discontinue its support of that which it should not support or control.

Most important, however, and with this I conclude my speech tonight, we should continue as we are doing tonight — support the Christian School. The day may come when the schools will be taken from us but let it never be said of us that we gave them up because we did not know what it meant to sacrifice for Christian Education in the best of times. Our fathers knew how to sacrifice in the past — we are called to use that which the Lord has given us to maintain the schools in the present.

With the Psalmist in Psalm 78, we conclude as follows:

Instructing our sons, we gladly record
The praises, the works, the might of the Lord,
For He hath commanded that what He hath done
Be passed in tradition from father to son.

■ ■

Sing Ye Praise

With Understanding

by Candace Hoeksema

Before we can understand what singing is, we must know what it is *not*. Singing is *not* just a good activity with which to begin the day. Singing is *not* an optional activity for a Christian child. Singing is *not* just an enjoyable aesthetic experience for those who sing well. In order to teach our children what singing is and how as Christians we should sing, we have to put forth effort continually to show them how important it is. I would like to look at the topic under four main headings:

- I. Teaching *about* singing
- II. Teaching *of* singing
- III. Teaching *through* singing
- IV. Teaching *critical* singing

In order to lay the foundation for good singing, we have to be certain that our children know what singing is and what their spiritual attitude toward it should be. First and foremost, they must realize that singing is a God-centered activity. God is the audience of our singing, just as He is of our prayers. This means that we must sing as reverently as we pray. We must also participate actively. Singing is not a time to sit back and let our minds wander. We have to think about and understand the words we sing.

Children can best learn this reverent, God-centered attitude not by talking about it, but by practicing it. Many *Psalter* numbers speak of praising and exalting God's name through singing. Take, for example, the versification of Psalm 92 in the first stanza of *Psalter* number 251:

It is good to sing Thy praises
And to thank Thee, O Most High,
Showing forth Thy lovingkindness
When the morning lights the sky.
It is good when night is falling
Of Thy faithfulness to tell,
While with sweet melodious praises
Songs of adoration swell.

Joyful songs like these abound in the *Psalter*. We can point out their words to our children, and then lead them in enthusiastic worship through song.

Lest hymns be forgotten, we can find many of them that address God in the same reverent, praise-filled terms. "Now Thank We All Our God," "Oh Let Every Tongue Adore Thee," and "Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" are just a few examples here.

Those songs we just looked at express joy and thanksgiving. Children should learn, however, that singing is appropriate and is also a source of comfort in times of sadness. Notice *Psalter* number 240, in which the songwriter pours out his trouble and sadness to the Lord:

Thou hast brought me down to darkness,
'Neath Thy wrath I am oppressed;
All the billows of affliction
Overwhelm my soul distressed.
Thou hast made my friends despise me,
And companionless I go,
Bound, and helpless in my bondage,
Pining in my bitter woe.

With songs like this one, we can teach our children to turn to God in their times of sadness, seeking solace both in the words and the music.

Children can also learn the value and importance of singing by seeing the high priority that people in the Bible gave to it. It is amazing how often God's people worshipped Him through song. I will cite just a few instances: Miriam in Exodus 15, and Deborah in Judges 5 sang songs of victory after battle. At the dedication of the temple in II Chronicles 5:12, 13 the glory of the Lord filled the temple because of the singing of the Levites. Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn at the Passover (Matthew 26:30). Paul and Silas sang praises to God in the Philippian prison (Acts 16:25). Singing will be important in heaven. We read of the song of the hundred and forty and four thousand (Rev. 14:3), and of the Song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev. 15:3). We can make students aware of these Scriptural references to singing incidentally, when they come up in Bible study; or we can make a point of reading and discussing some of them in daily devotions.

Finally, in our daily singing, we should remind students over and over that singing demands active participation by everyone. Everyone has a voice, and Christians have a responsibility to use it as a gift from God. Emphasize the availability of the voice. It is the handiest instrument there is, and no one has to learn any complicated fingering for it.

In addition to learning that singing is important, children should also

learn that there is a proper way to sing. As teachers, we can do our part in teaching them the basics of good singing. Children should be reminded (not nagged), at first on a daily basis, about proper posture, tone, and pronunciation, so that good singing habits soon become second nature. It is important here that the teacher explains *why* good posture, for example, is necessary for good singing.

Children should be aware of several of the more “mechanical” aspects of singing. The first is *posture*. Students should sit (or stand) straight, with their feet flat on the floor. Explain why they cannot sing all hunched over or slumped in their seats.

Especially in the lower grades, work on *tone*. Get students to open their mouths more than just a slit by having them see how many fingers they can fit in them. Relaxed jaws and throats will also help them hit high notes much more easily. In this connection, watch the range of songs for younger children. If at all possible, try to keep this range between middle C and the D, nine notes above it.

As far as *pronunciation* is concerned, provide some very basic guidelines. These may include not hitting the “r” sound too hard, not hissing on “s” sounds, and being sure to add final consonants, especially “d” and “t.” At least with younger children, I would not become technical at this point. Strive for clear pronunciation with an open mouth. With some students, achieving that is quite an accomplishment.

Even at a very young age, children can learn to *interpret* the songs they sing — and this interpretation will get them to pay more attention to a song’s words. When the opportunity comes up, ask children to compare the moods of two songs like these:

By Babel’s streams we sat and wept,
For mem’ry still to Zion clung;
The winds alone our harpstrings swept,
That on the drooping willows hung.

Psalter number 379:1

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
All that breathe, Jehovah praise;
Let the voices God hath given
Joyful anthems to Him raise.

Psalter number 409:5

Almost without being told, children will sing the first song quietly and prayerfully and the second one boisterously and zestfully.

Also by way of interpretation, let children find the climax of a song and build up to it. “Low in the Grave He Lay,” and “Oh, Come All Ye Faithful” are good examples here. Children also like the question-

answer relationship in a hymn like "Nothing but the Blood of Jesus." Capitalize on interpretation by having one group sing the question and the other the answer. Another good way of getting children to pay attention to the words and to interpret the song is to read through the words first, notice where there are no commas, and then sing it that way.

As far as *notation* is concerned, depending on the age of the children and the musical ability of the particular group, some basics could be taught. Younger children can simply follow the notes to see if they go up or down. They can learn some simple counting, mainly by clapping beat and rhythm. Older children who know some notes can be encouraged in part singing.

I would not over-emphasize this or any of the technical aspects of singing. Rather, I would emphasize first the *joy* of singing. Prepare students to be enthusiastic singers of God's praise throughout their lives. Interest in skills will follow if enthusiasm is there. Above all, maintain that enthusiasm, and do it by making singing an interesting experience. Here are just a few suggestions that will keep singing from becoming a humdrum activity: Occasionally teach a new *Psalter* number or hymn by rote. Have a room theme song — for a month or for the year. Sing a cappella at times. Have various smaller groups sing by themselves on songs that have a repeated line or a refrain. Teach a descant to a song.

Singing can also be a kind of tool, and in this way, we can teach through the use of song. We do not have to limit singing to the short session of *Psalter* or hymn-singing done in most classrooms every morning. Singing provides a good break in the middle of the morning or at the beginning of the afternoon. We can take time out to sing some God-centered songs at special times. Here are some practical suggestions: Begin the day with this morning song, sung to the tune of Tallis' Cannon:

Awake, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth and joyful rise
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

Similarly, we can end the day with a closing song like this one, sung to the tune of *Psalter* number 403:

Another day of school is past,
And we must say good-bye,
And so, good-bye, our merry mates
And teacher, dear, good-bye.

(continued on next page)

Oh may the Lord take care of you,
May He take care of me,
Till we again together meet,
From evil keep us free.

Sing the words of the Lord's Prayer, perhaps when the children come in after lunch. Or sing other prayer songs, such as this one, set to the tune of *Psalter* number 8:

Jesus, high in glory,
Lend a listening ear,
When we bow before Thee,
Children's praises hear.

Save us, Lord, from sinning;
Watch us day by day;
Help us now to love Thee;
Take our sins away.

It goes without saying that we sing special songs at holiday times. Children seem to know and like Christmas carols; but at least in my experience, their knowledge stops there. They know very few Lent and Easter songs, and their knowledge of other holidays, such as Ascension Day and Pentecost, is sketchy — let alone knowing songs for them. We can do much to correct that.

We can also sing in connection with other studies. Science, especially nature studies, lends itself well to the integration of song. Several hymns speak in general of creation and of God as Creator. These include "For the Beauty of the Earth," "This is my Father's World," and "All Things Bright and Beautiful." Some *Psalter* numbers also mention specific aspects of creation. For an astronomy unit, number 403 is excellent. Stanza 2 reads in part: "Our Lord is great, He calls by name/ And counts the stars of night." There are many more songs, both hymns and *Psalters*, that could be used here.

With history, also, the opportunity to sing rises frequently. We can bring in the songs of the past, such as the Gregorian chants or the hymns of the Reformation.

Finally, we should teach our students to make careful, God-centered evaluations of the songs they sing. This applies first to hymns and Christian folk music. They should ask themselves if a particular hymn is solidly Reformed. I have trouble singing the words of such hymns as "In Christ there is no East or West," "Come to the Savior Now," and "Throw out the Lifeline."

Many hymns also are either very self-centered, rather than being

God-centered, or very trite and sentimental. I put such hymns as "That will be Glory for Me," or "Jesus bids us Shine" in the first category, and "Whispering Hope" or "The Church in the Wildwood" in the second. I find nothing wrong as such with hymns like these, but I would certainly point out their emphasis to the children and downplay them. Our children should sing the best that is available to them.

More importantly, I think that it is necessary that our children learn to evaluate the world's songs. Especially as children get older, they are bombarded with all kinds of music — rock, country, jazz — and its availability and the pressure their peers put on them to listen to it are often too much to withstand. We should discuss this music with them, both from a spiritual and artistic point of view. Then they will be able to make critical, independent evaluations of it, and not be swayed by the fact that "everybody listens to it."

I think there is a right and a wrong way to go about this discussion. Children and young people will not accept pat answers. They are too smart for that. They will not unquestioningly accept some of the objections I have heard. One such objection is that this music is wrong because it has a beat. Beat in itself is not wrong. Many classical pieces have a very definite beat. Another objection that does not wash is that those who compose and perform rock or country music lead immoral lives. Young people will point to the immoral lives of classical composers such as Wagner or Chopin or Liszt, and ask why we can listen to their music. We cannot say either that the lyrics are always bad. They may not be very uplifting at times, but they are not always down-right immoral. One more objection that is not always true is that these songs are not music, but just noise. Especially with country music, and with some rock, the music can be quite pleasing.

Rather than throwing these kinds of pat answers at them, we have to lead students to see that the world's music, especially rock, involves the combination of many factors. In her article in the November, 1981, *Beacon Lights*, Terri Garvelink lists some of the characteristics of rock music, and it is from her list that I draw:

1. Rock has an incessant, driving, physical beat that is designed to pound through and arouse a person.
2. From an artistic point of view, the vocal quality of this music is poor. It more often involves howling, growling, screaming, and moaning than it does singing.
3. It is designed for extremely high levels of volume, at which point it deteriorates into noise.
4. Very often, the lyrics are objectionable. Rock music often deals

with drug abuse, the occult or Satan worship, and homosexuality. Country music centers around different, but no less objectionable subjects, such as gambling, drinking, and cheating.

It is true that some country and rock songs have none of these characteristics. They have a beat, but it is not pronounced. The vocal quality is excellent. They need not be played loudly, and in fact may be quite soothing. The lyrics are not objectionable. However, these songs are few and far between, especially as regards lyrics, and in order to listen to them, we will have to wade through a lot of trash.

Christian young people in a quiet, rational discussion should be made to see that it is a combination of all these factors — beat, volume, type of singing, and lyrics, that makes the world's music objectionable to a Christian. With the proper guidance, they will want to substitute good songs for that kind of trash. But they will only do that if they have positive guidance and good examples to follow. Parents and teachers have to provide both. In all our children's musical experiences, I would emphasize the positive — not what *not* to listen to and what *not* to sing, but what *to* listen to, and what *to* sing. Teach them to look for the *best* music, music that is worthwhile for them to listen to and sing. ■ ■

One Heaping Cup of Love; Mix with Firmness and Understanding

by Eunice Kuiper

Many times while I taught junior high classes, I listened to this comment from other teachers and parents: "How do you dare teach those big kids? Isn't it hard to keep them under control?"

My answer would often simply be: "I enjoy my junior high classes."

But these questions and the poor control over junior high and high school students that we sometimes witness makes us often wonder if these children change for the worse as they approach the junior high years. It is all too easy for teachers to shrug off the bad behavior with

the remark, "Oh well, they're junior high kids now — what else can you expect?" Any parent or teacher will tell you that the behavior problems of teenagers differ from those of elementary-age children. I would be the first to agree with him. Most parents and teachers also maintain that these problems are more serious and more difficult to control. Many times I would agree with that, too. But these behavior problems are not solved by adopting the attitude of "Kids will be kids." Rather, we as parents and teachers must view our junior high and high school students as *covenant children*.

Yes, children. Growing, adolescent children. Almost grown-up children. Children recognized and treated as adults by the government. But still children that we promised to bring up in the Lord's ways. Children who listen to and obey their parents as long as they live under the roof of their covenant home. Children who are taught the beautiful words of Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it," and Psalm 119:9, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."

The world tries hard to make us forget that they are children. Its psychology tells us that teenagers must be allowed to make their own decisions — from the clothes they wear and food they eat to the friends they make and the careers they choose. They must be given their independence. They may seek their parents' advice, but, parents, don't try to control their lives. This philosophy pervades all aspects of life, and all too often it creeps into our lives, too. The world's educators maintain students' rights. Expose the student to all the world's religious views, and the student will choose the one best suited to his needs. Expose the student to all careers. He'll find the one where he excels, where he attains his goal of financial security, fame, position of authority, or opportunity to travel. Expose the student to sex education and make him aware of the pros and cons of premarital intercourse. As long as he knows about venereal diseases and the availability of birth control and abortion, he is able to make his own decisions. The world's entertainers strive to immerse teenagers in entertainment and amusement. Theater marquees scream their wares — no one under 18 admitted — no one under 16 admitted without parents — and television madly competes to show the same popular, filthy movies in the home. The world's entertainment dictates participation in and attendance at sports events. Let the students spend their time and money for the exaltation of the body. Let the students spend more time and money at the video arcades. Let the students date frequently

or spend a night with the guys — drinking — or a night with the girls — walking the streets in search of good-looking fellas. But don't insist that these teenagers stay at home with their parents; they need their own kinds of amusement and their own friends. The world's society insists that teenagers have their own cars, their own spending money for pleasure and clothing. Let them get jobs, and let them spend the money they make. But don't call for an accounting; they'll set up their own priorities. And the world's society demands conformity to the students' peers. Let them copy the current dress and hair styles, follow the latest language fads, listen to the most progressive music, enjoy liberal dating and curfew privileges, and experiment with alcohol and drugs. But don't impose your lifestyle on the teens of today.

But we are different. Our generations succeed one another in the line of the covenant. And all too often we fail to show our covenant teenagers how positively to live as they ought. We condemn the worldly ways in the course of our classroom discussions and there we stop. Understandably the students are frustrated. "Like, man," a student once queried me when I had condemned a mode of dress, "what's wrong with dressin' that way?" The temptation is to answer, "Because I said so." So we teach our small children to learn unquestioning obedience. And we occasionally must resort to physical enforcement — a firm grip, a shake, or the rod of correction. As students enter their teen years, it often isn't feasible to use force — especially when the student stands taller than the teacher — nor is it necessary. Psalm 119:9 teaches not that a young man cleanses his way by getting a licking with a stick in the principal's office but by taking heed to God's Word.

Going back to my errant questioner, I answered him with another question. "Whom are you imitating not only in your dress but also in your speech?" He and his classmates were reluctant to answer, and I went on to explain that certainly there is a place for fashion. As Christians we need not all come to school in plain brown wrappers, but we are called to follow God's Word for guidelines in our dress. As a class we decided that our dress must be appropriate, modest, and in keeping with our financial means; that our enjoyment in good dress lay not in imitating the world or in sinful self-pride but in appreciating the textures, colors, and forms of God's creation. We had strayed far from our English discussion, but these ninth graders now knew what they might wear and why. What was I to do two weeks later when a girl blatantly wore an outfit that did not meet the standard of modesty? Shrug it off as teenage rebellion? Or go to the other extreme and send

her home? No, quietly I took her aside, arranged for her to wear a coat that day, and set her down with paper, pen, and the Bible to write an essay on proper dress.

Later that same class used a poem about baseball to bait me with the question, "Why don't you like sports?" And again, far afield from English, we discussed what a Christian's entertainment should be and how much he should seek to follow after pleasure. Can I participate in or attend events where we join a worldly team and compete in a worldly association on their terms? (The Bible calls it being unequally yoked together with unbelievers.) Do I play for exercise and enjoyment or for honor and trophies? Do my studies suffer? Does my church and spiritual life suffer? Does it take me away from my family life? Or could I temper my love of sports by practicing the piano, reading a *good* book, cooking, sewing, working at a hobby of wood-working or leathercraft, or having a stimulating discussion on a worthwhile subject with my family or friends? These questions I asked in response to theirs, and they learned that they did not use a basketball game or softball practice as a reason for an unfinished assignment.

Too often in junior high and high school we wait for our students to disobey, and then we react to their misdeeds in haste and anger with inappropriate words and punishment. As teachers we lose control over our students. More seriously, we are failing to *train* our students. As teachers of covenant teenagers we must be present in the hallway when our students enter. We must be in our classrooms when the bell rings, not with our noses in our work, but keeping order. We must lay down basic rules for behavior in a covenant classroom, not many, many rules, not militaristic rules, and explain the reasons for our rules. We must take time to answer the many questions they raise, the whys and wherefores of our rules and standards, with God's Word as our Guide. When our students disobey, we must not respond with harsh words and name-calling, with a slap across the face, or with 500 lines. How can such a response correct and train the students? Our teenagers are still children and as such still need correction and training; but they are growing, maturing children who must be taught to know *why* one way is right and another way is wrong. So the correction given to them must be geared to their situation. Has the student cheated? Let him memorize Lord's Day 42 of the Catechism and apply its truth to his misdeeds. Does he cheat again? Assign him an essay on the subject, and ask for his parents' signatures on it before he hands it in. Follow the same method of correction for one who takes God's name in vain. And treat minor infractions, not with sharp words or even worse by

ignoring them, but with a mild reproof that points out the error of the child's way and points him to the proper spiritual behavior.

Is it easy to control our teenage students? Certainly not! It means we forfeit that last cup of coffee in the lounge at recess. It means that we don't always have the time and opportunity to sit at noon hour with our feet up on our desks and a good book in hand. It means that we must struggle to control our own short tempers and sharp tongues and cultivate Godly patience and pray for an abundance of sanctified common sense — common sense that seeks the true spiritual welfare of the child. It means that as dedicated teachers we take our problem students home in our hearts and contemplate their ways even while we go about the routines of our home life.

Is it easy to be a junior high or high school teacher? No, that is not what God's Word teaches us to ask. Rather, we must ask, "Is it rewarding?" Indeed we as teachers are blessed in our efforts when we see our students graduate and grow to be adults and parents in the covenant line. Indeed we are rewarded with the words that echo and re-echo in our minds and hearts, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." ■ ■

Promotion and Retention

by Lamm Lubbers

As the end of the school year approaches, decisions on student failure and progress begin to have renewed significance. Graduation is a time to recognize the achievement of goals. The certificate awarded indicates that minimal standards have been met for an elementary education. The parents of our schools have been committed to the principle that education must be soundly scriptural and be marked by academic excellence.

Automatic promotion of all students from grade to grade without corresponding progress has made a laughing stock of educational standards in our country. Promotion to the next grade should not be as automatic as a birthday since it does not mark age but stages of learning. Nor should academic promotion be based on the doctrine of the covenant upon which all children of believing parents are guaranteed academic success and progress.

This should not be seen as a hard-nosed, promotion-retention policy.

Our school has insisted that the responsibility of the teacher is to identify the child's problems and work closely with parents for their solution. The teacher has the responsibility of recommending non-promotion at a point in the child's schooling where it has the greatest possibility of helping the student. (Probably in the first two or three years in school.) If the parent disagrees with the teacher's recommendation, the parent may request promotion of the student. Requests for promotion when standards have not been met do not lead to a regular diploma.

The problem of the teacher is much more complex than getting all students in the right compartments. Each student is so different that a grade of fifteen students has fifteen different learning situations. Group instruction only approximates the needs of each student. Typically, there is a range of reading abilities of more than four years in a junior high class. If instruction is directed to the "average" ability it must be stimulated with challenges for the able and special consideration and fundamental concepts for the slower learner.

The daily problem is to select concepts and make learning situations and assignments which are realistic for the students at their level of maturity. This decision is usually made on the basis of the average ability rather than the exceptional abilities.

The teacher is vital to the selection and development of curriculum, but not autonomous. For example, the goals of the school must be met, a body of material has to be covered, a list of words must be spelled, memory work assigned and checked. The pressures of goals set and to be achieved rest not only on the student but also upon the teacher. The teacher who spends too much time developing ideas at a pace comfortable for all will miss the needs of the class to progress and fall short of his expected goals.

For this reason teachers work under the board and the administrator. They are responsible to the parents through the board. If a parent feels that the pace the courses taught, or the work given is not realistic to the abilities of his student, he works first directly with the teacher. The administrator will be aware of the problem and the parent should seek his help since both student placement and curriculum are his concern as well as the teacher. If the parent needs further help or wishes to bring a matter to the board he should appear at an appropriate committee of the board or at a board meeting.

Parents should remember that problems are best solved in this orderly approach. It has been my experience that many major problems could have been avoided if the parties involved would meet

personally and the matter not be spread to other "interested" but not involved people. Drumming up support is the cause of many problems becoming insoluble for years to come and much party strife in the school and society.

Our staff has attempted to avoid the pitfalls of frequent and unnecessary retentions. We have attempted to teach each student enrolled by the board and assigned to the classes. We will continue to the best of our ability to recommend the best grade placement for each child's benefit. We are committed to work with each parent and we ask for your continued support. ■ ■

Book Reviews

Style and Class, by Sietze Buning; Middleburg Press, 1982; 127 pp., paper. (Reviewed by G. VanDer Schaaf.)

Style and Class is Sietze Buning's second book of poetry. When Mr. Buning is not busy writing poems, he teaches literature at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The college treasurer cannot spell "Sietze Buning" correctly, and so Sietze is forced to accept paychecks made out to "Stanley Wiersma."

In *Style and Class*, as in Wiersma's first book, *Purpaleanie*, the reader hears two voices. The first voice is that of the Dutch immigrants who settled in N.W. Iowa a hundred years ago, bringing to that place a strong and simple faith in God, a faith which found expression in a vital and vivid antithesis that gave order and meaning to every activity secular or sacred, from plowing to praying. This is the voice of men

who sang psalms while driving six-horse teams, who debated supra- versus infralapsarianism in country kitchens over saucers of cooling coffee, who, following the testimony of the Spirit in their hearts, would lose a field of corn to a hailstorm rather than harvest on the sabbath. It is the voice of women who gathered eggs, helped with the milking, fixed dinners for 18-men threshing rings as a matter of course, baked pie, bread, and chicken for classis, and still found time to teach the children their catechism and hear their bed-time prayers. This first voice is the voice of the *vaderen en moeders in Israel* who now are gone to glory. In *Style and Class* their voice speaks again, and we would do well to pay heed.

The second voice is that of Sietze Buning. Sietze is a son of the immigrants, an heir of the first voice who has grown up and away from N.W. Iowa, geographically from the place and, in

Wiersma uses these two voices to develop his theme of "style and class." Style is that grace, that certain flair in life which can be put-on, that can be acquired. Class, on the other hand, is more a quality of being. It is never acquired: it is something that is only had. It is never emulated: it is always the genuine article. For example, a congregation that cracks not a single smile during hilarious pulpit hi-jinks has class because "On state occasions, royalty is not amused." And

The poems collected in *Style and Class* are both entertaining and thought-provoking. There is in even the funniest of them a meditative quality that will give the reader pause and prompt him, perhaps, to examine his own lifestyle a little more closely. Hear the voices in this book. Smile at them, laugh with them. Shake your head at them, disagree with them even. But hear what they have to say.

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Calvin Miller is a pastor in Omaha, Nebraska. He is a well-known author among the Baptist churches. He has written other works such as *Poems of Protest and Faith*, *A Thirst for Meaning*, and *Transcendental Hesitation*.

New Testament. Written in dynamic prose-poetry, *The Singer* covers the gospel accounts, *The Song* faintly resembles the book of Acts, and *The Finale* attempts to parallel the book of Revelation. I will briefly treat each volume, then give an over-all opinion of the three books.

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Singer defeats the World Hater,
binds him in chains, and rolls
him over a ledge into the Canyon
of the Damned.

If you enjoy reading poetic narratives, then you will find these books worth adding to your list. Calvin Miller does a superb work in prose-poetry. You will find the first and last books to be the best. If you also enjoy mythical settings and characters then you will find *The Trilogy* a true delight and exciting reading.

The Finale begins with the main character, the Dreamer, viewing the future. The next exciting part concerns itself with the War of Fire in which Dreamer repeatedly flees the hunting down and death of the Singerians, who anticipate the glorious return of the Singer. The last part pictures the victorious return of the Singer to an earth almost destroyed by the evil power of the World Hater. Subsequently, the

My objection to these books is that they try to represent the New Testament from a mythical viewpoint. Included in my objection is the obvious Arminian picture of Christ's work of salvation (the Singer is dependent upon the will of the Singerians in regards to their salvation). Miller would have been better off by not attempting so close a parallel with the New Testament but instead purposely presenting a mythical didactic struggle in which the victory is centered in one person representing the just and upright.



mended as a guide for the study of the cults, for group study or for individual study. The cults that are included in the book were chosen because of their appeal to people and because they are

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cults that we are liable to come into contact with today.

The cults that are included in this guide are as follows: Jehovah's Witnesses, Church of the Latter-day Saints, Christian Science, First Unification Church, and The Way International. As the author mentions in his book, the last two cults have appeared recently and have quickly gained converts among young people.

The material on each cult is easy to read and understand. There are many facts included that make each chapter interesting

reading. Each chapter introduces a cult by giving some history on the movement and information about the leader. Then the author presents the basic beliefs of that cult. The focus is on a cult's teaching about the person and role of Jesus and the nature of God, on a cult's teaching on the role of Christ and the importance of human works in salvation, and on a cult's teaching concerning the authority of the Bible. Each chapter ends with discussion questions and it lists other resources for further study.

* * * * *

In trying to present a subject from the Christian viewpoint, the Scriptures must be effectively related and integrated with the subjects taught. Correlating the Bible with a subject, or using the Bible in teaching a subject is not the same thing as integration on the ground level. Take language for instance. It is not enough to go to the Bible and find verses showing how we should speak, though this is very important and is a vital part of Christian education. Nor is it sufficient to use Bible portions to instruct in public speaking, though again, this has its place in the Bible-centered program. Christian teaching must go farther and show how God is the author of language and has purposes unique to Himself in giving it to man. God is a communicative God. He has communicated His mind to man in His Son, Jesus Christ, Who is called the Word of God; and in the Bible, which is His written revelation. In creating us like Himself, He desires to communicate to us and recommunicate with each other on a human level, yes. But more so, to fellowship with God. There are many secondary uses of language, but this is primary.

quoted from
"Integrating the Bible with Other Subjects
in the Christian School"
by Herman Fransen

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

Biblical Perspectives in the Social Sciences (1971)

A Writing Program for the Covenant Child (1972)

Suffer Little Children (Bible manuals 1, 2, & 3), at cost

Workbooks for *Suffer Little Children*, at cost

Teachers' Manual for Ancient World History (1977)

History Units on Medieval World History (1979) on the following topics:

Unit I. The Barbarian Migrations

Unit II. The Eastern or Byzantine Empire

Unit III. The Rise and Spread of Islam

Unit IV. England and the Middle Ages

Unit V. France in the Middle Ages

Unit VI. The Crusades

Unit VII. Feudalism and the Manor

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

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

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