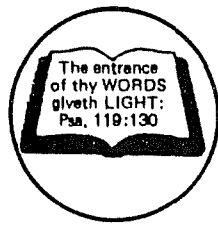


# *Perspectives*

*in Covenant Education*



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**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

*Perspectives in Covenant Education* is a journal regulated and published quarterly, in November, February, May, and August 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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Ellen, maybe time  
 to go back a make  
 1st "Science Musings"

## SPECIAL FOCUS

*Have you ever wondered what it would be like, as a father or mother, to look forward with eager expectation to the birth of a baby, and then to learn that the little one is . . . handicapped?*

*Dave and Bonnie Moelker, of our Hope Church in Grand Rapids, know all about that from painful experience. In the moving account which follows, they tell us their story — from the initial sub-conscious suppression of fears, through the struggle of coming to know and accept the truth, to the eventual grace of contentment, in the knowledge that an “impaired” child is very really a good gift from God Himself. A “necessary member of the body of Christ” they see Kristi to be — necessary for her parents, her siblings, her friends. . . . This reader has found it to be even so. We trust you will too.*

## **“Physically Impaired”: A Gift of God**

Dave and Bonnie Moelker

To the reader:

With sixteen years of our daughter's life to reflect on, we have no little difficulty in choosing which events best paint a complete picture of parenting a handicapped child. No less difficult was the task of including some of her feelings. We hope that what has evolved here, while only a small part of what could be written, will give some insights into an experience which is not unique to us, but which has occurred many times over, to a greater or lesser degree, in many Christian families. ■■■

That day in March dawned brightly: snow had made all things new the night before. The air had turned cold again after what seemed to be the end of winter. The day had proceeded as usual. A young husband had gone to work, perhaps wondering if he could earn enough money to make the payment on the new house. . . or maybe wondering if the coming of his first child would strain the budget beyond its limits. What will life be like if it's a boy?

The hopes, the dreams, the unknown of a new life! A new

life in the care of a new mother and father!

Can all of this really be happening? It seems we were just in high school. . . a girl and a boy who had known each other from the second grade; whose names were next to each other in the teacher's record book; who were even seated together at the same desk by a favorite teacher in Junior High; who had lockered together in #103 for part of high school and who attended the same church, catechism class, and young people's society. Two, we were, whose backgrounds and experiences were so much the same, and who knew only the other as a date throughout the dating years and throughout their courtship. God had fused two lives into one without their fully realizing it was taking place.

And one of the reasons for it all was that bright day late in March. . . but also for the days and years to follow. They would need the quiet strength, the look that said it all, the heart that could read the other's heart, to be able to bear all things, endure all things, and hope all things.

The busy pace of the afternoon was interrupted by the intercom telling the whole shop that a call was waiting. The voice on the line told the young husband that "It's time. The doctor says we had better go." After an "Alright, I'll be right there," I made a

hasty run from one place of employment to another. We had just found out that babies don't care much whether or not mothers are still working.

After a quick trip home for the suitcase, the hospital was twenty minutes away. Settled in the labor room, we began to reflect on all those parenting classes.

Time the contractions.

Breathe right.

Check the pocket for phone numbers and dimes for calls to relatives and friends.

It'll probably only take a few short hours. Wonder if it will be a boy. Athlete or scholar? Or a girl? Will she be beautiful and popular? Will it look like me or you?

Try to get some sleep. Another contraction? I'll get the watch. Why, it's early morning now. Didn't think it would take twelve hours! They're close now. We must be almost there. You're taking her in? This is it.

"Mr. Moelker, the doctor says you may wait in the father's waiting room now." This isn't the way they told us in the class. But it's the first time. . . and who can tell?

After a bewildering wait, I hear the doctor call into the father's waiting room, "Congratulations! Would you like to see your daughter? We're taking her to the nursery to warm her up. She's a little cool right now. Cute

little girl."

Later, standing outside the nursery, I see the doctor's concerned expression as nothing more than observation. She watched as the baby jerked her body, arched her little back, and made another small screech. Without taking her eyes from the crib, she told me of the events of the last hour.

The hurried exit from the labor room was because the baby's heart rate had suddenly increased dramatically. Then came a forceps delivery. (Only later would we learn that this was called fetal distress.) As the baby dropped into position, a short umbilical cord wrapped three times around her neck, had deprived her of oxygen for a short time. The result of this was newborn convulsions. "Your pediatrician has been called and you should get some sleep." Still not suspecting the gravity of the situation, we welcomed the doctor's advice.

The pocket where the dimes had been was empty as a tired first-time father slid beneath the covers. Long and weary had been the night. Now to get some rest, and then back to the hospital.

The anxious look that met a young father that early afternoon was noted with an unsuspecting glance. The pediatrician was still there and now dropped back into the room with both of the little girl's parents. "She isn't acting

just right and we'll run some further tests to see if we can pinpoint anything. She has been given a relaxant and the convulsions have stopped. The next 24 hours will be important. I'll be checking periodically just in case I'm needed."

Convulsions? What does he mean? The implications of it were subconsciously suppressed. Relaxant? The next 24 hours will be important? Is she going to die? What's wrong? With stunned silence, our minds raced. What does he mean?

These types of questions were to be for many months to come. It would take time to learn the full nature of the problem. But it would also take many months to come to grips with the idea itself.

The date was March 31, 1972. It also happened that the day was Good Friday — the day long ago which for the early New Testament church had been a day of questions, a day of fear, a day of dreams that were clouded by stunning events... but a day which from God's point of reckoning was a day of good things. Death and hell and the curse were forever defeated, making us full victors and recipients of the benefits of Christ's suffering and death. In retrospect we look back, and for us it is seeing in this event of the birth of a handicapped child, God doing

a work, not only in our lives, but also in the life of His church. We, too, like the disciples, had expected one thing and were given another. We were filled with questions; experienced a time of fear; saw a day of dreams that were clouded. But, again, God's perspective is so very different from ours. This member of the body of Christ was necessary at this time, on this day, at this place. Needful for her parents. Needful for a brother and sisters, though yet to be born, whose lives would be affected by this event. Also needful for relatives, for friends, for a congregation, a denomination, ministers, teachers, and fellow students. Her life, for her and for us, is a living testimony of grace, contentment, strength in weakness, a path of struggle and of happiness in the "small things in life."

With the arrival home from the hospital comes the realities of first-time parenting. No longer do nurses respond to call buttons for changes, bathings, and even late-night feedings. Mother is now given her first taste of broken sleep, crying babies, and calls to mother's mother with "what should I do now?" But there were no cries that first night home. No starts from sound sleep to recall dreamily that you are a parent now. Just night air filled with a young mother's wonderment as to why her baby

is so quiet. Is this normal? She seems too sleepy even to swallow. "Kristina, wake up! Swallow the formula." Thoughts began to race. "Calm down. She's alright. Just won't wake up." The Creator's gift of intuition tells her mother to watch these signs and take note. But each night the same scenario. No cries. Forced feedings. And that daily dose of phenobarbital.

The light was bright to our just opened eyes. What time is it? The mind aches as it asks. She has to eat. Let's try for an ounce. "You snap her feet to make her swallow, and I'll talk to her." More spills than goes down. How long has it been? I have to work tomorrow. "Kristina, swallow! Please? There! She did it. Wish she'd wake up. We've never even heard her cry!"

A county health nurse who would come to the house gave us some hints, showed us some tricks that might help her eat.

Baptism had come and gone. Our relatives had gathered for the occasion. Still there lingered questions as to the nature of the problem. What could be done? And what can we do to help? God gave His grace. Our ignorance about the gravity of the problem was the vehicle which He used to give that grace, and it was measured by a young couple's determination to press on.

The doctor leaned back in his

chair and lit his cigar and looked across his desk at the young couple. We were there for the regular monthly visit, and it was late afternoon. We wanted to hear together just what the doctor would say. With so many questions, we always hoped to have some of the uncertainty of the situation taken away. Specific labels were never given, and we found ourselves living in the hope that anytime now they would say, "Everything looks alright now." The late night sessions of "two on one" (two parents, one sleepy baby), forcing down formula, then rice cereal, seemed to be wearing on us. If only she would cry, it would be music to our ears. At one of our earlier visits to the doctor, we had carried out a pre-determined plan of action. We wondered if the sedative, phenobarbital, could be discontinued. Did we dare ask? With the courage of two, we asked, "Okay. But if she has another convulsion, you'd better call me right away."

The doctor's response destroyed the thin coating on that fear of ours. The hope of our youth had buried it under the rapid succession of all the recent events. "Yes, we want to stop it. It's so hard to feed her. We can't go on this way. And we haven't really heard her cry."

The smoke drifted around the doctor's head as he still leaned

back and pondered our next question. "Is it called Cerebral Palsy?" We finally used the newly-learned words.

"I think that's a wastebasket term. It's brain damage if you want to name it. It happens sometimes during birth. It's caused by a lack of oxygen. But if you want to call it Cerebral Palsy, you may."

The mother held her baby tightly. The air was cold on the drive home. But the car's heater felt good. "But she looks fine. Brain damage? How can it be? No one has ever said that before. Will it affect her learning? Her sight? Her walking?" With questions following questions, we withdrew into our thoughts. The possibilities, the ramifications, seemed endless. Little did we realize the point we had reached. There in the car on the way home, we were made fit vessels to receive God's grace even more. Stripped of earthly pride and hope, alone with our first child that afternoon, feeling only emptiness, we were ready to be filled.

At first, we were able to carry the baby quite easily. In fact, carrying did two things for us. First, it was easy. Simply pick her up and go. She could be included nicely in almost all activities. When one of us grew tired, the other could take over. Since she needed to be propped up by a "corner seat" to sit and play with



toys on the floor, and restrained so that she would not "flop around" in her car seat, carrying was by far one of the easiest things to do. No muss. No fuss.

The second thing carrying did for her parents was that it allowed them to move about without being noticed. Nothing looked different. Thousands of people carried their children about. In public, everything is normal. As she grew older, there was an occasional look from people if they got too close, but nothing that presented a "problem."

At church gatherings, fellow church members, suspecting that the stories they had heard could be true, began asking questions. Always questioning. Always meaning well. Hardly knowing that the answers they received were painfully torn from hearts that wanted them to remain buried there because each time the file was opened there were still unanswered questions. There were still pages that were missing, and pages that, as it were, had only a couple of lines written on them yet. "Yes, she is doing better. No, we're not sure about how she'll be as time goes on. They say it's something called Cerebral Palsy or C.P." Fellow saints, because they are just that, were always understanding, supportive, and compassionate. They are that way by no "accident." It is really God giving us

in our storms that often face us on the sea of life a safe harbor from the swelling sea within and without.

Eventually, infants, handicapped or not, begin to grow. Carrying is more difficult now and the stroller or umbroller is used more often and for greater periods. A small child being transported this way still appears like any other, though, and we can still get lost in the crowd.

Time was beginning to show what areas of our daughter's brain were damaged at birth. What are called the "fine" and "gross" motor functions were involved. Her speech was also showing impairment, but her parents were mostly aware of her ability to learn. Watching for signs of growth became our delight. What a warm feeling of accomplishment we felt when she pointed to body parts on command... and even to Grandma's glasses on the table.

Kristi's formal education began early in her life. From the first "infant parent program" in a local public school district, she advanced to being classified a Physically and Otherwise Health Impaired (or P.O.H.I.). As a POHI student, she was in a special classroom in a regular school. There she was able to receive physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy, as well as pursue as close as possible

a normal load. Though it grieved her parents to send her to a non-Christian school, there seemed to be no other option. In the first few years, this arrangement brought nothing to be concerned with. However, as time went on, we as well as our daughter became more aware of the stark contrast between our own schools and the schools of the public domain. While academically the teachers were very good, there were always the differences in background that nag at you at every turn. It began to grieve us when a holiday season would arrive. School life went from one celebration to the next: starting with Halloween and ending with Easter. There was the keeping Kris home rather than sending her to school with a costume on Halloween... or the dilemma of sending her without one and going through the long explanation of why — which we did, seemingly time and time again.

There were many times when faith had to utter her voice. Each time, though, strengthened by God to each circumstance, we were also given words to speak. We both recall the time, during a parent group which we were a part of in the early days of Kristi's life, when we had opportunity to express how we were able to accept her handicap. One of the parents there was quick to show her own bitterness, and she

placed blame on the doctor. When Kristi's mother was asked to speak, she told of the truth of a sovereign God who providentially controls all things so that they work together for our good, though it is not always plain to see why. This view to them was labeled as fatalism, not faith. They saw it as pacifism in a world of "you must place the blame." Much of our coming to grips with our situation came about by our having to exercise the knowledge and truths we had been taught from the time we ourselves were little.

Then came the day when we realized that Kristi's learning ability was being held down by her school situation. It seemed that she was ready to learn, but she was not stimulated to do so in the school situation. The teacher's time was demanded by more needy students, leaving little or no time for one who wanted more. While being faced unconsciously with the choice of physical or mental growth, we were beginning consciously to make the choice for her mental and spiritual growth.

The question loomed before us. Frustration grew into anger toward a system which was holding down a healthy mind.

As at any parent/teacher conference, POHI parents/teachers have a lot to discuss. Having seen the P.T. and the O.T. and the

speech therapist, we were on our way to see Kristi's homeroom teacher. We had mustered our courage that night after much thought about it, but the idea still seemed like a "long shot." Would this teacher be receptive or not? Would she be offended? Did we dare get out of step in a school system in which they were marching to a different drum?

"My wife and I have been thinking lately about Kristi's progress academically. It seems she is falling behind. Well, we were thinking that maybe... well, maybe our own Christian school might be able to give her more academically." Our hand was played. Relieved that we had spoken what was on our minds, we were ready for a look of surprise and probably a defense of past performance. "Oh, yes." Her eyes lit up. "That would be great!" This teacher was throwing up her arms in delight! "I'd been hoping to try to tell you that, but I can't turn people out of our program here. I haven't been able to give Kris all she needs. I think she can do far more. I'll help all I can."

Sometimes when the Lord opens a door, He knocks it off its hinges! Our prayers that our daughter would have a sound mind and the ability to learn were still being answered — this time beyond our wildest dream. She would be a student in our own

school.

Being in our own school proved to be an exercise in ingenuity. Kristi had been tested by our 4th grade teacher and her former teacher, and she was found to be functioning at the 4th grade level. The school board and administrator were always willing to cooperate from day one. Though we approached the Board with a lengthy document expressing our desire to send her, they needed little convincing. Some questions remained from a practical standpoint; but always there was a workable solution to be found. "Playing it by ear" became the watchword for her parents as well as staff and School Board.

On her first day at her new school experience, she was ready with a typewriter with a special guard over the keys, an extra set of plugs on the wall in the room, a wheelchair, and a roller-type walker. Transportation to school each day was via neighbor school-secretary. We discovered very really what teacher-parent communication/cooperation meant, far more than the average "normal" situation would require. In retrospect, we see how much extra effort was put forth by fellow students and teachers alike. We stand amazed at how the members of the Body of Christ actually do care for one another. Without that care, Kristi's school-

life at our own school would have been impossible.

Having one member of the family in a wheelchair can create some interesting situations and problems. With each phase of growing, parents of a handicapped child must re-adapt life styles, overcome hangups, and reach new levels of acceptance. When you first learn of the problems, as we did at Kristi's birth, there begins the groping, the ever-searching for help. Sometimes that help is hard to become accustomed to. Take for example the wheelchair. The early use of strollers and such must sooner or later give way to wheelchair use. But just obtaining one and using it would be easy except for the fact that by doing so you are faced with publicly accepting and acknowledging the fact that your daughter is unable to walk. Then there are the stares. With smooth vinyl and shining stainless steel, the wheelchair is hard to hide in a crowd. Small children, usually, would stare the longest. But some adults could outdo even them.

In crowded rooms, there is the danger of bumping into everyone's ankles and heels. There is the seemingly constant "Excuse me," the "I'm sorry," or "Pardon me." The looking for ramps becomes second nature. And where none happens to be, you begin to size up those stairs as a mountain climber studies the next peak.

Many times total strangers will lend a welcome hand. There are still many things that can make going about in a wheelchair difficult, but building codes have allowed for much easier access in the past few years. The chair has been to such places as the top of the Sears Tower; Tiger Stadium in Detroit; Washington, D.C.; the Smithsonian Institute; the Vulcan Monument in Birmingham, Alabama; numerous state parks; young people's hayrides; class trips; subway; Lake Michigan piers; Marshall Space Center; museums; the Atlantic Ocean; Mackinac Island; Sault Ste. Marie boat trip; and a pontoon boat on Silver Lake. It has waited on shore while its user has gone tubing with her dad behind Uncle Ray's boat on Lake Leelanau. There must come the time when the wheelchair as a liability becomes the asset to new adventures.

There were times when frustration gave way to pure joy, as when a handicapped daughter speaks first words and then sentences. We became more and more aware of the fact that learning abilities were present in force. There were also times when two weary parents would sit force-feeding a sleepy baby. There were times when countless hours were spent by a young father adapting and modifying all sorts of things in hope that his

daughter would be able to use them "normally." There were times when patience was put to the test by those trying to understand Kristi's speech, as well as by Kristi herself in having to repeat something just once more for them. Maybe that is how best to understand the handicapped and their troubles, their experience coping, the social difficulties they encounter. Then perhaps, understanding, we as parents and others close to the situation will gain insights and be able to look for ways to improve their situation or to give advice.

Put yourself for a moment into the body of someone like our daughter. You may find that even the thought of movement may be tiring — knowing that to do anything takes work and at times special planning. Your eye can see a task to be performed, the brain gives the proper command, but the hand that is sent to do the task misses its mark. All concentration is now focused and the hand comes nearer and nearer still. Every inch it travels accurately is triumph, for the object is almost in grasp. There, contact. "No hand, don't squeeze so hard," the mind signals, "now more... now less" — too late, the page of the new Sunday School Bible is now wrinkled. But, at least it is turned. Now it's time to eat. "I've been sitting here since school got out.

That's been two hours now. My legs! They're stiff. They usually are that way, but now they need to be stretched and they hardly cooperate. There. We're off. Move the feet. Move the walker. Um... supper looks good. Yes, Lord, do bless this food. I do need the strength."

Eating is accomplished best with a tool called a "spork" — half fork, half spoon. The same eye, brain, and hand control is needed as with our Bible page... but now figure in one sharp spork and one tender mouth. If the arm is laid on the table, the tool can be filled, and if the mouth is brought closer: "There, hand, tip the spork; no, not that far. It'll all fall off! But I'll try again. Maybe this time... There, supper is finished. Better clean up. That slice of bread with jelly on it sure squashed easily, even though I did my best. Those old fingers just weren't cooperating... Time to leave for catechism? We'd better hurry? Seems I'm always last. Dad, be careful with me on those church basement steps. I know, you've done this many times. But if my foot should not respond on cue or you should lose your balance (I'm not the little girl I used to be) we'll both fall down the stairs like Mom and I did that time at home... There, home again. Just a little more typing and the homework will be

finished. Sure glad this machine has a guard over the keys or it would be impossible to 'write' at all. Special friends of mine, one of whom is in heaven awaiting his perfect body, once bought me a computer which helps me a lot too. Some of these new inventions make new things possible for someone with physical difficulties."

When it's time for bed, the teeth present one of the last challenges of the day. This time, added to the hand, eye, and mouth coordination is the dimension of standing, holding, and balancing by a bathroom sink. A helping hand is usually needed and welcome.

"Ahhhh... relax." No effort to sleeping. The body can relax and, in the bliss of unconsciousness, strength is restored.

For the child of God who is handicapped, the problems, struggles, and frustrations of this life are small when compared to the glory which shall be revealed in them. The new heavens and earth for them will be far more glorious than for those who know not their kinds of struggles. For the present, too, they are blessed far greater than we often realize. While life takes its ever-quickening pace and carries us along with it, a handicapped person has time to reflect. Has time to commune with God as most of us cannot. The earthly goals, the enjoyment

of this world's pleasures, and the accumulation of its treasures mean far, far less to them, partly because they are dependent rather than independent. But also, God has chosen to reveal His power in the handicapped child in a special way. We may see patience manifested in their lives. We see in them how we who have our full strength should live each day out of the hand of God. These members of Christ's body are necessary for these reasons, we believe, but also so that the other members of the body may exercise more care for these seemingly weaker members. Then God will be glorified fully through their presence in His church.

Rev. John Heys once wrote this regarding our exceptional children: "What is more, we are given such children — and by we it must be understood that they are the children of the whole congregation, the whole church of God — so that we may have the opportunity of exerting exceptional efforts, and of performing spiritual works of unusual intensity to train them in the fear of God's name. These are efforts which we do not perform on our other children. And for our exceptional efforts we receive a reward of grace in the day of Christ, which would not be ours had we not been given these children.

"Yes, in that light we can be

Kristi is now enrolled at Covenant Christian High School, Walker, Michigan, where she is mainstreamed as a tenth grader. With joy she is pursuing her studies in hopes of continuing her education at a college level.



# FEATURE

*The Moelkers, in the preceding article, made reference to "mainstreaming." The idea there is of course that the particular handicapped student finds it possible to attend "regular" classes in a "regular" school. Kristi could do that. Students with other kinds of impairment, however, are not able to function in the "main stream." Something "special" must therefore be provided for these "special" children. In the article that follows, Deane Wassink, a teacher at our Heritage Christian School in Hudsonville, tells about what the Board of the Society for Protestant Reformed Special Education (of which he is a member) is doing to make provision for that. Do you know what an EMI room is? Heritage has one. To learn all about it, from a man who has long had an interest in Special Ed, read on.*

# Protestant Reformed Special Education

Deane Wassink

Covenant children come in every shape, size, and ability. We have in our midst a number of children who are not able to handle everything in a regular classroom. In the past, these children have not been able to function in our schools. They have had to go to the public school system for their education. Now we have begun to help these children in our own schools.

Our Christian school system as a whole stands on the principle that

our covenant children ought to receive an education that is in harmony with the Scriptures as taught in our churches. This is a covenant responsibility of the parents that is not limited by the ability of the children, but only by the ability of the parents to provide that education where they live. This is in harmony with the truth that God in His grace sees fit to gather His children out of our children.

We believe in the unity of the body of Christ. Each member of that body has an important and necessary place. We strive to develop that unity in our schools when we teach our children to show love for one another by sharing, praying for each other, bearing each other's burdens, and caring for each other's needs. This truth is at the heart of our belief that the covenant is a relationship of friendship.

With those covenant principles in mind it is evident that the best place for the special children in our midst is in our own covenant schools with other covenant children. There they can experience the blessings of fellowship. There they can grow in knowledge and develop their talents. There the other children of the covenant learn how to work side by side with them as fellow saints. This ability can only be learned by practice, practice, practice — on the part of all the members of the body of Christ!

This basic commitment to the needs of the special children in our midst is what led to the beginning of our own special education school. The consistory of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church called a meeting to encourage the organization of a society for special education. The Society for Protestant Reformed Education was formed. A board was formed and plans adopted to go ahead. As a member of the second board I recall a feeling of deep commitment and purpose on the part of the members as we sailed into uncharted waters. Miss Jessie Dykstra, who had many years of experience in the field, was hired to be our first teacher of the EMI room in Hope school. We began instruction in the fall of 1984. A year later we hired also Doug Boone to teach LD students at Heritage.

"EMI" stands for Educable Mentally Impaired. These are students who need a special classroom environment and a low student-to-teacher ratio. They are able to participate in regular classroom activities on a limited basis. Because we have students who vary greatly in age and ability, it takes a great deal of flexibility and innovation on the part of the teacher, along with help from aides.

"LD" stands for Learning Disabled. These are students with normal intelligence who have difficulty in particular skill areas, such as reading, spelling, or math. They spend nearly all their time in a regular class-



Jessie retired at the end of the '87-'88 school year. Because of a major change in our class makeup, and with the intention of consolidating our efforts, we moved the EMI room to Heritage this year. We also hired Deb Kuiper, a Calvin graduate with a degree in special education. Deb has four students in her room, with wide variations of ability and age. Doug is working with 10-15 students on a regular basis in his "I CAN" room.

The future looks bright, given the good beginning. We have established a building fund in order that we can purchase our own rooms in the future. Also, we are constantly assessing the needs of our covenant children to see how we can serve them. At present we are meeting student needs in two areas. If there are needs in other areas, we will do our best to meet them with the means we have available. Remember, our purpose is to serve the special children. Whether God sends us hearing impaired, visually impaired, emotionally impaired, or physically impaired we will do all we can, by the grace of God, to provide a covenant education for these children.

Please keep this special cause in your thoughts and prayers.

## VIEWPOINTS

*Usually we have, for our "Viewpoints," two views which do not agree the one with the other. Perhaps that adds a little to our readers' interest in the articles; but our intention never was to use this rubric only for mini-debates. In fact, for this issue, we have two writers who obviously are in basic agreement with each other with regard to the subject at hand. Mr. Jim Lanting, who as a practicing attorney and a strong supporter of Christian education makes it his business to keep abreast of legal developments which are likely to affect us, was asked to write an article for Perspectives. He decided to write on the subject of corporal punishment. Mr. Gary VanDerSchaaf, a teacher at Adams Street Christian School in Grand Rapids, had to write an article for the December issue of Adams' "Announcer." By coincidence he chose the same topic. We decided therefore to borrow Gary's piece from the "Announcer" and use it to provide, for this issue's "Viewpoints," a pair of complementary articles on corporal punishment, especially as that is (or was) exercised in the schools.*

# The Demise of Corporal Punishment in Schools:

*Quasi in Loco Parentis?*

James Lanting

*Mr. Creakle came to where I sat, and told me that if I were famous for biting, he was famous for biting, too. He then showed me the cane, and asked me what I thought of that, for a tooth. Was it a sharp tooth, hey? Was*

*it a double tooth, hey? Had it a deep prong, hey? Did it bite, hey? Did it bite? At every question he gave me a fleshy cut with it that made me writhe. Not that I mean to say these were special marks of distinction, which only I received. On the contrary, a large number of boys (especially the smaller ones) were visited with similar instances of*

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Mr. Lanting is a member of our South Holland Protestant Reformed Church.

*notice, as Mr. Creakle made the round of the schoolroom. Half the establishment was writhing and crying, before the day's work began. . . .*

Charles Dickens,  
*David Copperfield*

Although such torments as those endured by young Copperfield and his classmates at Mr. Creakle's dreary Salem House school are virtually nonexistent today, the debate over corporal punishment by school teachers has not abated. Many parents, educational experts, child psychologists, and public interest professionals are demanding a permanent moratorium on physical punishment of disobedient children in the school setting. The anti-corporal punishment movement is active on several fronts.

First, numerous state legislatures have adopted statutes outlawing corporal punishment in schools. As of 1986, eight states (Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont) have passed laws prohibiting physical punishment of school children in state schools.

In many other states, parents, guardians, and state social service agencies are filing legal actions in the local and federal courts against school teachers and headmasters alleging violation of children's rights, battery, or other

civil wrongs, even where the children were subjected only to relatively mild spankings. The courts have historically dismissed such actions as inconsistent with the doctrine of *in loco parentis*, but recent decisions in several states seem to indicate that teachers' traditional shield of legal immunity for reasonable corporal punishment is being pierced. (Indeed, some state courts have recently punished *parents* because state agencies alleged they spanked their children too severely or too frequently).

Although the U.S. Supreme Court in 1977 decided that reasonable corporal punishment of children in schools was not violative of children's rights, only last spring the Court appeared to retreat from that ruling by allowing a state trial to proceed in Penasco, New Mexico, against a principal who had paddled a 4th grader on the buttocks. Moreover, numerous local school systems, such as the Chicago City Schools, have banned corporal punishment entirely.

There also appears to be a growing consensus among psychologists, sociologists, and educators that corporal punishment is not only ineffective, but is actually counterproductive, contributing instead to the insidious societal problems of anxiety, violence, and abuse:

"... the Supreme Court simply

should forbid all corporal punishment, especially of children by teachers. In a society appalled by widespread child abuse, why is the deliberate inflicting of pain allowed in schools? . . . What corporal punishment usually produces is not better behavior, but rebelliousness, fear, and hatred of schools and often nightmares, anxieties, and loss of self-esteem, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. . . ." Joan Beck, "A Small, Good Move on School Paddling," *Chicago Tribune*, March 8, 1988. Such arguments against corporal punishment are not new, of course, but one does get the impression that such views are gaining momentum in the last decade or so. For example, in 1979 the Swedish parliament banned all corporal punishment of children (including parental punishment) by a vote of 259 to 9.

On the other hand, it should be noted that by far the majority of states still permit corporal punishment in schools. A brief survey of school law in the states in which our Protestant Reformed schools are primarily located discloses that Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Colorado have no legislation or case law prohibiting corporal punishment, and California only provides certain statutory guidelines for the administration of such punishment. The language of a fairly recent Illinois

appellate opinion is typical of these states which still sanction corporal punishment:

"A teacher, standing *in loco parentis*, has the right to inflict corporal punishment so long as such action is reasonable under the circumstances. Furthermore, the use of corporal punishment by a teacher will not give rise to civil liability unless the punishment was actuated by malice or inflicted in a wilful and wanton manner." *Gordon v. Oak Park School District*, 320 N.E.2d 389.

But even though the majority of states still permit corporal punishment, I think it is safe to say that in many schools even mild physical punishment of children by teachers is becoming rare. I recently interviewed several of our principals who informed me that it is not unusual for an entire school year to pass without a single occurrence of corporal punishment. This is in stark contrast with, for example, many southern fundamentalist schools today where spankings by headmasters are frequent and brisk. It appears that, unlike the past, corporal punishment may be virtually nonexistent in our schools.

Why is this? Could it be that just recently our children have scaled heights of sanctification, compliance, and obedience unattained heretofore? Unlikely.

Could it be that we no longer embrace the Biblical notion that a

parent who "spareth the rod hateth his son?" Probably not.

Or could it be that, although we still believe that *parents* should inflict physical punishment upon disobedient children (Proverbs 23:13, 14), we no longer think it appropriate for someone *other* than parents (teachers) to inflict bodily punishment? Is it possible that we now perceive teachers to be "in the place of parents" except for infliction of punishment upon disobedient children? Has *in loco parentis* become *quasi in loco parentis*?

I think it has; and it may not be all bad. Cruel Mr. Creakle aside, all of us know of instances "in the old days" when teachers abused their right (rite?) of corporal punishment in many creative ways. Moreover, perhaps at times teachers became insensitive to the delicate dynamics of inflicting pain upon someone else's children and the natural resentment parents experience when others spank their little darlings.

In any event, the pendulum seems to have swung the other way and many school children today enjoy, for better or worse, a spank-free environment. But I suspect that sometimes frustrated teachers in our school federation are deliberately refraining from corporal punishment *even* when it is indisputably necessary because (1) they fear reprisal by offended

parents, and (2) they are uncertain of their school's policy on corporal punishment. My interviews with some of our principals disclosed also that few, if any, of our schools have formal policies on corporal punishment.

Given this state of affairs, it may be advisable for each school board to adopt a formal written corporal punishment policy. There are at least four reasons for this. First, parents, teachers, and administrators are apparently uncertain what corporal punishments, if any, are acceptable. Secondly, teachers should formally be given the right to administer reasonable corporal punishment when necessary without fear of retaliation from mawkish or protective parents. Thirdly, a written policy will safeguard against any potential abuses. Finally, such a written policy in this controversial area will serve the school well in the event of possible (albeit improbable) legal action by litigious guardians or zealous state agencies.

Although several national school associations have recently published suggested corporal punishment policies, I propose the following for our school boards and staffs to consider:

#### Corporal Punishment Policy

The Board recognizes the Biblical imperative that parents must at times inflict corporal punish-

ment upon disobedient children. The teachers and administrators, standing *in loco parentis*, likewise have the right and duty to exercise reasonable corporal punishment to maintain discipline, provided the following guidelines are observed:

1. Corporal punishment should be exercised with prudence, moderation, and discretion.

2. Corporal punishment shall be limited to spanking the disobedient child on the buttocks with a paddle designated for that purpose.

3. Corporal punishment shall be inflicted by the teacher or principal in the presence of another staff member.

4. The child's parents shall be notified the same day by the

school principal.

5. Parents may request in writing that the Board exempt their children from corporal punishment for medical or other well-grounded reasons.

Generally speaking, school boards should loath adopting restrictive rules. But because of recent developments in this sensitive area of corporal punishment, it may be advisable to consider such minimum guidelines as suggested above. The desired goal should be a balanced and workable policy to guide teachers and principals who are often burdened with the difficult task of disciplining with love the disobedient children of others.

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## Sparing the Rod

Gary VanDerSchaaf

"Reading and writing and 'rithmetic/All to the tune of a hickory stick." So goes the old ditty; but so it definitely does not go in American schools today. The hickory stick is all but forgotten, banned by law in some places, or used only as a last resort, reserved for the most dire offenses in most schools, as it is in our own.

I've been thinking of corporal punishment lately, not because I've got a particularly bad class

this year, but because within the last few weeks, the Michigan State Legislature came perilously close to passing a law which would ban any form of corporal punishment in all state and private schools. According to this bill, school staff could not administer a spanking, or cause a spanking to be given. In other words, not only could the school not spank; the school could not tell the home to spank, or give information to

the home that might incline you or cause you to spank your child.

As covenant parents, we recognize this bill for what it is: an unholy bit of legislation that, if enacted, would have put the state a half-step from forbidding corporal punishment in the home. Our parental Protestant Reformed schools are extensions of the home, with the teacher in the parents' place, given, then, the parents' authority and divinely mandated duty to spare not the rod which, with reproof, gives wisdom (Proverbs 13:24; 24:15).

Regarding this recent "spanking-ban bill," however, I wonder what our reaction would have been if the bill had passed. We would have objected, I'm sure, on the principle grounds outlined above. But how convincing would our objections to state control be? Our schools have a long history of compliance to state regulations, even regulations that the state has no business enforcing. For instance, by demanding state certification of teachers and by annual certification review, the state controls who teaches in our schools. Further, and in direct connection to the corporal punishment issue, we have long acquiesced to state regulation of the *manner* in which corporal punishment is administered. Did we ever really think that if we allowed the state to determine the exact manner in

which Biblical discipline was administered that the state would not someday seek to forbid its practice altogether?

Secondly, I wonder how sincere our objections would be. Really now, what is the sense in protesting the prohibition of a form of discipline that we, for all intents and purposes, have long since abandoned? In most Protestant Reformed classrooms today, you will find children whose parents forbid school spankings under any circumstances, children whose parents forbid spanking except for the most heinous offenses, and lastly, that ever-smaller group of children whose parents tell the school, "If you think he needs it, spank him." (Oddly enough, the children of such parents do not seem to need much spanking.)

In such a classroom it is impossible to administer corporal punishment equitably and consistently, and soon the paddle — the rod of Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13; and 29:15 — falls into disregard, disrespect, and, finally, disuse.

For the state to forbid corporal punishment in the school is principally wrong. It is just as wrong, however, for the *home* to forbid this punishment. Furthermore, it is wrong for the home and the school to consider corporal punishment as an "ace-in-the-hole," last-ditch defense

against behavioral catastrophe. As Dr. Noel Weeks, author of *The Christian School* remarks, "To see physical punishment as the very last resort, never to be used except in some rare and extreme circumstance, is not taking Proverbs seriously" (p. 70).

The Lord sends such trials as the state's attempts to control our schools for the benefit of His people. It is time, I think, for homes, school boards, and teachers to re-evaluate their dedication to Biblical principles and practices of discipline. The apostle Peter tells us that no form of chastisement is, at the time, pleasant, and that is as true for him who receives the chastisement as it is for him who must

administer it. But Scripture is clear on this point and, as ever, changeless. The rod is not the product of a crueler, less enlightened age, a relic of the days of inadequate psychological understanding of the child. It was and remains a part of the God-ordained way to produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness. To deny the rod, at home or in school, in sum or in part, is to confess hatred of our children. It is to condemn them to a life of godless foolishness. And it is to invite shame, not only upon father and mother in the home, but upon mother church, her risen Lord, and upon the heavenly Father of us all.



## CURRENT ISSUES

## Where in the World is Zaire?

Brian Dykstra

The December 1988 issue of the *National Geographic* contained a map of the world. If asked, could you point, on that map, to the continent on which you live? Could you locate, even in a general fashion, the nation in which you live? Might you even

be able to locate the particular area of your nation in which you live? Would you be insulted if I were to ask you these questions in a way which suggested that I felt you could not "find yourself"? I hope so.

The August 8, 1988 issue of



*Newsweek* printed an article titled, "Lost on the Planet Earth." It bemoans the shocking lack of geographical knowledge on the part of American adults. The article begins: "'Have you heard of the lost generation? We have found them,' said Gilbert M. Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society, which last week released a report on the dismal state of Americans' knowledge about the globe. 'They are lost. They haven't the faintest idea where they are.'"

The article then relates some shocking findings of research done by Gallup. Fourteen percent of Americans were unable to pick out the United States on a world map. *Newsweek* suggests tongue in cheek, "Perhaps Gallup should have included a helpful 'You are here' pointer." Only half knew that Arabs and Jews were fighting in Israel. "One in three cannot name any of the members of NATO — 16 percent think the Soviet Union is a member of the group. And 5 percent don't know that Washington is the nation's capital."

Could an ignorance of geography be something serious for us? Remember, geography is more than knowing where cities or nations are. Geography also includes the study of how soil conditions, the availability of water, and the climate affect

man as he lives on earth.

Gilbert M. Grosvenor feels that geographic ignorance is serious. He wrote an article called "Will We Mend Our Earth?" in the December 1988 *National Geographic*. Grosvenor writes: "The National Geographic society began its first century with a determination to better understand the world. We have begun our second with the same determination but with an added imperative: to encourage a better stewardship of the planet. . . .

"All our concerns, all our hopes point to a need for better knowledge of geography. How can we hope for good stewardship of this planet if we don't know how life interacts with life? How can we hope to live peacefully with our fellow man if we don't comprehend where or how he lives? How can we hope to remain a successful economic competitor if we know so little of the nations we are competing against?"

Grosvenor, of course, approaches the subject from a godless point of view. Such is very evident in his title where the earth is called "*our* earth." Man is not viewed as the steward of the earth by virtue of God's creating Adam as the caretaker of the garden. Grosvenor feels that the earth should be cared for since it will be man's home until the nuclear furnace of sun runs out of

fuel in a few million years, unless man has the technology to find a different place to live.

While the worldly can see the importance of geography, we should not feel that we could just as well leave the arena just for their use. Rev. J. Heys pointed out the importance of geography in a series of articles in Volume 39 of *The Standard Bearer* called "My Father's World." Rev. Heys began by stating: "Indeed this is God's world. It makes no difference what man may do with it. It makes no difference how greedily he may press it into the service of his own flesh. This world is God's and no one and nothing can ever change that. We may try to deny it. We may behave as though it is not at all true, but the fact still remains that it is His world. All of it! All the vastness of outer space. All the world of unseen germs and viruses. The depth of the sea which still remains unexplored by man and hides from his eyes many of God's works and creatures. The animate and inanimate creatures, the organic and inorganic substances, the heaven and earth, the WORLD in its broadest sense, it all is *God's world*."

In the second article of his series Rev. Heys speaks specifically about geography. "Surely it is in the Geography class that the child can be made to see most clearly that this is his Father's

world. He sees the mountains and the streams, the rich soil and the minerals, the plants and the animals, the food and the water for his life. And, if he has had a covenant training, if he has been taught in this subject by a believer, by one who gave instruction in His fear, that child will in reverence and awe cry out: 'My Father's world!' O, reader of these lines, do you want your child to do that?"

An understanding of geography will also help us as saints to watch for the signs of the return of Christ. Through geography, students can study the effects of the opening of the seventh seal which is recorded in Revelation 8. The opening of the seventh seal brings forth seven angels blowing trumpets. The first four trumpets deal with the increase of the destruction of the world.

A major cause of our geographic woes, in a national sense, is apathy. The *Newsweek* article concludes: "The vast majority of Americans in the Gallup survey still insist that they think geography is useful and important, but they obviously haven't taken the time to master the map. Why bother? Japanese capital, Korean cars, French wine, English nobility and Chinese food all find their way *here*. Who cares where *there* is?"

The cause for us is, perhaps, a lack of good geography texts.

able? After all, in order to sleep soundly tonight are you going to run to your atlas to find out where in the world Zaire is?



REPORT OF THE 34th ANNUAL  
PROTESTANT REFORMED TEACHERS' CONVENTION  
(October 27-28, 1988)

Gerald Kuiper

We began the convention with about 70 teachers meeting in South Holland Protestant Reformed School at 8:00 Thursday morning for registration. All of our schools in the Grand Rapids area and from South Holland were well represented. In addition, teachers came from the following Protestant Reformed schools: Hull, Iowa; Northwest Protestant Reformed Christian School in Doon, Iowa; Free Christian School of Edgerton, Minnesota; Loveland Protestant Reformed School from Loveland, Colorado; and Lynden Christian School all the way from Lynden, Washington. Following registration, opening devotions were held during which time we sang together (I always enjoy the spirited

singing of our teachers. I'm sure Martin Luther would approve of the singing of the "School masters"!).

We then enjoyed the keynote address by Rev. Ron VanOverloop entitled, "Teachers Seeking the Kingdom of Heaven." In this instructive and inspirational address Rev. VanOverloop pointed out that our duty as teachers is not only to impart knowledge, but to impart the fear of Jehovah as well. We stand beside our students as fellow citizens of the kingdom. He taught us that teachers are to model the fear of Jehovah, by confessing to one another and to our students our sins, and by showing one another our forgiveness. We are to present God as



Jim Regnerus



Connie Meyer



Jan Zandstra

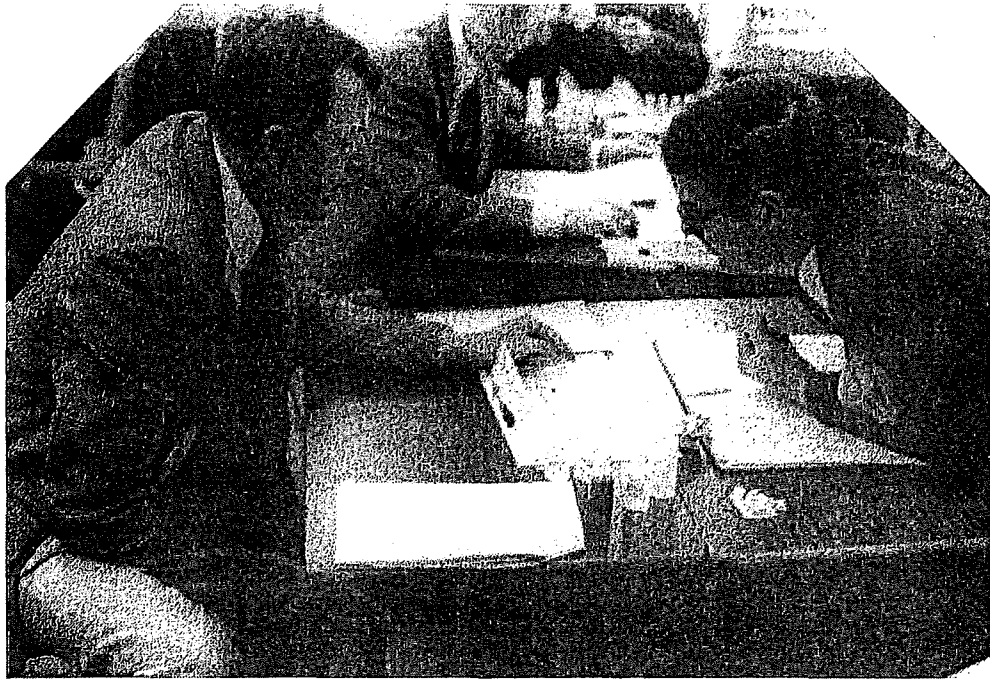
Stimulating  
presentations  
and...



Gerald Kuiper



Denise DeJong

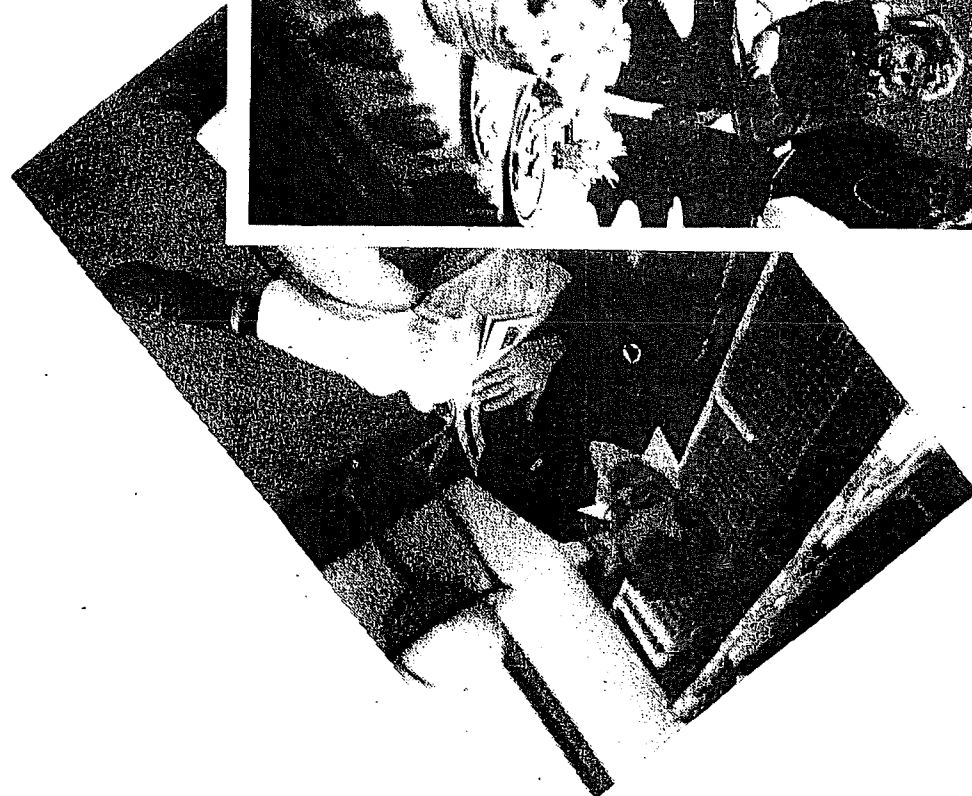


... eager learners.



## BULLETIN BOARD

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“Coffee”  
breaks

holy and sovereign, and attack wrong attitudes we see in our students by condemning sin *with understanding*. Rev. VanOverloop charged us to strive faithfully, even though we do it imperfectly. He urged us to be constant in study and prayer so we ourselves can be filled with the fear of Jehovah.

Following his speech we had "crunch" (coffee-lunch), followed by four 75-minute sectionals on subjects such as "Math Their Way," "Newspapers in the Classrooms," and "Junior High Art." After noon devotions we boarded buses and cars and went to the Museum of Science and Industry Omni Max where we enjoyed a presentation about "The Great Barrier Reef" off Australia. After a lunch at Berghoff's Restaurant in downtown Chicago we went to the Adler Planetarium where we experienced two lectures: "The Universal Motions," and "The Planetary Puzzle." We were once again reminded of the wonderful hand of God who "orders the stars in their courses." We could rejoice in our God who shows *His* glory in the heavens. At about 6:30 PM we were free to tour downtown Chicago or go back to South Holland.

Day two began with a delicious breakfast at South Holland School. Imagine — scrambled eggs, Belgian waffles with strawberries, blueberries, peaches, and

whipped cream!!! It was delicious. We then had devotions, followed by a choice of more sectionals on Jr. High Science, Primary Art, and Student Motivation. Following these sectionals we had a break.

Professor Robert Decker then spoke to us on "Developing Proper Self-Esteem." He showed us that we look at ourselves according to the standard of God and His Word. We see in that Word that we are totally depraved, but we also see ourselves as saved by grace through Jesus Christ. Therefore, we see *ourselves* and our children as *precious* in Christ. We are to treat these children with great care. We are to criticize them constructively and be lavish with praise. We have to learn to listen to the children and address *their* worries. We are to teach the children that God has a place for each of them, and He gives to each child His grace so that each one may serve God in his particular place. We are to say with Paul, "I am, because God made me!" The fruits of proper self-esteem will show themselves in contentment, gratitude to God, and hard work by each in his own place. What an encouragement his address was to all of us! We then had a business meeting of the organization which puts on our convention — the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute. New officers were

# ... the King's Speech to His Daughters

## GENESIS 1 and 2

*Mrs. Engelsma is a member of our Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.*

We open our Bible to the beginning (the opening of our wounds): Genesis 1:27. So God created man in His own image. . . male and female created He them. Here we learn that not only the man, but also the woman, was created by the Hand of God. I



say *also* because we read in Genesis 2 verse 18 that, when it was declared "not good that the man should be alone," God then accomplished His goodness to Adam by forming from him woman, to be his fulfillment physically, mentally, and emotionally. Thus Adam had completeness.

Continuing now in Genesis one, we read in verse 28 that God blessed them, and said unto them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it. . . ." God blessed them; and this blessing of God may be regarded as the source from which the human race has flowed. Surely God could have covered the earth with a multitude of created people, but, as Calvin posits this truth, it was His will that we should issue from this one fountain, Adam and Eve.

As we are considering exclusively the woman's role as wife and mother, I ask you to recall that Adam named his wife Eve, meaning "life as mother" (Gen. 3:20), for she, with him, was created also for the production of offspring, in order that man might replenish the earth.

God intends the human race to be multiplied by generation, yet not as brute beasts, which have intercourse promiscuously. See here that in Genesis 2:22 we read that God joins Adam to his wife — forming and bringing her to him.

This is the institution of marriage, within which they might produce a legitimate seed. God gives His benediction upon marriage as the pure and lawful method of increase.

Perusing the first chapters of Scripture, and studying these historical events, we may be inclined to ask, "Why doesn't this blessing nullify the chastisement inflicted on the repentant, believing woman?" Unto the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:19).

We must know, we must understand, that this sentence is not a curse given to bring us to ruin. Indeed not! It is exactly what the word chastisement means, namely, applied affliction and pain, given in love, in order to recall to duty, or bring to repentance. And this, in turn, is coupled with the truth found in I Timothy 2:15: "Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." Does this mean that the believing woman is saved when she becomes pregnant and delivers a child? Of course not! It doesn't even mean that she has knowledge of and enjoys her salvation only, or for the first

time, when she becomes a mother. Rather this (having children, with all that is inclusive) is the ordinary way of life in which God maintains and enriches the spiritual sensitivity and perception of the Christian woman.

We mothers have experienced (oh, yes, we know as well as the unbelieving feminist) that children are expensive — they are demanding of our energy and time, they're not always so lovable, and, more often than we like to admit, they're unthankful. They even can be a bitter disappointment, and so we grieve. What shall we do when the burden and frustrations of motherhood threaten to overwhelm us, when the multiplied sins cause sorrow and pain? Do we throw up our hands in despair and abdicate our given position as daughters of the Heavenly King, daughters who are privileged to bring forth and nurture the church of tomorrow? Here we confess, to our shame and added sorrow, that we at times even do reject the chasten-

ings of the Lord and so become impatient, complaining that His way is too difficult, too unbearable — which in turn leads to self-pity and depression.

Well, where is the remedy? Where must we go? *Run* to His word of Promise for strength, for encouragement, for guidance. Pray that the ears of your heart may be opened by His gracious Spirit. Listen and believe, dear daughter!

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward. "The promise (i.e., our Savior, our salvation) is unto you and your children." And then there's this most beautiful, exquisite, even humbling testimony, spoken to *us* in Mark 9:37: "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth *Me*."

Believing this truth, Jesus Christ *in* our children, we are assured and confident that our lives as mothers in our homes are neither wasted nor fruitless.

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by Carole Reitsma

#### TITUS 2:3-5

The Apostle Paul in the book of Titus instructed Titus to choose elders in the church and

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to teach good works, obedience, and brotherly love to the Christians at Crete. This was the makings of sound doctrine. This morning we will discuss the characteristics of the older woman and what her duties are as stated in Titus 2:3-5.

Who is an older woman? Must her hair be gray? Should she be 60, 50? An older woman has no specified age, no definite appearance. She is one who is full of life and the experiences that life brings. She may be a 70-year-old grandmother or a 30-year-old widow. She is a woman who is wise in the ways of her Lord and has received grace to apply the ways of the Lord to her life.

What does Paul want us to learn about the proper character of the older woman? First, that her behavior must become holiness. What does this mean? Holiness implies separateness, purity, and righteousness. A separation from the world; a seeking of the things of the kingdom — we are talking about her walk. She must walk as a woman who loves the Lord. The younger women must see her love of the Lord and the grace that her Heavenly Father works in her life.

And, how does she acquire this holiness? Our bodies need daily food — good nourishing food. We would not neglect this. To grow spiritually we must be fed from God's Word daily. How much more is it true that we should not neglect this food for our souls! Spiritually we can give no more than we give ourselves. Unless we are grounded in the Word we have nothing to give away. Galatians 5:22-23 says to us, "But the fruit of the Spirit is

love, joy, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These fruits of the Spirit the older woman must exemplify. God must be first in her life.

Another characteristic is that she must not be a bearer of tales. She cannot be a gossip. The vicious poison of gossip has ruined many friendships. In Proverbs 11:13 we read, "a talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." She must not falsely accuse others. The heart of the younger woman must be able to trust in her.

Titus 2:3 tells us that the older woman must not be given to much wine. In the Apostle Paul's day it was not uncommon for a Roman woman to have many slaves. Because of this she had many idle hours. These idle hours were often spent in drinking too much. Paul took this opportunity to warn the Christian woman against this sin.

We may apply this to our lives also. We have no slaves, but modern conveniences have made our work much easier, giving us more free time. It is not likely we would fall into the trap of drunkenness, but we have other temptations to waste our time. The older woman must be an example to the younger women in showing them the proper use of their time.

We have learned some very important facts about the older woman. She must show behavior that becomes holiness; she must not gossip or falsely accuse others; she must show good use of her time; and she must be a teacher of good things. The

failure of the older woman to be a teacher of good things is a very serious error. When this happens it becomes a great handicap for the younger women. The younger women need the spiritual, biblical instruction of the older women.

[illegible]

## Book Review

*The Christian School: An Introduction* by Noel Weeks. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988. 204pp. \$11.95 (paper) [reviewed by Gary VanDerSchaaf]

I have long wished that Protestant Reformed School boards would require new teachers, as well as parents who are enrolling their first child, to sign a statement saying, "I have read Prof. D. Engelsma's book *Reformed Education*. I understand it and agree with it, and will do my best to teach or support the school according to the principles and practices described therein." With certain reservations, I would recommend that *The Christian School* be added to that imaginary mandatory reading list.

The book has many strengths, not the least of which is its lucid style. Dr. Weeks is Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Sydney, Australia, and holds a number of academic degrees. I feared that the infamous "In-

verse "Understandability" law would be in effect; that is, "The more letters a person has behind his name, the less easy it is to understand what he says." Dr. Weeks is a happy exception to that sad rule; his writing is clear and forceful, and is completely free of "educationaleze."

And his ideas are not only well-stated, they are well-balanced. Dr. Weeks, speaking from his experience as both teacher and Christian school board president, addresses his remarks to the teacher in the classroom and to the parents whose labors provide the means to place and keep that teacher there. For instance, while teachers are warned that overmuch homework should not rob children of time for family fellowship and responsibilities, he also cautions parents, saying, "Parents who want a school which will just take care of their children, but not interfere in their private lives, should not choose a Christian School" (p. 102). Further, in stressing the need for communication and mutual understanding among

board, staff, and home, Weeks remarks, "Parents and teacher must be willing to listen to, esteem, and love one another. The teacher cannot use his supposed professionalism, the parent his supposed employer relationship to the teacher to set aside their relationship in Christ" (p. 177).

Yet another of the book's strengths is its refusal to fall prey to educational novelty and fad. Dr. Weeks is an Australian, writing to Australians, addressing the need and manner of establishing parent-controlled Christian schools in Australia, where the Christian school movement is in its infancy. Thus the book deals with very fundamental issues, fundamental *truths*. We in the United States, who in some cases are entering our third or even fourth generation of Christian school support, need reminding of these truths. Many of Weeks' observations would provide good discussion material in board, faculty, and PTA meetings. A few of his remarks are given below. See what you think of them.

"[The Christian school] exists to aid parents in their task of raising children in the fear of the Lord. . . it is supplementary. . . to be a help and adjunct to what the family itself is doing in the education of its children." p. 7

"[In the training of the child, Scripture places a] particular

responsibility on the father. . . . we as Christians need to think and work towards a work-style that is more conducive to family life." p. 6

"Parents are to train their children. The school can supplement but cannot replace the home." p. 7

"While the school may contribute to the development of a child's personality or help in the management of personal relationships, it is quite unable to replace the parent in this training." p. 8

"A school is not well equipped to deal with personal problems and problems of behaviour which require a long term relationship between a mature Christian adult and a child." p. 8

"The school cannot set curriculum goals in terms of things which require the Holy Spirit's enlightenment." p. 36

"[For the home and school] to see physical punishment as the very last resort, never to be used except in some rare and extreme circumstance, is not taking Proverbs seriously." p. 70

"If people are not taking those responsibilities seriously [those of maintaining a Christian school], it may be that they are not growing in the Lord." p. 90

"Children need to be motivated to work at learning. For learning necessitates work. The prime motivation is that God requires it of us." p. 65

Regular readers of the *Perspectives* will understand the appeal of the following to the undersigned:

"We are not teaching morals under the cover of physical education." p. 174

And as a science teacher in a Protestant Reformed School, I found the following satisfying, exciting, and challenging:

“The relationship between God and creation is a covenantal relationship. That applies, not just for the human or even animate creation; it applies to the whole creation. It is the relation between the Lord who speaks commands and a creature who obeys.”  
p. 123

Science teachers, can you see how this might change approach to “natural law”? Bible teachers, and all believers, what does this say about the nature of providence and miracles?

As I was gratified to find Weeks' covenantal view of creation, so was I disappointed to find no covenantal view of the child or of Christian education explicitly stated in the book.

Given Dr. Weeks' correct emphasis on the home's responsibility to educate its children, it is unclear, to this reviewer at least, how Weeks justifies the transfer of that responsibility to a school in the absence of any covenantal framework, particularly in the absence of the idea of *in loco parentis*, whereby the teacher stands in the place of the parent. Dr. Weeks stresses correctly, again and again, that the Christian school is an "adjunct," a "supplement," even an "extension" of the home; but I looked in vain for any Biblical grounds for that extension, any Scriptural justification for the existence of the very Christian school that Weeks elsewhere so ably and accurately describes.

Nevertheless, *The Christian School: An Introduction* remains worthwhile and necessary reading for all who have any connection to Christian schooling. I hope this book from "down under" is read "all over," and receives the wide readership which it richly deserves.



A teacher who grows  
is one who uses his classroom  
as a laboratory  
in which to gain new and better experience.

## SAVORING SEVEN

# Musings

John M. Faber

...while I was musing the fire burned (Psalm 39:3).

Yesterday I was a-musing on the first-cousin relationship of fish and fowl, each with their own characteristics. Water birds live in or near the water, of course, for their food can only be found in watery places. Then there are other kinds of birds that live in trees, bushes, meadows, and mountains, also because of their peculiar needs. Then I thought, they all in one way or another speak of the glory of their Maker. Speak? Well, they don't speak like people do — although some of them seem to speak in English, like the whippoorwill. Then I remembered that one of the water birds, the loon, voices a sound like a human laugh. I also think of a whistling bird that whistles quite plainly, "Bob White." And I have a cardinal in my back yard with a most beautiful song which I surely cannot spell in English. But to me it would be like, "Whee-wor-wor-wor-ship Theet." And when I hear that "t" after "thee" I recognize it as an exclamation point!

Then I mused on the early morning call of the red-breasted robin. Only he and his Master can understand that speech. To my ears it is most delightful. Methinks God has taught the robin to teach *us* to thank Him for yet another day! And even the barnyard rooster, with its morning "cock-a-doodle-doo" is probably saying, "God wants me to awaken youoo." Oh, Creator God, how great Thou art!

Then I wondered about the busy bee (one just buzzed by me). It is another distinct family of living creatures from the hand of God. Unlike the birds whose wings flap or soar, and can readily be seen by me in action, this flyer's wings are transparent, and they flit(?) so rapidly that their action cannot be seen. And, I wondered, in God's wisdom He gave them a radar system that pre-dates and out-dates the most sophisticated radar system of modern mankind. The honey bee, after sipping the nectar from a clover blossom, can zoom back to its beehive honeycomb in a straight line. That way has become famous in our language as

a "beeline."

Musing about the bee and its beeline, I thought about the many birds and animals to which God has given a homing instinct. That's what my dictionary calls it, but I cannot find the word "instinct" in my Bible dictionary. Man calls it instinct because he thinks that it is a natural trait of those beeliners. No, no, they did not adapt to their needs by way of evolution. God increated that marvelous ability on that Creation Day.

The uniqueness of the water fowl is that it was created to thrive in watery environment. The ungodly evolutionist says that it adapted to those surroundings in some millions of years. Poppycock! We know better, for God's Word tells us that He made all creatures "after their kind." There is the crane with its long legs to wade in shallow water to snatch up a slowly swimming fish in its long beak for its breakfast. The slowly swimming duck, with its beak (bill) different from that of the crane, is able to snip off the leaves on under-water plants for its "daily bread."

Then I mused about another member of flying creatures which are neither bee nor bird. One of those infrequent visitors to my back yard is that elusive, but beautiful, dragonfly. I marvel at that member of the insect world. It has four, (count them, one,

two, three, four) gossamer wings. With these four flimsy things it can fly miraculously: forward, upwards, downward, right, and left. Then I wondered what God had provided for its breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I know a little about animal fare: like, horses eat grass; cats eat mice; and some even eat one another. But even that knowledge is so limited. Then how can I know what that flittery, fluttery dragonfly can find to eat!

Wondering and marveling at that part of God's Creation: how many millions of individual creatures; their hundreds of individual characteristics; the understandable, but marvelous ways in which each of these individuals "fits" in its own niche. . . my heart sings the old refrain, Oh, God, how great Thou art!

While I was contemplating the immensity of all that, I glanced down and saw a black critter walk, no, run over my shoe. It was a common ant, who with its tiny feet very easily overcame that huge obstacle in its path. Watching it go in the grass nearby I saw that each blade of grass was an obstacle. It would have to climb up each blade, and down again, to make any forward progress. I thought that it must take a prodigious amount of time and patience to traverse my yard! My first reaction was to say, what a dumb creature that is.



But then I remembered a Sunday School text I had been privileged to learn: "Go to the ant thou sluggard, and be wise. . . ." Wise? Yes, because Solomon had mused on that very thing, and he judged it to be very wise in that it "knew" enough in the summertime to provide food for the wintertime. It neatly stored it in its pantry for later use. Then I realized that it was I that was dumb for my short-sightedness, not seeing the ant's fore-sightedness. That brought me to the certainty that God who even knows when a hair falls from my head surely knows what a little black ant is doing! Knows? Of course He knows. He created that little creature with that wisdom! Oh God, how incomprehensible Thou art!

Folding my arms over my chest, and letting my head fall forward, I thought I would take a little snooze. But alas, I was alerted to a new visitor. It signalled its nearness to my unprotected neck with a really high-pitched hum. Sure enough, it was a mosquito. Now there is a creature of which I do not know what it eats. But I do know what it drinks! If I sit quietly, its next drink will be my blood. It has a little drill with which it can bore a tiny hole through my skin, and through that hollow tube-drill it will suck up a stomach full of my red and white

corpuscles. Then, in its seeming kindness, it will release a bit of chemical to cause my blood to clot so that I will not bleed too much. But that act of "kindness" soon reveals itself to be a parting shot! That chemical causes a reaction which raises a bump that will itch for quite some time. That little bump is the calling card it left behind! Pesky mosquito! A minute ago I was wondering what the dragonfly could possibly find to eat. Probably its fare consists of insects. Then I hope it really likes my pet pest, the mosquito! I am glad that I know that God created *all* living creatures, or I would surely think that the pesky mosquito came from the devil's workshop.

Then I mused, correctly, that upon the sin of Adam and Eve, God sent all kinds of thorns and thistles (pests) upon them and their future generations. So I concluded that we must endure all those pests in nature to remind us daily of the guilt of our original and daily sins. Yes, I thought, we share in the sin of the first Adam, but, praise God, we also share in the Redemption merited for us by The Second Adam on the Cross on that memorable Good Friday! Then I mused on the last line of the Doxology: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

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## from the TEACHERS' LOUNGE

*There are several "teachers' lounges" for which I'm beginning to develop a particular fondness. One of them is Lynden's; for out of it have come several fine articles written, as I understand it, specifically for Perspectives, and unsolicited. The writer is Mr. Robert (Pete) Adams, who this time took pen in hand to address the matter of the rationale for starting and maintaining a Protestant Reformed High School. I wish that there were some way to give the article a bit more prominence in this issue — like colored-type, or something like that. Let me just say that, if there's one article you read twice, I hope it's this one. Whether we're teachers, parents, or teenage students, we need, now and then, a reminder of what we are about. And Mr. Adams reminds us masterfully.*

### In Full Bloom

#### The What and the Why of a Protestant Reformed High School

Pete Adams

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

Have you ever wondered what makes a high school a high school? What is it that differentiates primary from secondary education? Is it just more of the same only harder and more varied (a quantitative difference), or is it schooling of a different sort (a qualitative difference)? I believe the second view is the correct one, and this understand-

ing has a definite bearing on what we should be looking for in a high school for our children.

In 1956, Benjamin S. Bloom, a secular education analyst, wrote a book concerning the levels at which students (and everyone else) think. It has had widespread acceptance and influence in educational circles ever since. Here are his levels, along with a brief descriptive phrase, beginning with the lowest:

1. Knowledge — the ability to recall given data and information.
2. Comprehension — a transla-

tion, internalization; the ability to put information in your own words.

3. Application — to be able to utilize learning in a given situation.

4. Analysis — to be able to compare and contrast.

5. Synthesis — to create a new situation for application of data.

6. Evaluation — critical judgment. This assumes abilities in all other levels plus a conscious value judgment.

Looking at this analysis of thinking, particularly in light of the apostle Paul's statement (see above), we can say that Bloom has expressed truth concerning the way God created us. If so, as Protestant Reformed people concerned that our covenant seed should preserve and develop the truth God has given us, our attention should be drawn to those higher levels of thought. You see, don't you, that if the truth that we have been given so graciously by God is to continue with our children, they have to be able to fight the spiritual battle where it is being fought? They must internalize and apply God's truth, and be able especially to analyze and evaluate new propositions as to whether they are good and proper or whether they are antithetical to the Gospel.

Now high school is precisely where this development of thinking, particularly evaluation, main-

ly takes place. This is where lifetime directions are being decided upon. It is not that now, all of a sudden, our covenant seed start asking "why" questions. They have been doing that all along. But in high school they need to see that there are real and true answers to all their earlier questions on the deeper, mature, adult level. For instance, a younger child might ask why we go to a Protestant Reformed church and not to another one. We could say that this is the place where we feel God's truth is preached most purely, and that answer probably would satisfy. In a high school Bible class, if this question is asked, or better, if it is being answered all the year long, alternative doctrines and viewpoints can be discussed frequently, and it can be demonstrated how our Protestant Reformed doctrines and viewpoints are correct, based on Scripture. This would encourage at least the beginning of the analysis and evaluation levels of thinking as stated above. Since high school students are still on their way to adult, Christian thought-patterns, however, they need the input and guidance and example that can come only from having Protestant Reformed teachers teaching, at *every* level of learning, in all areas of academic life. If we want our children to graduate from high school with a Protestant Reformed world/life

view, we must exert biblical, Reformed influence on their thinking during their high school years not only in church and at home but in a Protestant Reformed school.

Another man expressed this same understanding of the critical importance of Protestant Reformed high schools in the September 15, 1937 issue of the *Standard Bearer*. In an article entitled, "Our Own Christian High School," Rev. Herman Hoeksema noted that it had been "at least ten years ago" that he had "pleaded for a Christian High School of our own." Rev. Hoeksema believed that, though grade schools of our own were indeed important, the need for a high school was decidedly more urgent. He argued that "the age when our boys and girls attend high school is the period in their life when they begin to reflect, to think for themselves, when, more than in the years of their childhood, they are able to imbibe and understand definite principles and doctrines, when it is of utmost importance that, both with respect to their thinking and to their conduct they are guided in the right direction." What Rev. Hoeksema wanted, he said, was "*specific* instruction" for the covenant young people of our churches. He was not at all content with "so-called *Christian* instruction in the general sense of

the word, without emphasis on specific principles." "If we are serious about this," he wrote, "and want to reach this ideal, strive for it, realize this purpose, there is only one way: a school of our own." And he meant a Christian *high* school, a high school "based on specifically Protestant Reformed principles," which, he insisted, "is worth fighting for." (These are quotes taken from *The Standard Bearer*, December 1, 1980.)

What constitutes a Protestant Reformed high school then? Here is a definition I would submit for what I desire high school to accomplish for my children: A Protestant Reformed high school creates an educational environment in which the students are so instructed in all of their subjects that they graduate having the mental/spiritual tools to be wise as serpents as they go out as sheep into this world of wolves.

Is this too spiritual a view of a high school? If a Protestant Reformed high school could provide only the basic academic subjects without a sports program, without vocational courses, and without other nice-to-have subjects, would it be any good? Could it really fill the bill of providing a well-rounded high school education that fits our students for the world of the 80's and 90's? The answer depends on what our conception is of a high school in

general. I think that if we truly attempt to evaluate a high school from eternity's viewpoint we must say, "Even though a sports program, vocational courses, and other subjects may be nice additions, *they are not the essence of secondary education.* What is *essential and sufficient* in a high school is for it to teach sound academics and spiritual truths, developing Protestant Reformed thinking at the highest levels, in young men and women of God."

Now does this mean that all we have to do is to hire some Protestant Reformed teachers, de-

vising a basic curriculum, and call ourselves a Protestant Reformed high school? While these outward actions have to take place, this kind of high school has to start and *continue* in the hearts of the parents and rest of the school society. Without the vision set before our eyes of what we are really about, of what a high school actually should be, any deficiencies will be all that we will see. Let's work to see the blossoming of our children into those prepared to live in the Kingdom.

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*Another favorite, as teachers' lounges go, is that of Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School. Mr. Chester (Skip) Hunter, principal of our school in Doon, writes interesting little essays on the reverse side of informational notes to parents. He has used them even, on occasion, to promote Perspectives. But, best of all, he's willing to share them with the editor, so that we have something on hand for use in this rubric. They're all good. We choose one here, more or less at random.*

## Finding *The Answer*

Skip Hunter

THE ANSWER. When I was a junior high student, I had a teacher who was constantly distressed by students' worries over finding THE ANSWER. At the time I was perplexed by his distress. After all, wasn't that the object of our school work. Were we not to find answers to put on our papers? We were joyful when problems were assigned

which had answers in the back of the book.

It has taken me nine years of teaching really to understand my junior high teacher's distress. As I have spent the first four weeks answering students questions, I begin to feel as distressed as my old teacher. It's not that I don't want to answer questions. Nothing can be farther from the

truth. But I am increasingly finding that students want only THE ANSWER.

Again the question pops up, "Isn't that what they are supposed to want?" The answer to that question is NO. THE ANSWER to number 15 on page 45 is not important. What the student should be trying to find out is the manner at which the answer is achieved. Students need to learn process. This is not only true in English or math but also in other subjects.

As I have pondered this problem, I have found one problem that has surfaced over and over again. Students do not read the question carefully. They try to ascertain THE ANSWER with as little effort as necessary. Sometimes their only goal is to

fill in a blank with something which seems reasonable.

What can we do? As teachers we must identify students who are having this sort of trouble and devise ways to help them. As teachers and parents we must not give in to the temptation to provide them with THE ANSWER because that is an easy way to answer their questions. Parents can also help in this area by assigning household chores in such a way that the child must think out some of the methods himself. Do not give him a step by step list of his work. Challenge his thinking and problem-solving skills.

As we continue this school year, let's attempt to find THE ANSWER to our problem by working together. ■■■

### CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

The Christian philosophy of education calls for an educational process that puts the Bible at the center and asks the student and the teacher to evaluate all they see in the world through the eyes of God — because God is Truth. All must conform to Him or it is not truth. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6). In true Christian education, students learn to use the Bible to evaluate all of life. The Bible is Life — it is the living Word — it is above every other book.

taken from *Christian School Comment*  
by Dr. Paul A. Kienel



### In Memoriam

On January 17, 1989 it pleased the Lord to take from this earth to her place in glory

*Mrs. Antoinette Quenga,*

a long-time teacher in our Protestant Reformed schools.

Mrs. Quenga's teaching career spanned some 36 years, beginning at Adams Street School in 1952. She was for nine years in Guam, teaching school also there; but the remainder of those 36 years were given to Adams (3 years), Covenant High (10 years), and Hope

(14 years). She distinguished herself at all levels as one of unusual ability, keen insights, and dedication to the cause of providing distinctively Reformed education for covenant children and young people.

Quiet and unassuming she was by nature, but her presence was felt, and she will be missed — both by her students and her colleagues. We rejoice nevertheless in the assurance that she has received her eternal reward, a crown of life that never fades. And we thank the Lord for the years of faithful service which by His grace she was privileged and equipped to provide for us. Our prayer for Mr. Quenga and son Dwight is that they will receive comfort in the knowledge that "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Mrs. Quenga knew she was going home. Not long before she died she reflected on that, and penned these lines, which were read later at her funeral, and which we share also with our readers:

### PARADOX

*The Lord dimmed my sight,  
the better to see the glory of the kingdom of God.  
HE softened my hearing,  
the better to hear the voice of the Word of God.  
HE muted my song,  
the better to hear the songs of the morning stars  
and the angels singing together.  
HE emptied my breath into a gasp, a sigh,  
the better to be filled with the breath of the Spirit of God.  
HE dulled my taste,  
the better to taste and see that the Lord is good.  
HE slowed my steps,  
the more compassionately to see the pain and suffering of those  
around me.*

*... and at last He stills the beating of my weak heart, so I can clearly feel the pounding of His mighty heart as He cried, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The promise — "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise" echoed in my ears. All of my senses were restored to me and I joined the multitude before the throne who sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain who has redeemed us."*

PERSPECTIVES

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