

# **PERSPECTIVES** IN **COVENANT EDUCATION**

## **ARTICLES**

**Instruction Concerning Cults  
and Non-Christian Religions  
in the Christian School Classroom**

**Parents and Teachers:  
Allies or Adversaries**

**Preserving Our Heritage**

**The Necessity for Music Education  
in the Christian Schools**

**WINTER  
1984**

# PERSPECTIVES IN COVENANT EDUCATION

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

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page	
Editorials		
Miss Agatha Lubbers, Editor . . . . .	2	
Instruction Concerning Cults and Non-Christian Religions in the Christian School Classroom		
Miss Agatha Lubbers . . . . .	5	✕
Parents and Teachers: Allies or Adversaries		
Rev. Michael DeVries . . . . .	16	✕
Preserving Our Heritage		
Rev. C. Hanko . . . . .	23	✕
The Necessity for Music Education in the Christian Schools		
Miss Linda Pastoor. . . . .	31	✕

# Editorials

by Agatha Lubbers

1984!!!! I remember my first encounter with the book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. George Orwell, pseudonym for Eric Blar, invented such terms as "Big Brother," "Newspeak," and "thoughtcrime." The approach of the calendar year A.D. 1984 seemed to many to be more ominous because of the seeming verity of many of the events predicted by Orwell.

A.D. 1984 has arrived. It is not the year of "Big Brother's" creator but it is the year of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

A.D. 1984 is the year of Him Who said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. To me are given the keys of heaven and hell."

A.D. 1984 is the year of Him Who said, "I come quickly and my reward is with me."

In the hope of His blessed promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us, we wish all our readers a blessed A.D. 1984.

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*Christian School Comment* published by the Association of Christian Schools International reports in the Volume 14, Number 5, issue that the IRS has dropped racial quota for Christian schools. Many of the new Christian schools have arisen during the last decade following enforced integration in the public schools. Dr. Paul Kienel writes as follows:

I am pleased to report that the IRS has returned to the more reasonable racial policies of 1977 rather than the racial quota system initiated in 1978. This information was given to ACSI attorney William Ball and me by the U.S. Assistant Attorney General Glenn Archer at his Washington, D.C. office on December 14. This was good news indeed.

The ACSI position on racial discrimination has been widely circulated. Administrators of ACSI member schools and colleges must affirm annually that the school or college they represent does not discriminate racially. This is a strong Biblical conviction of ours based on Romans 2:11. We object strongly, however, to a government agency such as the IRS establishing racial quotas for our schools which attempt to racially balance our student bodies, faculty, and boards as previously proposed.

Our persistence has paid off. I find personal meetings with high-level government leaders are often more effective than court confrontations.

We are not "out-of-the-woods" with the IRS racial regulations, especially in Mississippi, but the situation has improved dramatically.

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We commented in the fall issue of *Perspectives* about new provisions being proposed for Christian Schools regarding the Social Security Law. In *Christian School Comment*, Volume IV, Number 5, Dr. Paul Kienel writes about the appeal of church and Christian school leaders to U.S. Senate Finance Committee to amend the new Social Security Law. I quote:

Senator Robert Dole was noticeably surprised when he walked through the door into the packed Senate hearing room on Wednesday, December 14. He was also surprised at the concern and resolve of the Christian community regarding the government's first attempt to reach over the "wall of separation" and *demand* that churches and Christian schools pay social security taxes. Eighty percent of the nation's religious ministries already pay social security. It is a heavy financial burden. But participation is voluntary. A serious separation of church and state problem arises when the government *demand*s that the church or Christian school pay the tax. The *demand* implies that the government has authority over the church — that the church or Christian school is subservient to the state.

Congressman George Hansen from Idaho testified, "Our insatiable lust for revenue has led us to the point where, given a choice between defending the First Amendment-guaranteed freedom of religion and finding sources of that revenue, we have become blinded to the full implication of going to war with the very groups which form the character of the nation."

The outcome of the hearings was positive. It appears certain that Senator Dole and his finance committee will revise the 1983 Social Security Amendment in response to our concerns.

Most of the teachers in the schools which are responsible for the publication of *Perspectives* have for years paid the FICA tax. They have done this in the hope that one day, when the need will arise, they will also be able to receive support through the Social Security Program.

Traditionally Christian schools in the Reformed churches have not resisted the demands of government. School boards have willingly paid FICA taxes. School boards have also attempted to abide by state laws when hiring faculty. Teachers with certification have been hired in preference to those who are not properly certificated.

The principle of Scripture is that we should obey all those who are in authority unless or until they ask us to do that which is contrary to the Word of God. Jesus Himself said, "Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." Christians are law-abiding citizens. They obey every commandment of man for the Lord's sake (cf. I Peter 2:13).

The principle of Scripture is confessed for us and by us in our Netherlands Confession, "... Moreover, it is the bounden duty of every one, of what state, quality, or condition soever he may be, to subject himself to the magistrates; to pay tribute, . . ." (Art. 36).

The argument of the ACSI is that the FICA tax should be a voluntary tax. One does not receive the benefits, if he does not pay. Nor should one be forced to pay when he sees that this is part of the attempt to take away his religious freedom.

The results of this confrontation will be interesting to observe.

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Chalcedon is a non-profit, tax-exempt foundation, described in the *Newsweek*, February 2, 1981, as the "think tank" of the religious right. I have in my possession the first issue of the *Chalcedon News*, January, 1983, a small informative newsletter concerning the activities of Chalcedon. The newsletter reports the involvement of the men in this foundation in church and state battles. I quote the report.

As many know, we are active in church and state battles. Dr. R.J. Rushdoony is known as the number one witness on the theological aspects of church and state. He is not paid for his witnessing; Chalcedon contributes his services, and usually, the travel expenses to and from the trial city. In one case recently argued before the U.S. Supreme Court, both Dr. Douglas F. Kelly and William Kellogg provided data to the law firm defending the Christian organization involved in the case.

At present, to provide data to lawyers, legislators, pastors, and all concerned Christians, three studies are in progress. Dr. Rushdoony is writing on the theology of the state from a Biblical and historical perspective. Dr. Kelly is collecting data from an historical study of the relationships of church and state. Mr. Kellogg is working on Tudor and Stuart legislation because the courts are now going back to English tyrants for legal precedents. It is claimed that the powers of the kings of England were inherited by the federal government. This would mean that the federal government is the Head of the church (a la Henry VIII), and that the church is wholly under the control of the state. These are serious matters, and only Chalcedon is giving major attention to them. Thus, your support is making possible the defense of Christian freedom in the courtroom, and the preparation of an arsenal of ideas for the furthering of our cause.

The Chalcedon Position Papers have been studied and used by lawyers, pastors, educators, and others. In one city recently, a lawyer, in filing a protest with a city planning agency, included a copy of Dr. Douglas F. Kelly's article, "Who makes Churches Tax-Exempt?", from the August, 1982 Chalcedon Report No. 204. ■

# **Instruction Concerning Cults and Non-Christian Religions in the Christian School Classroom**

by Agatha Lubbers

*This article was originally the text for a speech given at the fall Convention of the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute meeting in South Holland, Illinois at the Protestant Reformed Christian School, October, 1982. At that time the Cults and Non-Christian Religions course was an elective for seniors and was a two-semester course. Since that time it has become a one-semester course and is required of all seniors during either the first or second semester of their senior year.*

I teach a course to seniors called Cults and the Non-Christian Religions. This is one of three religion courses taught at Covenant Christian High School — this is not to say that the rest of our courses are irreligious. Religion is an all-pervasive leaven that must determine the direction of every course taught in the school.

But there are certain courses in the Course of Study of a school that are more specifically and more systematically religious. These courses in the school to which I refer — Covenant Christian High School, Walker, Michigan — are courses such as Biblical History taught to all tenth grade students, Church History (Ancient, Medieval, and Modern) taught to all eleventh grade students, and Cults and the Non-Christian Religions taught to all twelfth grade students.

The burden of this paper is to show why and how a course such as Cults and the Non-Christian Religions can be taught.

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In an article appearing in the October 22, 1982 *Christianity Today*, the "Changing Face of American Religion" is described. The results of a county-by-county analysis of church membership covering 111 Christian and Jewish groups with a total of 112.5 million adherents or nearly half of the U.S. population was made public. This study is the

third of its kind in the last three decades and it reveals that the number of religious groups has increased but the rate of growth has been slower in the 1970s.

During the 50s and 60s church growth surged ahead of population growth but the 70s the population grew at a rate of 11.5% while church attendance increased by just 4.1%.

One notable exception to the rule was the Mormons with a 25.9% growth rate. The Mormons, a group we consider to be a cult, became the dominant religious group in 74 counties in Utah, Idaho, and adjacent states. Another exception was the Seventh Day Adventists, a group some will not include with the cults. The Seventh Day Adventists grew in the Grand Rapids area about 28%.

It's this kind of research that catches the eye of one who has been involved for the last several years in teaching a course such as I have taught at Covenant Christian High School about the Cults and the Non-Christian Religions.

At the outset I should admit to you that a course like the Cults and the Non-Christian Religions is not without its critics. While attending the Bible and Religion conferences sponsored annually by the Calvin College religion department, it became obvious that there was not total unanimity in the Religion department of Calvin College about the value and purpose of courses that were developed around an understanding and critique of the cults.

There are several reasons for this.

1. In the first place there are always differences of opinion about what group is a cult and what group is not a cult. One of the most notable examples of this difference of opinion concerns the Seventh Day Adventists. There are those writers who are very certain that the Seventh Day Adventists are not a manifestation of the church evangelical. They point to its stand on investigative judgment as this destroys the Scriptural doctrine of justification by faith alone. They point to the supremacy of the ideology of Mrs. White. Some of those who have left or been cast out of the Seventh Day Adventist church are its chief critics.

2. There are also those critics who contend that young people do not know the doctrines of the church and therefore they should not be expected to study the false doctrines of the cults when they need more time to understand Reformed Doctrine.

3. The third kind of criticism says that the primary concern of the Reformed Christian should be to combat the errant theologies like Arminianism and that it is a misplacement of emphasis and one's



energies to concern himself with the more obvious errors and false doctrines held by the cults.

In spite of these criticisms we contend that the purpose of all education is to give our students an understanding of their life in the world as they live antithetically against all religious groups who do not see and confess that "there is salvation in no other name given among men" than the name of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 4:12). One can effectively teach the basic doctrines and truths of the Scripture as he contends for the faith once delivered for the saints against those who contend against the faith. It is our belief that important units of positive instruction can be developed as one seriously and systematically studies the errors of those responsible for the development of sectarian ideas.

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The decade of the 70s has been the age of the development of movements called the cults. Ronald Enroth, author of the book *Youth, Brainwashing and the Extremist Cults* was interviewed by a writer for *Christianity Today*, October, 1981. Enroth answered the question, "Why have cults found such fertile ground for growth in the U.S. in the last 25 years?" Enroth said there are at least four factors that have contributed to this development. (It should be noted that Enroth views the development of the cults from a sociological point of view.)

1. Enroth first of all pointed to the general factor of cultural upheaval and social change during the 1970s. Enroth noted that especially during the 1970s there has been no nationwide focus of thought for young adults as we had in the 1960s. The 1970s was not a time influenced so much by civil-rights advocates or anti-war movements as had been true in the 1960s. Instead young people have channeled their energies and idealism into the religious sphere.

2. In the second place Enroth pointed to what he called a spiritual vacuum and an erosion of religious knowledgeability that could be exploited by the new religious movements — particularly those with an eastern ideology or those with an extremely charismatic leader. Enroth points correctly to the fact that many young adults are spiritually illiterate and therefore they could easily be swept along into erroneous groups. The time is such that the Judeo-Christian religious and cultural base has eroded beyond repair.

3. In the third place Enroth points to the fact that the new groups appear to satisfy the basic human needs of the adherents of the new religions. There is the need for a source of authority, whether in the

form of a charismatic leader or in the form of some written source of authority. In addition there is need for community, for fellowship, for commitment, for family wisdom, and for a sense of mission and purpose. The fact that the cults and new religious groups emphasize recruitment and utilize a form of brainwashing and mind-control does not negate their emphasis and provision of the other human needs.

We would be correct in affirming that the spiritual needs are the most basic cause for the growth of religious groups, but the psychological factor is very important and is determinative. Those who ally themselves with a cult need no longer make important decisions about careers, and the concern for their daily needs such as food no longer really exists. Even the abuses in the cults can be tolerated because of the security provided by the hierarchy of the organization.

In January, 1979, I wrote an article in the *Beacon Lights*, "The Threat of the Occult." In that article I quoted the dean of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, who said, "Our generation has produced more new religious cults than any generation in the total history of the human race." At the time of the writing of that article a recent report indicated that 1,300 new and sometimes "fly-by-night" cults had come into existence between 1966 and 1979.

The November 24, 1980, *U.S. News and World Report* contained an article entitled "A Comeback for Religious Cults?" This article written on the second anniversary of the Peoples' Temple mass suicide stated, that according to sociologists who have studied group allegiance, that "full-time memberships of many new religions have leveled off or declined." However, the sociologists also found that the "sturdiest cults continue to weather the public outrage directed at new religions."

Biggest memberships are claimed by The Way, a "Christian" sect run by Victor Paul Wierwille with 100,000 or more followers. The Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, which has experienced much difficulty with the IRS, can claim the allegiance of about 30,000 and has vast monetary assets. The Hare Krishna with 10,000 in the U.S. have temples in Los Angeles and a very controversial one in West Virginia. Almost any weekend one can hear a Krishna advocate discuss his philosophic ideas on the media.

The *U.S. News*' article also quotes Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman who estimate that about three million Americans have been involved with religious cults. A more recent article in the *U.S. News and World Report*, July 5, 1982, reports that "a few of the more publicized cults may be losing members but others appear to be growing. Exact membership is hard to determine, but experts estimate the size of such

groups is now between 2 and 3 million in America.” It must be noted that when cults are referred to by the national news media they do not include groups such as the Mormons with more than 5 million members, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Christian Science movement, and the Jehovah’s Witnesses to name only a few of the more tolerated religious groups.

In my article in *Beacon Lights*, January, 1979, I wrote that we are thankful to our covenant God that our Protestant Reformed young people have not been swept along with the occult craze of our age. But we and our children are not naturally immune. We too must be alert so that we are not swept along with this craze. The armament we need is doctrinal preparedness. Our children and young people acquire this in a course of this kind.

In one of the books that I have used in my course at Covenant Christian High School, i.e., *The Mind Benders* by Jack Sparks, the author writes as follows:

The Christian Church has spoken out boldly against those who twist and pervert the truth of God. Many of the creedal and confessional statements included here still smell of the smoke of battle. They come from God’s people when they had their backs against the wall. These statements were put together with great care, some of them when the very existence of the Church was threatened. Their words are battle-ried. They’ve weathered well. Now they are brought to duty again in these current wars.

Jack Sparks in this brief statement refers to the reliability and usefulness of the Ecumenical Christian Creeds and the Confessions written by the Reformed Churches during the 16th and 17th century. The point to be noted is that strategy may change but that the basic issue of the battle never changes.

It ought to be obvious that the religious situation is of such a kind in the world and our own country that a course called the Cults and the Non-Christian Religions is justified in the Christian school curriculum. We are in this world but not of it. For our young people this means that they must be “thoroughly furnished unto every good work.” In addition they must be prepared to give an answer to every man concerning the hope that is in them. (Cf. I Peter 3:15.)

In order to understand more specifically what the content and direction of a course such as this should be, I will ask and answer four basic questions.

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I. What is the significance of the growth of the cults in today’s world?

In the first place we ought to notice that the rise of the cults is one

of the signs of Christ's coming. Jesus told His disciples that false Christs and false prophets shall arise and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch, that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect (Matt. 24:24).

In the second place we ought to observe that today's religious deception and the outright rejection of Biblical Christianity is taught in I Timothy 4:1-2.

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

The same idea comes out strongly in II Peter 2:1,

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

More concerning the religious deception of our day is proclaimed by the apostle John in I John 4:1, 3.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

. . . And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God and this is that spirit of anti-Christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

In the Christian school the rise of the cults must be interpreted in terms of the development of the system of anti-Christ. This does not mean that a particular individual cult be identified as *the anti-Christian system* but it does mean that it be identified as one that is associated with the spirit of anti-Christ.

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## II. What is a cult?

The *Random House Dictionary* defines a cult in several ways. In the first place a cult is a religion that is considered false or unorthodox. In the second place a cult can be understood to be a group or sect bound together by devotion to or veneration of the same thing, person, or ideal. One can therefore speak of the "Cult of Hitler." In the third place a cult can be defined as a particular system of religious worship especially with reference to its rites and ceremonies.

The fundamental idea in all of these definitions is that a cult is a false religion, humanistic and man-centered. This also means that the

cults are usually "one-man shows." The authority for their authenticity goes back no farther than their founders or leaders. Hoekema in his book the *Four Major Cults* says that all cults hold to an extra-scriptural source of authority. This extra-scriptural source of authority can be some additional extra-scriptural and contra-scriptural written material; it can also be some person or the pronouncements of that person and his colleagues.

On the basis of the definition that we have adopted particularly with respect to the cult being usually a one-man system, we can conclude that a cult is a religious group often claiming the authorization of Christ and the Bible but in actual fact being guilty of neglecting or distorting that gospel.

The Bible in the Old and New Testaments defines a cult. A cult consists of those who lead and those who follow and are like those condemned by Moses in Deuteronomy 13:1-6 and Deuteronomy 18:22. "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder. . . . Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. . . . And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death. . . ."

The New Testament Scriptures also refer to those who are false prophets and whose spirit one cannot trust. (Cf. again I Peter 2:1, Matthew 24:11, and I John 4:1.) Jesus says in Matthew 24:11, "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."

The difference between a cult and the church is that the church is the spirit-led flock of Christ. The promise of Christ comes in John 14:26 and John 16:13. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things. . . ." "...when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. . . ."

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III. Why do the cults claim to uphold and follow the Bible and why is this dangerous?

We should note in the first place that the cults in distinction from the non-Christian religions have Christian roots and are led by apostate infidels. The cults that we study with the exception of some of the cults with Eastern religious roots come out of Christianity — often Presbyterian or Reformed branches of the church. They leave the paths of orthodoxy.

Article IX of the Belgic Confession in talking about those who deny one of the cardinal truths — the Holy Trinity — as many cults do, refers to such deniers as “Jews and Mohammedans, and some false christians.” This is noteworthy because here we have a clear indication that the Christian church takes as its historic position that there are those who *claim to follow the Scriptures but are heretics*.

That which makes these false Christians so deceitful is that they have Sunday Schools, radio programs, telecasts, Bible correspondence schools, and mission societies. In all these ways they often look so much like the true church. Often these groups do not show their true colors and hide behind guarded and deceitful statements of their real doctrinal position.

It is not that the church has not received warning that this would happen. Christ warned of false prophets in Matthew 7:15, “Beware, of false prophets which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.” Paul warned the church of deceitful workers that transformed themselves into apostles of Christ. (Cf. II Corinthians 11:13-15.) Paul in II Corinthians 4:2 speaks of those who handle the word of God deceitfully. In verse 4 of the same chapter these deceitful handlers of the word are said to have been blinded lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them.

Bible-professing cults such as the Way Movement International or the Jehovah’s Witnesses are sometimes difficult to detect. It is exactly because of their seeming allegiance to the Scriptures that they are difficult to detect. In fact there may be some validity to the claim made by some not so well-informed Christians that they do not know who to believe. Cults and the leaders of cults claim to be true professors of the Christian religion. It is then most important that we bear in mind the warning of John in I John 4:1, “Beloved believe not every spirit but try the spirits.”

Because a program on the radio in the name of Christ is replete with Scripture quotation does not guarantee the orthodoxy of the program or the orthodoxy of the group that sponsors the program. What does guarantee the orthodoxy of that group? Allegiance to the heart of Biblical revelation as this is properly stated in the Ecumenical Creeds and the Reformed Confessions.

In this connection it should be noticed that all heretics in the history of the Christian church have brought in destructive and damnable heresies *not by ignoring the Scriptures but by distorting and subverting the Scriptures*. It is for this reason that Peter says in II Peter 1:20-21,

“that no scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation.” Scripture came not by the will of man but by the will of God and therefore Scripture must explain Scripture.

Heretics always arise claiming they have a new revelation or that they have an inside track to the truth. They have received something that only the initiated and specially informed have. But this is not the truth that shall make us free (cf. John 8:32).

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#### IV. What must be the attitude of the Christian toward the cults?

II John 9-11 teaches us about those who deny the doctrine of Christ and what the attitude of the “elect lady” (i.e., the church of Jesus Christ) must be toward those who transgress the doctrine of Christ — i.e., the truth that shall make us free.

Usually this has been explained to mean that we must slam the door in the face of all those who devalue and destroy the doctrines of Christ. If someone comes to your home with the *Watchtower* or *Awake* magazines, mediums for doctrines of Satan taught by Jehovah’s Witnesses, you should simply slam the door in the face of that peddler of untruths. However, the books that we use in our classroom do not advocate this simplistic approach. The approach advocated in books like *Confronting the Cults* by Gordon R. Lewis; *Cults and the Occult* by Edmond C. Gruss; and *Cults and Isms* by Russel P. Spittler, to name just a few, is to attempt to reach the cultists and those involved in the occult. Edmond C. Gruss says, “This writer was also won to Christ from the Jehovah’s Witnesses as the result of the faithful testimony of his teenage friends. They were not well-trained in the Scriptures, but they did know Christ as a living reality in their lives” (p. 147).

Gordon R. Lewis in his book *Confronting the Cults*, page 10, takes the position that the church has been too apathetic and has not confronted the cults but instead has been confronted by the cults. Lewis quotes Horton Davies, who says, “The challenge of the sects is a summons to reformation. The Church of Christ has nothing to fear from the zeal and competition of the sects. She has everything to fear from her own missionary apathy and lethargy.”

Lewis challenges the church to confront the misrepresentation of the gospel and those who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction (II Peter 3:16). Having no obvious love of the truth (cf. II Thess. 2:10) men must know that the cults deliver to them cleverly contrived counterfeits and not the message of reconciliation and redemption.

People must hear that Jesus Christ is totally other than a spiritualistic medium as the Spiritualists say, and that Christ is certainly not the first successful Christian Science practitioner, and most surely Christ is not the archangel of Jehovah's Witness theology.

Although we are not all ordained missionaries and therefore preachers of the gospel, it is true that every Christian is in his own station in life "set for the defense of the gospel of Grace" (cf. Phil. 1:17). Every Christian is exhorted by the great apostle Peter to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in him with meekness and fear" (I Pet. 3:15).

Among the followers of the leaders of the cults there are sworn heretics. Advocates of the ideology of the cults who place their trust in an extra- and contra-scriptural source of authority, who deny justification by faith alone, who claim that the cult is an exclusive community of the saved, who claim that Christ is not really God, who devalue and change the doctrine of Christ, and who claim that the members and leaders of the group have a central role in bringing to a conclusion all things as they now exist, are apostates and infidels. They are those servants of Satan who formerly claimed to be sworn allies of Christ but who have crucified the Son of God afresh (cf. Heb. 6:4-6).

This does not mean, however, that we simply ignore the cults. We have a responsibility to know and to judge the error of those committed to heresy and falsehood and if possible to be assistive in converting them from the error of their way.

The apostle Paul assured Timothy, the preacher in wicked Ephesus where evil Demetrius lived and where others had been in the snare of Satan, that God will give repentance and recovery out of the snare of the devil to some who are taken captive by Satan at his will (II Tim. 2:25-26).

Mere man cannot change a fanatical cultist but the Holy Spirit can. He, who converted and changed fanatical Saul into the missionary Paul, does not quake at the sight of a cultist.

Gordon R. Lewis writes as follows in *Confronting the Cults*, page 11-12,

In conclusion we may say, "The veritable tidal wave of strange cults that is now swirling alarmingly across the world" is one of the greatest challenges to orthodox Christianity today. That is the judgment of Philip Edgcumbe Hughes who includes with theological relativism, the ecumenical movement, and reunion with Rome, "The cultic hordes."

From *Christianity Today*, September 11, 1961, the chairman of the International Association for Reformed Faith and Action is quoted:



If this satanic assault on the unique gospel is to be repelled it will only be, humanly speaking, as a result of penetrating study of the teaching and practices of the cults and a counter-attack in depth, not merely exposing their spurious and deceitful pretensions, but piercing their armour with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and by God's grace reclaiming through the trumpet call of the genuine gospel many who have been deluded by their falsehoods.

Although a concerned approach may seem to be contradictory to what II John 9-11 says, this is not the case. A concerned approach is not to be confused with support for the cults. In John's day itinerate teachers were not given salaries and to care for them by giving them shelter and food and by giving them hospitality was tantamount to sharing or supporting their deceptive work. Christians may not do this with respect to cults today either. Christians should not give money or goods to cultists.

However, patiently seeking to help them understand the error of their way so that they may understand and by God's grace receive the gospel in no way aids or abets their cause.

In all this instruction, the Christian teacher must remember the words of the apostle Paul who said in II Timothy 3:13-17,

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Remember it is the sovereign, free grace of God that we are what we are. Our weapons in the battle of faith are described in II Corinthians 10:4, "They are not carnal, but are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."

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# Parents and Teachers: Allies or Adversaries

by Rev. Michael DeVries

*This article is the text of an inspirational speech delivered for the Parent/Teachers Association of the Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School of Grand Rapids, Michigan, October 14, 1983. Rev. DeVries is the pastor of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church, Wyoming, Michigan.*

As is intimated by my theme I believe that at times, to one extent or another the godly attributes of humility, unity, brotherly love, and likemindedness do not characterize the parent-teacher relationship. Perhaps your first reaction is to think it rather silly to suggest that parents and teachers could be adversaries. But understand that it is indeed possible for that to be the case. Perhaps the most obvious example of this is to be found with regard to the public school system.

And I think it well that we remind ourselves of this that we may give thanks to God for the schools He has given us. A recent "Impact" article published by the Institute for Creation-Research entitled "How Can Our Children Know" emphasizes that if God is forbidden territory in the public education process, as He is, the children will be programmed in that no-God framework. Should Christian parents use the public school system, they and the teachers of their children are adversaries, opponents, those who have contrary purposes. The instruction by the parents would be and must needs be a continual contradiction of the teacher. And the only instance of parents and teachers truly being allies in such a system is that of ungodly carnal parents and ungodly carnal teachers joining hands to lead the children merrily down the road to hell!

But what about us, what about this parent-teacher relationship in our school? Are we allies or adversaries? As parents do we honor and respect the teachers as servants of God and as servants to us for God's sake? Do we as parents and teacher discuss together the mutual concerns regarding our children? Is our high regard for the teacher evident from our attitude toward the school, from our prayers? How do you react to the news that your son or daughter has been disciplined by the teacher? Do you stand behind the teacher or criticize? Would

you rather talk to other parents about the teacher than to the teacher himself or herself? Do you discuss a teacher's failure or short-comings with your children?

As we consider this question: Parents and Teachers: Allies or Adversaries?, I would submit to you three propositions:

- I. Parents and teachers must be allies.
- II. Adverse attitudes destroy the proper parent-teacher relationship.
- III. Parent-teacher adversaries have an extremely detrimental effect upon our children.

- I. Parents and teachers must be allies.

Allies are those joined together in a common enterprise. Allies stand together, shoulder to shoulder; allies cooperate in their endeavor. I hope there is no question as to what our one enterprise or endeavor is. As parents and teachers we are to work together toward the common goal of the proper instruction of the covenant seed. Proper instruction is that which rears children to become mature Christians.

As our own "Principles of Education for our School" emphasizes "Christian instruction means. . .essentially one thing. This one thing is instruction that is based entirely upon the truth of the Word of God." That is repeatedly the command of the Scriptures with regard to the children: "Train up a child in the way he should go. . . ." "Thou shalt teach them (that is, the commandments of Jehovah) diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The prayer of our Baptism Form presents this so beautifully: "that they may be piously and religiously educated. . . that they may live in all righteousness, under our only Teacher, King, and High Priest, Jesus Christ. . .to the end that they may eternally praise and magnify thee. . . ."

In fulfilling this command of God, in attaining this goal parents and teachers must be allies. We have recognized the fact that as parents we are unable to fulfill this great task by ourselves. We are unable to devote our talents and time exclusively to rearing our children through all the years of their formal education. We have united as parents of like mind and common desire to rear our children in the fear of the Lord. Our schools are a demand of the covenant, an aspect of our calling as parents in the covenant.

Therefore, the school is an extension of our homes. And our godly, like-minded teachers stand in our place. That is the chief concern, not

simply that our teachers are academically qualified, but that our teachers have the spiritual qualifications to stand in our place. That is the historic Reformed conception of the Christian school. Dr. H. Bouwman wrote: "The rule ought to be, that the school originate with the parents. According to the ordinance of God, the full task of rearing rests first of all upon the parents. To the many aids which serve to assist the parents in this rearing belongs especially the school. The school takes over a part of the task of the parents. It follows from this, that the school must stand on the same foundation as the Christian family, that is to say, on the ground of the covenant. . ." (*Gereformeerde Kerkrecht*, Vol. 1, pp. 520-521). This means that the authority of our teachers with regard to the students is our authority as parents, that same authority which God has given to us.

Because of all this parents and teachers must be allies! There must be the closest intimacy and cooperation between parents and teachers. We must be involved in the school, in the obvious ways, of attending association meetings, P.T.A., and our Parent/Teacher conferences.

But we must also be involved in more personal contact with the teacher. As parents we should feel free to talk to the teachers about our children. We should give them insights into the child that may help them in their task. We should ask questions we may have regarding their instruction. We should discuss the mutual concerns we have for the child we are both rearing.

The same holds true for the teachers: they ought to inform us regarding problems. They ought to consult with us regarding their concerns. The teachers deal with many moral problems: laziness, irresponsibility, sullenness, anger, disrespect, pride, cruelty, and mob spirit. Together we must deal with these problems!

The Dutch educator T. Van DerKooy stresses: "It is my fervent hope that we may be spared the unfortunate conflict between parents and teachers which has sometimes been predicted. These ought by all means to stand shoulder to shoulder in the fulfilling of the sacred calling to educate" (*The Distinctive Features of the Christian School*).

Are we allies, standing shoulder to shoulder? The home and school, the parent and teacher must be one in mind and will, and above all in heart, as to who the child is, what the required instruction and discipline are, and who God is. In this consciousness we must labor together.

II. Why? Because adverse attitudes destroy the parent-teacher relationship.

There are several factors that we must consider that tend toward

making parents and teachers adversaries. On the one hand there is the extreme that parents turn over all responsibilities for education to the teacher. Parents then show little concern for or interest in the school or the teacher. Fathers do not bother with association meetings. Parents make no effort to attend P.T.A. or conferences with their child's teacher, or perhaps they go with obvious dread and reluctance. There is no consultation with the teacher regarding problems, concerns, questions.

Sometimes teachers can promote this attitude. If they regard themselves and their work as independent, and resent "parental intrusion" and fail to view themselves as servants of the parents, this can be the case. In pride teachers may suppose that they are competent in the field of education while generally parents are not, ergo, they will have success, as sovereign educators, unhindered by blundering parents.

But I'm afraid that more often it is our failing as parents. We abdicate our responsibility and authority to the teacher completely. Viewing the school as an advanced day-care center for our children, we allow or compel the teacher to take over the whole task of covenant instruction.

On the other hand, there is the extreme that each of us feels that as a parent, we should have the complete say-so concerning the child. We would like to control the instruction given, the teaching methods, the homework, the discipline within the school. We would like to have complete control over our children and have the teachers only carry out our specific instructions. This might work fine if only one parent and one teacher were involved, but when many parents with many children are involved this becomes an impossible situation. Teachers are not able neither should they attempt to carry out every whim that we may have as parents. Oh, teachers must be willing to listen to us and our concerns and our opinions regarding our children. But we must remember that we have extended to the teacher our God-given authority. They are not mere puppets of the parents. They must have liberty to teach without a parent looking over their shoulder and criticizing every move.

To find the proper balance in the parent-teacher relationship is not easy. But we must strive for that both as parents and teachers. As Prof. H. Hanko put it in a paper he delivered to mini-course participants funded by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools: "On the one hand, we must not be independentistic in our conceptions of Reformed education, but remember that we work together and that this sometimes means that individual concerns must

sometimes be sacrificed for the good of the school as a whole. And yet we must also show a vital concern for the education of our children and parents must work with the teachers in all aspects of the training of their children" ("Principles of Counseling," Lecture I).

In addition, in the parent-teacher relation, we must constantly reckon with the reality of sin. Certainly this has been implied in what has been said regarding the two extremes that must be avoided, but we must consider some specifics. We must recognize that as parents we are sinners. To a considerable extent the proper involvement in the school and with the teacher on our part is a matter of priorities. Are we too busy with our own concerns and activities to be concerned with the person who is standing in our place for six hours five days a week? As much as we need to talk about our children as fathers and mothers, we must feel the need to talk with the teacher of our children.

But all too often, it seems we would rather talk to other parents and friends about the teachers. As Dr. D. Monsma writes in an article entitled "Parental Education": "We may praise the teacher to each other; we should cooperate as parents in assisting the teacher, we should express our united confidence in the teacher, but we may not discuss with others what we consider to be the failings of our teachers." That must be brought to the teacher himself or herself in a spirit of love and humility.

And certainly we may not criticize a teacher in the presence of the children! Understand, that undermines our authority as parents! We may not discuss our teacher's failures with our children! We must be very careful in this regard lest we become guilty of sin against the ninth commandment.

At the same time, we recognize that teachers are sinners too. They have weaknesses and faults. It is a struggle for them too to be a godly example both within and outside the classroom. Fairness does not always prevail in the teacher's handling of the children. Discipline is not always administered by the teacher in the proper way and spirit. Teachers do not always initiate contact with the parents when they should.

One of our high school teachers, and a fellow parent here at Hope School, Mr. Gerald Kuiper, confesses in a speech delivered to the teachers' convention a few years ago in Northwest Iowa: "We as teachers sometimes coast along. We don't show conviction when we fail to pray and study God's Word daily to hear what God says concerning that awesome responsibility we have to instruct children in the fear of the Lord. We sometimes forget that each day the Holy

Scriptures and the Confessions are to be the solid basis for all the instruction we give. . . . We should, as a matter of fact, grow, not only in our knowledge of the subject matter, but also in the ability to bring the Scriptures to bear on it. If we are stagnant, and are running on the gasses of stagnancy, then we have ourselves to blame when interest wanes in our schools" ("Protestant Reformed Education: Tradition or Conviction").

How do you react to the teacher's faults? Do you react by back-biting, speaking to others instead of the teacher? Do you react by taking the side of our children in opposition to the teacher? Do you react by rejecting any problem or criticism the teacher may present to us regarding our child, in an explosion of temper that causes teachers to dread parent-teacher conference time? As regards the teacher's weaknesses and faults, parents and students alike must always keep in mind the instruction of the Heidelberg Catechism as to how God requires us to respond to the "infirmities" of those in authority: "patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand" (Q. 104).

Finally, let us not forget that our children are sinners too! They are conceived and born in sin. They partake of original sin and guilt. They do not have to be taught to sin; it is the good that is foreign to the child. On the other hand, we believe our children are regenerated. And that of course, is a principle change! God saves His people in the line of continued generations. Hence, Jesus can even hold up children as models for adult conduct. But they remain sinners, and because of that we must expect the worst from our children.

They are sinners! And they need discipline, therefore! Scripture is perfectly clear on the necessity of discipline. God demands it: "Correct the child"; "bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"; "Spare not the rod!" Standing in our place in the classroom the teacher must discipline, not according to whim or fancy but in obedience to the will of God. We must recognize this as parents, and insist upon it! We must require that of the teachers! Admonish, discipline, rear my child! As parents support the teacher in that discipline.

And remember that our children are astute. They see clearly when parents are not in agreement and they often begin to work on this fact and drive a few wedges of their own. They learn how to get their own way by setting one parent against the other. The same holds with regard to the parent-teacher relationship. If they detect disagreement with what the teacher has done, they will be sure to make the most of

it. How the story can be colored to make the child appear an innocent angel and the teacher a cruel ogre! A favorite tact is to pit teachers against parents and parents against teachers. Here again, communication between parents and teacher can quickly put an end to this.

Obviously, it is sin that works to destroy the parent-teacher relationship. Imperfect saints are involved in this business of Christian instruction. If only we can bear with each other's weaknesses and faults, if we can counsel with one another when problems arise, if we can forgive each other for Christ's sake, we shall as parents and teachers continue as allies. Rev. D. Engelsma writes: "The unity of our homes and schools in the truth is a rare thing today — pray God that we not lose it!"

### III. Parent-teacher adversaries have an extremely detrimental effect upon our children.

Do you see the seriousness of this matter — the parent-teacher relationship? One could consider the bitter fruits which we should surely reap as far as the schools themselves are concerned. How long could our schools last if parents and teachers become adversaries? Or we could consider the sorry effect upon the communion of saints and unity of the body of Christ. But I wish to call your attention to what this means for our children, the heritage of Jehovah!

Rev. C. Hanko spoke for a teachers' mini-course in 1978 upon the subject "motivation." He stated: "Our Christian schools are also definitely suffering from the lethargy and tendency toward mediocrity so evident among the students." He summed up the problem of lack of motivation under four headings; the third was: "Parental interference with the instruction given and/or discipline administered, complaints against the grades the child receives, resulting in an attitude of complacency in the child."

Our children are not unaffected by our attitudes. Why respect the teacher? — Mom and Dad don't! Why study for my history test? Maybe the teacher thinks it's important, but Mom and Dad don't — they'll complain to the teacher if my grade's too low.

When we manifest ourselves as adversaries over against the teacher we sow seeds of rebellion in our children! Understand, we cut *our own* throats, for it is our own authority in the teacher that we are undermining! Rev. Ronald Cammenga drove this point home in a recent *Standard Bearer* article entitled: "Ten Rules for Producing Unspiritual Young People." Rule six reads as follows: "At every opportunity, be critical of the Christian school teachers, the elders, and the pastor.



Make your criticisms known to your children, and the ill will you feel toward these people. Don't hide your feelings toward them, and don't honor them at least for their office's and work's sake. This too, is most effective in producing unspiritual young people. It will encourage the same critical spirit in them. It will cultivate a low view of the church, and the members of the church, and make it easy for them to leave the church later on. And this is what usually happens. Once out of the church and separated from the means of grace and the preaching of the truth, they are fair game'' (*Standard Bearer*, Vol. LX, No. 1, Oct. 1, 1983, p. 19). If dad and mother are critical of the Christian school and teacher, be assured that the children will be more critical still and will see no need for a Christian school education for their own children.

As parents and teachers let us labor together as allies in the cause of Christian instruction. Our children, the Lord's heritage, demand no less. Let us labor together in mutual honor and respect for one another. Let us labor together assisting one another in the rearing of our children. Let us labor together in a true spirit of humility, unity, brotherly love, and likemindedness. Let us together seek God's grace for that, confessing that it is God's work! By His grace alone can we fulfill the awesome responsibility He has placed upon us. May God be with us and help us as parents and teachers. May God save the covenant children and glorify His name through them.

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## **Preserving Our Heritage**

by Rev. C. Hanko

*This article is the text of the keynote speech given at the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute Convention held at the Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School, November, 1983. Rev. C. Hanko is a minister emeritus of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America.*

First of all, I wish to express my appreciation to you for the privilege of being your keynote speaker at this convention. That in itself is a privilege. But what is even more of a privilege is the fact that we have here a cross-section of our churches. I am not merely addressing a local group, but representatives of many of our churches. Still more, you represent that very important element of our churches to whom is entrusted our covenant youth, to shape and to form them for their places and callings in our churches in the future.

Therefore your subject is well chosen. Nothing is of greater significance to us than the heritage God has entrusted to us, particularly as Protestant Reformed Churches. Nor is there a higher calling than to be instrumental in instructing the covenant youth that will be taking our places in the future. There is no better way to preserve our heritage than by passing it on to the future generations now growing up in our churches.

I wish to divide my speech into three parts. First, I wish to consider our heritage. Then, the preservation of that heritage in our Christian schools. And finally, the teacher's calling in preserving that heritage.

## OUR HERITAGE

Our heritage can well be summed up in the words of Jude's epistle, "The faith that was once delivered unto the saints" Jude, verse 3. The faith that Jude refers to is the objective truth of the Scriptures as it lives in the hearts of God's people throughout the ages. It is the faith of Adam, of Noah, of Abraham, David, Isaiah, Peter, John, of all the apostles, and of all the martyrs who gave their lives for that faith. It is, in one word, the faith of our fathers living still, in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword. To that faith we have vowed to be faithful even unto death.

More specifically, this faith is summed up in our Apostolic Creed and in the Five Points of Calvinism.

But even more specific than that is the truth of God's Word as it has been entrusted to us as Protestant Reformed Churches. In a time when much of the preaching has become man-centered we are called to maintain a God-centered gospel. While many churches are sacrificing their distinctiveness as denominations to join with other denominations or to become "community" churches, our calling becomes even greater to maintain the truth as we are privileged to confess and to cherish it. If the time should come that we are no longer interested in maintaining our distinctive calling as churches, we will no longer have any right of existence.

When we say that we have a distinctive truth entrusted to us, we do not mean to say, as our enemies sometimes accuse us, that we have a monopoly on the truth. But we do maintain that ever since 1924 we have been charged with maintaining the truth of God's sovereignty, a charge that was confirmed and became even more emphatic in 1953. We can regard that truth from three aspects:

First, we are called to maintain the truth of God's *sovereign grace*. This grace, according to the five points of Calvinism, is always saving,

and therefore only for the elect. This we maintain over against a general, well-meant offer of salvation, which in recent years has come to mean that God loves all men and presents His gospel with the intent that all men should accept it, believe and be saved.

Second, closely related to the truth of God's sovereign grace is the truth of the *antithesis*. Already in 1924 when the synod of the Christian Reformed Church adopted the Three Points of common grace, they warned of the danger of worldly-mindedness and compromise with the world if this theory would be brought to its logical conclusion. History proved that there were indeed just reasons for such a warning. Many churches have given up their position of isolation and separation from the world and now seek what they call contact, that is a more intimate relationship with the world round about them. The light is being dimmed, the truth is suppressed in order to make themselves more appealing to the world. Worldly amusements and associations are officially approved and condoned. We have a calling, more emphatic than ever, to maintain the antithesis between church and world, between light and darkness as it is so plainly taught in the Scriptures (II Cor. 6:14-18). "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate."

Last, but certainly not least, the truth of God's *covenant* is entrusted to us as we are privileged to confess it in our Protestant Reformed Churches. The truth of God's covenant has always been considered a peculiar heritage of the Reformed Churches and, accordingly, has always been strongly emphasized. Yet also that truth has been corrupted to mean nothing more than a contract or agreement between God and man. Particularly Rev. Herman Hoeksema, following the principles laid down by some soundly Reformed theologians of the past, has developed the truth of God's covenant as a relationship of friendship between God and His people in Christ. This truth of God's covenant plainly permeates all of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation and spreads an entirely new light on the blessed relationship between God and His church in Christ Jesus. This covenant relationship is just as basic, if not more so, as the truth of predestination. Both become a source of inexpressible comfort to those who love and cherish the Word of God.

At this point we do well to pause a moment to consider the fact that doctrine and walk always go hand in hand. There is actually no such thing as practical preaching or instruction apart from doctrine. This lies in the very nature of the case. Scripture is given to us by our God to instruct us in all godliness, to show us the way that we should go. And

Scripture does this by unfolding to us the truth which alone can make us free. It is from that vantage point that Scripture teaches us to "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her *for she is thy life*" Proverbs 4:13. History proves that when a church departs from sound doctrine, often to cater to the weaker element in the church, it also introduces a spirit of worldly-mindedness among its members.

The truth of the Scriptures, the faith of our fathers is our heritage that is so important to us, that we must consider it worth dying for, yes, certainly worth maintaining and defending with all our power.

## PRESERVATION OF THIS HERITAGE IN OUR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

It is this conviction which gave rise to our own Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. It became evident already in the Janssen controversy in the early twenties that common grace is more than a mere theory. It is a world and life view, as Prof. Janssen showed when he introduced the higher criticism of the German theologians into his teachings on the basis that also this was a fruit of God's common grace. As a result he questioned the secondary authors of Scripture and even the miracles. This also became evident when Calvin College began to deny Genesis 1 by teaching long periods of creation instead of the six days of twenty-four hours. The church spoke of labor unions as "neutral organizations," sought a harmony between "Jerusalem and Athens," denying the antithesis and introducing a compromise with the world.

First in Redlands, California, then in Michigan, later in South Holland, Edgerton, Iowa, and Loveland our schools arose. Lynden was later. But in 1953 our schools went through a period of stress on account of those who were trying to introduce into our churches the conditional theology of the Liberated Churches of the Netherlands. It is rather significant that these same people no longer felt the need for our own schools and even worked against them. In Redlands our school ceased to exist for a time. Many of our schools lost students, so that it was difficult to survive. In Adams one-half of the student body was suddenly withdrawn so that the school was able to continue only through the strong support of our people, young and old alike. It has always been our strong contention that there must be perfect harmony in the instruction of the church, the home, and the school.

The question has been raised, what is the difference in character of the instruction of the church and of the school? The first difference that cannot be ignored is the fact that the catechetical instruction belongs to the church institute, and is therefore official ministry of the

Word by the consistory, while the school is an extension of the home, and therefore belongs to the organic life of the church or to the office of believers. From this follows that the emphasis (and I would stress the word emphasis) of the church falls on the doctrine, while the emphasis of the school falls on the application of that doctrine to every sphere of life. Parents promise, when they make their baptismal vows, that they will bring up their children in the aforesaid doctrine, that is, the doctrine taught in *this* Christian Church, to the utmost of their power. In either case, whether in the church or in the school, the calling is to labor "that the man of God may be perfect (complete), thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:17).

This man of God lives in covenant relationship with the living God as God's friend-servant. He is born again according to the image of Christ to serve in his God-given place with all his gifts and talents in the home, in the church, and in the midst of this present evil world. He holds the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king to devote himself to God, seeking always the kingdom of heaven and antithetically opposing all the forces of evil round about him. In his own way and in his own capacity he also is instrumental toward the coming of God's kingdom and the eternal glory of His Name.

God has created all things as an *organism*. All things are inter-related. A tree, for example, cannot exist apart from the soil in which it grows and from the air and sunshine on which it thrives. This tree is also related to all other trees, even to the cattle that find shelter under its branches and the birds that nestle among its leaves. The tree is especially related to man, for whom it is created. This inter-relationship of all things becomes evident, for example, when we try to take pictures of a mountain peak or of autumn leaves. Usually we are disappointed when we see the picture, because that particular scene has been separated from the environment and does not hold the same beauty any more. Man as king of the earthly creation must not only see the inter-relationship among all things, but must also see his peculiar place and calling in the midst of God's universe. He is called to replenish the earth and to subdue it to the glory of his God.

Each child is more than a mere number, another member of his class. He is an individual who is born at his God-given time, in his own place, from his own parents, in a particular church, with his own character, personality, abilities, talents, etc. He is a "man of God" who is called to devote himself with his whole being to God as God's priest, to proclaim God's praises as God's prophet, and to rule over his own domain as king to the glory of God. His first calling is not to make a

success for himself in this world, nor to make a name for himself, nor to get out of this life all that he can for his own enjoyment. He must be taught to keep his priorities straight. For in the great Day of days he must give account of what he has done with God's life entrusted to him, God's time, God's family, God's church, God's gifts and talents entrusted to him for serving God's cause and kingdom. The task of the school is to equip the man of God for that calling throughout his life here on earth.

Let me add that much has been done by our own school teachers to prepare material for instruction from a strictly Protestant Reformed aspect. Workshops, teachers' institutes and conferences have served a good purpose among us, which should not be minimized.

#### THE PECULIAR CALLING OF THE TEACHER IN MAINTAINING OUR HERITAGE

Allow me to point out, first of all, that teaching is not a mere job, but is one of the most important functions, a profession. Teaching the covenant seed of the church is an even greater privilege and responsibility. God entrusts to you the "man of God," who must be equipped as an individual for his calling here below. Each of you may well remember some particular teacher in your early training who had a tremendous influence on you, either for good or for bad. You are preparing future fathers and mothers, leaders in the church, even in the last days of the coming of the Son of Man. This is a full-time task, demanding all your time and effort. You must not only prepare lessons day by day to remain an enthusiastic teacher, but you must have time for research, for reading, for developing yourself in the subjects you teach or in some other field. If you do not do that your teaching will become stale, lifeless, a bore for yourself and for your pupils.

To fulfill your God-given calling you yourself must be fully equipped. The truth of Scripture, and more specifically, the doctrine as taught in our churches must be thoroughly understood, must be your strongest conviction, and must be part and parcel of your soul. I would emphasize that the beautiful truth of God's covenant as the relationship of friendship between God and us, as it so thoroughly permeates the Scriptures, must fill your soul with excitement for God, for His cause, His Name, and His glory in all that you say and do.

In the classroom the teacher must radiate the light of God's Word in every action, in every spoken word, in every course that is taught. It is true that there are subjects in which this is brought out much more

than in others. There are the formal subjects that simply do not allow for this emphasis. Take, for example, arithmetic. Even though the Christian views all things in the light of God's Word, it still remains a fact that 2 plus 2 are 4 in the Christian school as well as in the public school. A believer does see the harmony and beauty, the intolerant logic of figures, yet that actually has nothing to do with teaching a course in arithmetic, no more than does the symbolism of figures. This same fact applies to such subjects as spelling, grammar, languages, logic, etc.

But there are subjects like history, philosophy, and science that simply cannot be taught properly except on the sound basis of the Word of God. Here is where we part even sharply from those who maintain the theory of common grace. It is simply impossible to teach in the classroom without maintaining or denying the theory of common grace, even though the term may never be used. Much work has already been done to prepare material, such as textbooks and workbooks on a sound Scriptural basis, but we all realize that there is still much to be done. We still need a good philosophy course based on the Word of God, as well as a thorough psychology course that can serve us in teaching the covenant seed of the church. For we must never lose sight of the fact that each individual child is placed under us as God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto those good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10).'

As a workmanship of God each child is a masterpiece, handmade, as it were, as he comes forth from the hand of the Almighty, All-wise Covenant God. That is true of the child that learns readily, but that is also true of the slow or special child. That is true of the child who behaves in class, but also of the problem child. Each truly covenant child is a born-again believer in Christ, formed and shaped by the sovereign Craftsman for his or her own place in life according to God's sovereign purpose. God has ordained the child, his place in the church, as well as the purpose that child must serve here below. We must bear in mind, that many of the first shall be last, and many of the last first. One that is esteemed in our eyes as a slow learner or without many talents may still serve a very important place in the church as one of God's jewels. God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts and His ways than our ways.

This reminds us of the tremendous responsibility God has placed upon us. Children are very observant, far more than we often think. A child knows the teacher almost better than he knows himself; knows his

moods, his feelings, knows whether he is prepared or not. The impressions we make upon the child are lasting. Children even tend to imitate those whom they like and admire. Each of us is daily confronted with the question whether we are good examples to the children we teach. Do we say to them even by our actions, live as I live, think as I think, speak as I do, mold your life after the pattern that I set before you day by day? Can we say as Paul did, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus. . . . Brethren, be followers together of me" (Phil. 2:13, 14, 17).

Each child under our instruction must learn to say, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." No covenant child must regard this life as an end in itself, but rather as a preparation for our real and full life in eternity. Christ is the reason for his life. Christ is his sole Possessor. He belongs to his faithful Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore Christ is the purpose, the only goal in his life. We do not hold a double standard, one for children and another for us adults. In our lives and with all our being we are friend-servants devoted to the living God. And who is capable of these things?

This may sound very idealistic. Our first reaction may well be, who can ever attain to that high goal in our lives? Yet we cannot deny that this is the truth of the Scriptures. And those same Scriptures direct us to much prayer and supplication, living lives of prayer for guidance before the face of Jehovah, our Almighty, Unchangeable, ever faithful covenant God.

★★★



# The Necessity for Music Education in the Christian Schools

by Linda Pastoor

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Make a joyful noise unto God all ye lands:  
Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.

Psalm 66:1, 2

Music is a marvelous part of God's creation. God gave us this great gift both for our recreation and for His praise and glory. Thus, John Calvin writes in his preface to the *Genevan Psalter*:

Now among the other things proper to recreate man and give him pleasure, music is either the first or one of the most principal, and we must think that it is a gift of God to this purpose.

Since music is such a significant part of our lives, I believe that music education is a necessity in the Christian school.

The reformer Martin Luther also declared music to be a great gift of God. Like Calvin, he was determined to have the people participate in worship — in prayer and in song. In his foreword to Georg Rhau's collection of part-songs, Luther writes:

This precious gift has been given to man alone that he might thereby remind himself of the fact that God has created man for the express purpose of praising and extolling God. However, when man's natural ability is whittled and polished to the extent that it becomes art, then do we note with great surprise the great and perfect wisdom of God in music.

Because we have been created "for the express purpose of praising and extolling God," we have an immense responsibility both to praise God and to develop the talents He has graciously given to us.

Further, I believe that we must study music because it is part of God's creation through which He reveals Himself. God is a creator God, and as images of Him, we are also creative. We can express ourselves in art, literature, and music. In order to explore and develop fully the gifts God has given to us, we must study music, as well as art, literature, and the other disciplines.

Music education is for the entire body of Christ. God has given everyone a voice, so all students must develop their vocal talents and praise God by singing in a choir. Besides this, I believe that every student should have the opportunity to develop his talents further by learning to play an instrument.

Since music is "one of the most principal gifts of God for our pleasure," everyone must learn about music. From pre-school through the eighth grade, the basic elements of music must be taught. The content of this early music education is "sound concepts" — isolable and teachable patterns of sound, such as duple rhythm and upward leap. Each grade should meet for instruction at least once per week.

Music is an integral part of God's creation and our lives. Therefore it is imperative that we learn about the genre and history of music. Music is all around us, for man has expressed himself musically throughout history — in art music, folk music, popular music, and even in propaganda and advertising.

Is it not the goal of Christian education to help children to see God's hand in all aspects of creation? I believe that we must also help our children to grow to make responsible decisions — about music in recreation.

Therefore, it is essential that adolescents receive general music education. This general music class would be structured for either the eighth or ninth grade, and would meet two times per week. It is my objective to pry open attitudinal doors at this crucial age. If these young people are not exposed to an abundance of music at this point in their lives, there is a great possibility that they will never develop an appreciation for or knowledge of God's marvelous gift of music.

I have already stated that we must have a choral program in our schools. Many schools have two choirs: an elementary choir, grades four through six, and a junior high choir, grades seven through nine. Do these choirs deal effectively with the problems of changing voices and initiate interest and participation — especially in junior high? I don't think so.

I would like to structure this type of choral curriculum: a treble choir, grades four through six and most of the seventh grade; a girls' choir, grades seven through nine; and a boys' choir, grades eight through nine. For those with special talent and who show extra effort, there must exist a select soprano-alto-tenor-bass choir which would meet before or after school at least twice per week.

I am sure that some will argue that this choral program is difficult to squeeze into the curriculum. Perhaps it is more difficult to

structure, but I firmly believe that it is worth it. The purpose of a choral program is to help children develop their vocal skills and appreciation for music so they can praise God to the best of their ability. The expanded choral structure deals with special problems and needs that exist in the child's musical development.

Involvement in the elementary choral program should be required. However, in high school, choral involvement is better optional. Students have the opportunity to audition for and participate in one or perhaps two choirs.

I believe that it is the goal of a high school choral program to involve as many students as possible in developing their musical skills and in praising God. Therefore, one or even two choirs are not enough. A high school could begin with this type of choral program: a select choir would meet three days per week; a men's chorus and women's chorus would each meet once every other week; and the whole group would meet once per week. A madrigal choir for those who have special talent and show extra effort could meet two or three times per week during recess or before or after school.

Again, some will argue that this type of choral program is difficult to implement. This is true, but I firmly believe that it is the only way to begin adequately to meet the needs of our young people.

I also believe that everyone should have the opportunity to play a musical instrument. This experience is not difficult to provide — the recorder is inexpensive and relatively easy to play. In the third or fourth grade, playing the recorder is ideal for further developing music skills and starting to compose music. All children should have the chance to increase their appreciation and understanding of all kinds of music, and to praise God and enjoy themselves playing the recorder.

Besides recorder training in the third or fourth grade, we should provide an optional instrumental program in our schools. This would consist of a training band in fifth grade, an advanced band for grades six through nine, and a high school band and perhaps orchestra. These groups should meet at least three times per week.

The purpose of an instrumental program is to develop further the child's musical talent and to give the child an even wider experience in ways to praise God.

Martin Luther affirms:

I truly desire that all Christians would love and regard as worthy the lovely gift of music, which is a precious, worthy, costly treasure given mankind by God. . . next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in this world. It controls our thoughts, minds, hearts, and spirits. . .

Luther's preface to Rhau's collection of part-songs.

Because music is such a “worthy treasure,” it demands a prominent place in our lives and our education. Praising God is indeed one of the most joyful and significant elements of the Christian’s life. Therefore, it is our responsibility to develop our God-given talents and live our whole lives in praise to God.

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

*Biblical Perspectives in the Social Sciences* (1971)

*A Writing Program for the Covenant Child* (1972)

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

Workbooks for *Suffer Little Children*, at cost

*Teachers' Manual for Ancient World History* (1977)

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

Unit I. The Barbarian Migrations

Unit II. The Eastern or Byzantine Empire

Unit III. The Rise and Spread of Islam

Unit IV. England and the Middle Ages

Unit V. France in the Middle Ages

Unit VI. The Crusades

Unit VII. Feudalism and the Manor

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

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

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