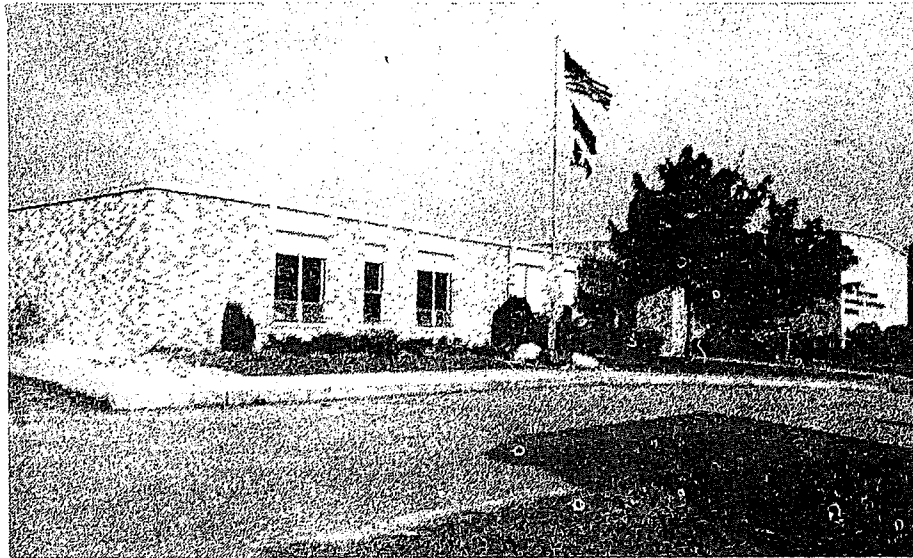
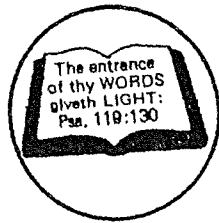


Perspectives

in Covenant Education



SPRING, 1988

VOLUME XIII

Spring, 1988

Number 3

Published quarterly in the fall, winter, spring, and summer by the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute.

Perspectives Staff:

Don Doezema
Fred Hanko
Cal Kalsbeek
John Kalsbeek
Gary VanDer Schaaf

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.

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Don Doezema
1904 Plymouth Terrace S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Business Office

Prot. Ref. Teachers' Institute
c/o Adams Street Chr. School
1150 Adams St. S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Business Manager: Judi Doezema

EDITORIAL POLICY:

Perspectives in Covenant Education exists for the purpose of furthering the cause of Protestant Reformed Christian education. This principle therefore regulates the entire contents of the journal. *Perspectives in Covenant Education* will publish any article written by a teacher, parent, or friend of Protestant Reformed education, provided the article is in harmony with the stated purpose of the magazine. The journal will publish articles whether theoretical or practical. All manuscripts must be signed and all authors are solely responsible for the contents of their articles.

SUBSCRIPTION POLICY:

Subscription price: \$4.95 per year (\$6.00 per year outside the U.S. or Canada). Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order, and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Subscription Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

REPRINT POLICY:

Permission is hereby granted for the reprinting of articles in our magazine by other publications, provided that a) such reprinted articles are reproduced in full; b) proper acknowledgement is made; c) a copy of the periodical in which such reprint appears is sent to our editorial office.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Special Focus	2
From Rivulets to Rivers	2
Feature	5
The Happiness of the Godly Home	6
Parents' Corner	19
Feminism.	20
The Joy of Parenting	24
Bulletin Board	26
Young Writers' Day	26
Readers' Forum	27
Current Issues.	29
Positive Incentive Programs.	29
The Good Ol' Days	31
Savoring Science	34
Musings	34
Dear Miss Koole	37
From the Teachers' Lounge.	40
Fearfully and Wonderfully Made	40
Teaching Bible in the Christian School.	43
The Least of These	45
Trying Something New.	47

SPECIAL FOCUS

The writer of the following article which commemorates the 40th anniversary of Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School (Grand Rapids), is himself a graduate of the school. In fact, if my calculations are correct, he must have started kindergarten in September of the year in which Hope had just graduated its 10th class. That was back in 1958. Ten years later, in June of 1968, he graduated from the 9th grade. And now, 20 years after graduation, Mr. Larry Meulenberg is president of Hope's Board, and has five children of his own in attendance at the school, from kindergarten through 8th grade. So, in one capacity or another, Larry has been on hand at Hope's 10th, 20th, and 40th anniversaries. He knows whereof he speaks, therefore, in this keenly perceptive and interestingly written history of Hope School.

The picture on the front cover is of Hope School as it stands today; and the one below shows how it looked to the students and teachers who entered it in 1947. Elsewhere in this issue, look for a picture of a Junior High class in session, in Hope School, in 1954 — and see if you can spot anybody you know.

From Rivulets to Rivers

(40 years of Hope School)

Larry Meulenberg

The Stream Began

Although many rivulets were evident prior to March 4, 1946, it was on that date that these rivulets merged together. Over 20 they were in number, and with their converging, the stream had its beginning. A quiet beginning, but quite a noticeable beginning.

The Stream Was Named

Recognizable entities must be known, and many are known by

their names. Even so this small stream. It was established in hope, and so the STREAM HOPE it became, its very name bearing witness to its future.

The Stream Had a Purpose

To govern its course, the stream adopted a constitution, and it was here, within its Constitution, that could be found what is the basis for its existence:

"The training of the Covenant

child in the School, as well as in the Home and Church, must serve to prepare them to follow their lifelong calling to reveal the glory of their God in a life lived from the principle of regeneration by grace."

Much would be placed in its path to dam this noble stream, and many would be the obstacles which the master dam builder utilized in order to divert the STREAM HOPE from its purpose. The Force propelling the stream was greater, however, and onward it flowed, slowly gathering momentum, and slowly gathering strength.

The Stream Begins Serving Its Purpose

By September of 1947 the stream had grown sufficiently to bear the first rafts of Covenant children along its course. Such was the beginning, over 40 years ago, of a purpose being realized and a responsibility being met.

The Stream Becomes a River

As with most streams that flow for a period of time, so it was with the Stream Hope. Other waters merged into it and mingled together, sharing a common purpose. In 1951 the STREAM HUDSONVILLE converged, followed in 1954 by the STREAM HOLLAND. So the stream became a River, and the River Hope moved determinedly onward.

Through the years, that River has borne many rafts of Covenant children along its course. Through the years that River has remained steadfast to its basis for existence. Such was not without turbulence, however, for in 1953 the River shrank within its banks. The master dam builder forged a new course, and in deceit guided a portion of the River along a different way, the way of vanity and pride. That hurt the River, that shrank the River, but that also purified the waters of the River Hope, giving it a rededication to its original purpose.

The River Becomes Congested

The River Hope was just barely contained within its banks, and although those banks had grown through the years, they could grow no larger. The rafts of Covenant children increased to such an extent that by 1983 something had to be done to enable efficient handling of the River traffic.

Through the Providence of God, a small channel was found, through which some of the River's water was diverted, along with some of the rafts of children. Such a solution was only temporary, for, as with many channels, it opened back into the River.

The River Branches

Permanent relief came to the swelling River in 1985 when the

River branched and the waters divided. The River Hope continued on its course, kept its size, but had fewer rafts to handle, while the River Heritage branched to the West, ran a parallel course and started a history of its own.

itself for its growth? Can a River pride itself on the number of rafts of covenant children which it has borne? Can a River claim for its own the River Pilots who have sacrificed themselves to its purpose?

The River Continues

Over 40 years have passed. The waters continue to serve the River's purpose. Many rafts of Covenant children have been, and are being, floated along its course. Many River Pilots have dedicated their lives to guiding these rafts along the river's length. God has blessed the River Hope. God has blessed the River pilots. God has blessed us.

HARDLY. Such would arise from the depths of foolish pompousness and pride.

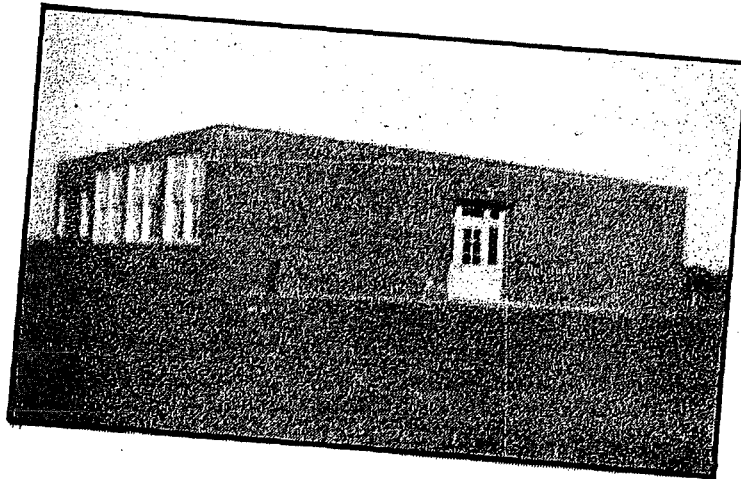
What can we say? We can quote Psalm 46:

There is a River, the streams
whereof shall make glad the city
of God. . . .

God is in the midst of her,
she shall not be moved. . . .

Come, behold the works of
the Lord!

What can we say? Can a River
boast of itself? Can a River credit



Hope
School
(1947)

You can do more than pray, after you have prayed,
but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.

John Bunyan

FEATURE

The Feature article in our Winter, 1988 issue came out of the Reformed Conference on the Christian Family, which was held in South Holland, Illinois on October 16 and 17 of last year. Three speeches were given on that occasion: one by Rev. Carl Haak on "The Biblical Foundation of the Family," another by Rev. James Slopsema on "The Role of Family Worship," and the third by Rev. David Engelsma on "The Happiness of the Godly Home." In our last issue we printed Rev. Slopsema's speech. This time, for our Feature article, we're privileged to have Rev. Engelsma's. He began by acknowledging that family life does indeed entail responsibilities, cares, and burdens — to the point where we might wonder if we do well to "resign ourselves to being unhappy." But he went on to say to his audience, at that conference, that it was his privilege "to announce the good news that happiness is possible for the family." He proceeded then to demonstrate convincingly from Scripture that happiness for men, women, and children is in fact "bound up" in the home — not in spite of those heavy responsibilities which are part of family life, but in the way of fulfilling them. God wills that it be so. It is the family that He favors with His blessing, such that happiness is therefore to be found, as it were, inside the house. A question put then by Rev. Engelsma must have had the affect of bringing his listening audience up short, as it should also his readers: "Do we believe this, we who are driven, it seems, restlessly to 'go out,' to live as much as we possibly can outside our house and away from our family, whether in work or in play?"

Because "The Happiness of the Godly Home" was prepared to be delivered as a speech, not, in the first place, to be printed as an article in Perspectives, it might perhaps appear to be a bit long for our magazine. But I'm sure that you'll all appreciate reading the entire work — and some of you might even, as I did, want to read it twice. If you enjoy reading the article, maybe you'd like also to think about ordering a video tape of the three speeches which made up the Conference on the Christian Family. We understand that various Bible Study Groups have already made profitable use of the tape (one speech per evening) in their meetings, conducting their own Question and Answer Period in connection with it. If you'd like to purchase one of them, you

can do so by sending your request, with \$15.00 for both tape and shipping, to The Evangelism Committee, Protestant Reformed Church, 16511 South Park Avenue, South Holland, IL 60473. From the same source you can order, if you prefer, a Cassette Tape Album (audio only) for \$15.00. That's for a set of six cassette tapes, including, in addition to the three speeches, the Question and Answer Period at the conference, and two sermons: one entitled "And Ye Fathers: Our Task" (by Rev. Haak), and the other, "The Motivation of Discipline" (by Rev. Engelsma).

We might mention too that, some years ago, Rev. Engelsma delivered a very instructive series of lectures on "Reformed Education." Recognizing their value, the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies put the lectures into book form—a small, 100-page, soft-cover edition. The supply of books from that first printing was soon depleted and, because of the work's popularity, it's been reprinted, this time by Beacon Lights. If you do not already have a copy, and if you do have an interest in the subject matter, we are very confident that you'll enjoy reading *Reformed Education*, by Rev. David Engelsma. You may order a copy by sending your request, with payment of \$2.00, for the book and shipping, to Beacon Lights, c/o David Harbach, 4930 Ivanrest Ave., Apt. B, Grandville, MI 49418.

The Happiness of the Godly Home

Rev. David Engelsma

Is family happiness possible?

This has become a real question in modern society as people observe the breakdown of the structure of the family, a breakdown that threatens the very existence of the family. In a recent, highly acclaimed study of the family, *The Making of the Modern Family*, Edward Shorter

concludes:

"The nuclear family is crumbling — to be replaced, I think, by the free floating couple, a marital dyad subject to dramatic fissions and fusions (p. 280)."

Recognition of the peril of the family is not limited to secular historians and sociologists. Already at the turn of the century,

the Dutch Reformed theologian, Herman Bavinck (a man not given to exaggeration), wrote:

"There is no time known, in which the family is struggling in such serious crisis, as the age in which we live" (*Het Christeligh Huisgezin*, p. 88. The English title would be *The Christian Family*. This and the later quotation are my translation of the Dutch).

Even where the family structure is still holding, the world sees, and feels, all the conflict, all the suffering, and all the damage done within the home — husbands abusing wives, psychologically and physically; wives emasculating husbands by their feminist insurrection; parents destroying children, by cruelty or neglect; children, especially adolescents, devastating their parents and making a shambles of home-life. Not surprisingly, the world asks, in all seriousness, "Is happiness in the home possible?"

The question may also arise among us, in the Church. Let no one suppose that the Reformed Faith, i.e., Biblical Christianity, views family life through rose-tinted glasses. We know very well the sorrows and burdens of the home — the sorrows and burdens of the home *within the Church*. We suffer in sympathy with the family griefs of our fellow saints. We struggle with the inescapable burdens of family life ourselves.

And the question can arise, "Is happiness possible?" — not satisfaction, or contentment, but *happiness*. For the believer, this question is not calculated to lead to a rejection of the family, as is the case with the world, but to a certain resignation regarding family life. Family life is necessary, we all know: God wills it. But in family life, we resign ourselves to being unhappy; it is a life of responsibility, cares, and burdens. We adopt the attitude toward family life expressed in the nursery rhyme that we boys used to sing so lustily, especially in the presence of the girl we were attracted to:

Needles and pins,
Needles and pins,
When a man marries,
His trouble begins.

This is a mistake, and a mistake of such seriousness as to amount to unbelief: it is doubt concerning the promise of God.

The Promise of Family-Happiness

He who runs may read that the God revealed in Jesus the Christ esteems the family. It is His creation: God created the human race as family — husband, wife, and children dwelling together, until the children leave to form their own family. By His ordinance, the home is the basic unit of His Kingdom, both as Israel in the Old Testament and

as Church in the New Testament. When God sent His own, dear Son into the world, He entrusted Him to a family — adoptive father, Joseph; biological mother, Mary; and at least six brothers and sisters. The family — the “nuclear family,” to use the jargon of sociology — carries the Divine seal of approval.

Esteeming it, God favors the family with happiness. In Psalm 128, God says, “happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee” (vs. 2), which happiness verse 3 identifies as family-happiness: “Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine. . . thy children like olive plants. . . .” God promises the objective well-being of the home (“it shall be well with thee”); and He assures us of our subjective experience of happiness as we live the life of the home (“happy shalt thou be”). Nor is this the exception. God Himself stresses that it is the rule: “Blessed,” He begins in verse 1 (where the word is really “happy” — the same word translated “happy” in verse 2) — “Blessed is *every one* that feareth the LORD. . . .”

It is my privilege, at this conference on the family, to announce the good news that happiness is possible for the family, and that God-fearing people — young people contemplating marriage; husbands; wives; parents; children; grandfathers; and grandmothers — may expect happiness. God wills it!

The Covenant-Blessing

Although we may expect happiness, we may not make it the main goal of our marriage and family life. Not our happiness, but the glory of God is the chief end of our home. We must be clear about this: our home is not for our happiness, but for the service of God. So much is this our purpose that we are resolved that we will maintain our home, even though this be at the expense of our personal happiness. In this case, we will be happy that our home serves God. If this is not our purpose, if our happiness at home is the main thing, family-happiness is an idol. The God Who esteems the family very highly warned against this over-estimation of the family on our part, for Jesus said, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26).

Heeding this warning is crucial for the enjoyment of happiness in the home. Strange as it may sound, the reason why some are unhappy in their family is exactly because they seek happiness as the main thing in family life. Fact is, to make happiness the chief end of marriage and home is to forfeit happiness. This is true, first, because the one who does this is not fearing the Lord. To fear the Lord is to have the Lord as the

chief end of everything, including your home. But fearing God is necessary, if one is to receive from God the blessing of family-happiness. One who replaces the Lord with happiness, as the god of the home, cannot be happy in his home, because God will not bless him with happiness.

Second, it is a law of life that happiness is never found by being sought directly; happiness is always a by-product. We seek something else; and as we do, we find, almost to our surprise, that we are happy.

It is striking that in the book that I referred to before, the contemporary, thoroughly worldly scholar, Professor Shorter, attributes the death of what he calls "the traditional family" exactly to this idolizing of personal happiness:

"In modern society... individual self-realization takes precedence over community stability: The careers and happiness of individual members of the family triumph over the continuation of the lineage as a whole... as for the right of the individual to sexual gratification — well, we all know about the horrors of 'repression' " (p. 19). The "Great Transformation" of the family in modern society, according to this student of the subject, is "egoism" — the seeking of self.

To illustrate this is not difficult. The husband whose main

goal is sexual pleasure is likely to suppose, after 20 or 30 years with the same woman (and even after only 2 or 3 years), that he is unhappy (especially if he meets a younger, prettier woman); and since happiness is the name of the game, he abandons his wife and family. Similarly, a wife, burdened, as she may feel, with children and with all the dull routine of keeping up a home, to say nothing of a now rather boring husband, may well run out on the whole business, if her happiness is everything. Since sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, also the young people, discovering their parents to be restrictive, will revolt, and bolt, in the interests of freedom and pleasures.

The Bible tells us of a man, a God-fearing man, who made the mistake of putting family-happiness before God, and of the bitter consequences of this sin. God Himself judged Eli's failure to discipline his boys as his honoring his sons "above me" (I Sam. 2:29). I need not detail to this audience how severely God dealt with this sin, *in old Eli's house*.

God did not create the family, nor does He build your house or mine, for our happiness, but for His own glory. To live as a God-fearing man, or woman, is to will, in this matter, conformably to the will of God; it is to determine,

and confess, with Joshua, "As for me, and my house, we will serve the LORD" — "my house for the LORD!"

This is not to suggest that we surrender all desire for happiness in the home. On the contrary, there is happiness for men, women, and children in the home. Indeed, I may assert that there is happiness *only* in the home. Now I am not forgetting the God-fearing men and women whom God Himself deprives of family life, the life of Psalm 128, as though I mean to imply that they are excluded from happiness. Nor am I overlooking those believers who voluntarily deprive themselves of the joys of husband, or wife, and children, in order to devote themselves more fully to the Lord, as Paul writes (and which Paul praises!) in I Corinthians 7: "For I would that all men were even as I myself. . . He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord" (vss. 7, 32).

But I am saying that the rule is that God's people enjoy true, rich happiness, under the blessing of God their Savior, in the best and fullest experience of that blessing, in family life, and not outside of family life. God said, from the beginning, that it is not good for the man to be alone (Gen. 2:18). Life does not go well for the single man; and, therefore, he

cannot be happy. God tells us in Psalm 128 what happiness is and where we can find it. God, Who is not selfish, Who is not content merely that His people have enough to eat and shelter from the weather — God wants us to be happy: He wills that we experience His blessing of us. How does He make happy the man who fears Him? By setting this solitary fellow in a family — by giving him a wife and, usually, by surrounding him with children; and then by making things go well for him in that family.

That happiness for man is bound up in his home is also the lesson of the book of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes is the Word of God that passes the judgment, "Vanity," over all of earthly life: riches, power, learning, debauchery — all. But there are two escapes, as it were, from this awful judgment. First and fundamental is the fear of the Lord and the keeping of His commandments (Eccles. 12:13). Second, as the earthly way of life in which God's blessing is enjoyed, is the home — the simple life of the family:

"Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath

given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccles. 9:7-10). In his fine work on the Reformed family, *When Thou Sittest in Thine House*, Abraham Kuyper put it this way: "...our real life, and therewith our real happiness in life is hid of God in just our ordinary home" (p. 281). The saint from whom God withholds marriage and family life, although he is certainly blessed and, therefore, also happy, is nevertheless deprived of something of the richness of happiness. The believer who gives up marriage and family in order more completely to devote himself to the work of the Lord, although he will enjoy the blessing of the Lord Whom he thus serves, nevertheless sacrifices something of happiness.

Do we believe this, we who are driven, it seems, restlessly to "go out," to live as much as we possibly can outside our house and away from our family, whether in work or in play?

It is a mistake for a husband to suppose that his real happiness lies outside his home — with another

woman, with the boys at a bar, or working far more than is necessary to put bread on the table. God says your happiness is in the midst of your family. Find it there!

It is a mistake for a wife to suppose that her real fulfillment lies outside her husband's house — with another man, in a career, or in gadding about. God says your happiness is on the inside of your husband's house, as a fruitful vine, bearing and rearing children. Find it there! (God's apostle becomes very strong about this, in I Timothy 2:15: "... she shall be saved in childbearing. . .")

It is a mistake for a teenager to suppose that he will be able "really to live" outside his home, in the fascinating world. God says your happiness is under your parents' roof, around your father's table, and in the fellowship of your father, your mother, and your brothers and sisters. Find it there!

It is a mistake for a young man, neither gifted with celibacy nor intent on remaining single in order more fully to serve the Lord, to spurn marriage, because it will interfere with his pleasure. Young man, you are spurning the blessing of God, and forfeiting happiness!

I sing the happiness of the home, today, with the lyrics of Psalm 128.

What the Happiness
of the Home is

First, the happiness of the home is its fellowship: the close, unique friendship of husband and wife, of parents and children, and of grandparents and grandchildren. Happiness for humans is not rugged individualism, splendid isolation, unhampered independency; happiness is communion. Happiness is in the preposition, "with." The enjoyment of the fellowship of the family is happiness: the intimacy of husband and wife (which is not the same as sex between a man and a woman); sharing earthly life; conversation; going to church together; holding the children, or grandchildren, on our lap. Whatever disturbs the fellowship threatens the happiness: another woman; a wife's sharp tongue; disinterested parents; rebellious children.

Second, the happiness of the home is the activity of giving oneself to the others — giving oneself up for their sakes, giving oneself as this is done uniquely in the family. The husband gives himself for wife and children by his labor, as provider; the wife gives herself to the husband, by becoming his "help" (the sacrifice of her "self"), and to the children, by her care of them (yet further sacrifice of her "self"); and the children give themselves to the parents, by subjecting themselves

to the parents' will, and to each other, by accepting each other, bearing with each other, and giving in to the will of each other. At the entrance to family life stands an altar upon which must be laid, in sacrifice, one's self. But exactly in this giving of the self is discovered... happiness! The law of the Kingdom of heaven holds supremely here: you must lose your life in order to find it.

The activity of self-giving in the home is happiness, if it be a willing, hearty self-giving, and not a grudging, resentful self-giving that is always calling attention to the tremendous sacrifice that is being made.

Whatever dams up the giving of oneself and gives vent to self-seeking, to a greedy taking, in the family, destroys happiness. Not only does self-seeking destroy happiness for the others, as, e.g., a husband's using wife and children makes them unhappy, but it also destroys happiness for the one himself who is doing the seeking of self. Who on earth is more miserable than the wife and mother who is seeking herself? How can she possibly be happy in the family? What can be more contrary to her basic desire than a family? What is more unconcerned about a woman's pleasure than a baby?

The happiness of the home, thirdly, is responsibility — the

heavy, awesome, unique responsibility of the family. To family life belong burdens. Not only must the husband provide for the physical necessities of this woman and her children, but he must undertake that care of her that corresponds to Jesus' being Savior of His Body, the Church. The wife must help this man, not with this or that, but with living, as well as build her entire house. The parents are responsible for the temporal and eternal welfare of their children. The children are responsible neither to grieve and shame their parents, nor to injure each other. Is there any burden like this one? As we shoulder the burden and carry it, we are... happy. Happiness for humans is not a carefree life, idleness, or irresponsibility. We are not butterflies, made to flit here and there, in carefree abandon; but we are man, made in God's image, made to have dominion, made to be responsible.

The happiness of responsibility in the home has two aspects. First, undertaking these responsibilities, we are "fulfilled." We use our energies, our abilities, and our time in a worthwhile calling; we use them for exactly that purpose for which we were created to use them.

Second, where there is responsibility, there will be trust; and trust is essential to the happiness of family life. Describing the

virtuous woman, Proverbs 31:11 says, "the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." The wife, on her part, relies upon her husband; he is her strength and shield. As for the children, everyday experience shows how vital is a confidence in father and mother. But also we parents have a trust in our children, a trust that they will honor us and love us. The home, I am saying, is the place of security, and, therefore, of rest, for the members of the family. Out there, in the treacherous, dangerous world, is strife, faithlessness, and the necessity of always being on guard. Within the walls of the Christian home, responsibility nurtures trust, so that there is peace and safety.

Irresponsibility in the family circle spells misery, whether that of the husband who shirks headship, or that of the wife who is forever opposing her husband, or that of the parents who divorce, or that of the teenager who rebels against parental authority. There is no happiness in the family of a David who neglects to supervise and discipline his children, and who troubles his family besides with adultery, but only a chaos of disrespect, jealousy, intrigue, fighting, rape, and murder, climaxing for David himself in the pathetic sorrow of II Samuel 18:33, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O

Absalom, my son, my son!"

Upon What Happiness Depends

All of this happiness of fellowship, self-giving, and responsibility, with its fulfillment and trust, depends solely and squarely upon the blessing of the Lord. Psalm 128 proclaims that family happiness is the blessing of the LORD: "thus shall the man be *blessed* . . ." It is of the greatest practical significance that the one whom the Lord blesses with family happiness is the "man . . . that feareth the LORD" (vs. 4). First, family happiness requires the man's good exercise of his headship. Psalm 128 asserts the headship of the man, in clearest, strongest language: Happy is the *man* that feareth the LORD (vs. 1); the woman appears as "thy wife," and the children, as "thy children" (vs. 3); and the woman and children share in the happiness of the husband and father. My concern is to point out that so much depends upon the man. The man is responsible, under God, for the happiness of his family. The French have a saying, in any trouble, "*cherchez la femme*" — 'look for the female.' As regards family problems, the Word says, "look to the man."

Second, family happiness requires a God-fearing man. The secret of the happy home, subject always to God's blessing, is the

man who reverences God, the godly man. The secret of family happiness is not the sexual organs, but the heart; the most important room is not the bedroom, but the prayer closet.

Thirdly, family happiness requires the expression of the fear of God, namely, that the man walks in God's ways: "... that walketh in His ways" (vs. 1). The man must walk in God's ways *in his family life*. He must be able to say, with Psalm 101:2, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." Before marriage, he avoids the strange woman (Prov. 5). He marries a woman who fears the Lord (Prov. 31:30). He lives faithfully with this, his one and only wife (Mal. 2:11ff.). He works diligently to provide for his family (Ps. 128:2). He exercises headship, but as Christ exercises Headship over the Church, i.e., in love (Eph. 5:23ff.; Eph. 6:4). He lives actively himself, and raises his family, in a true Church of Christ, where alone the blessing of the Lord is found — the "Zion" and "Jerusalem" of Psalm 128:5. He sees to it that his house has order, holiness, and peace. Not every house, not every house in the Church, not even every house headed by a believer, but a house set up and ordered *in this way*, God will bless, still today, with happiness.

This happiness, however, will be tested, sorely tested; and it

will be threatened, seriously threatened!

Tested by God

It would be a mistake to think that a family happiness is possible that is untouched by sorrow. I would be a fool to leave you with this impression. This would be to jeopardize the happiness of the family: as soon as the certain sorrows come, the family would despair of happiness, and even of the blessing of God. Our homes are builded in a fallen, disordered world. The quakes of the curse shake them; the storms of the Devil's rebellion batter them; the icy wind of sickness and death blow through them; and our own sinful natures infect them. Scripture does not hide this from us, characterized as it is by a hard-headed realism. The Reformed Faith is likewise realistic. Its marriage form *begins* by sounding the note that "married persons are generally, by reason of sin, subject to many troubles and afflictions." Its vow requires the couple who marry to swear faithfulness, "for better, for worse."

God Himself tests our homes and their happiness by burdens and sorrows. In the very best of circumstances, there will be, ordinarily, the great sorrow of the woman's conception and the heavy burden of subjecting herself to a sinful man; likewise, there will be the profuse sweat of the

husband and father to make a living. This is the Word of Divine chastisement from the beginning; and from it, there is no escape (Gen. 3:16ff.).

There is the anxiety to make ends meet, especially where there is a large family.

There is the grief of sickness and death. I think of Luther on his knees at the death-bed of his fourteen-year old daughter, Magdalena: "O God, I love her so, but Thy will be done." What sorrow at the bedside of the pale, feverish, dying child! What grief at the grave of the husband, or wife, or parent!

There is the secret, bitter disappointment at a husband, or a wife, who comes far short of that which the other expected at marriage, indeed far short of what he, or she, is required to be by God. There are Abigails in Israel, married to Nabals. There are longsuffering husbands, married to brawling women. Herman Bavinck makes the penetrating observation that there are marriages in the Church in which the husband, or the wife, is the cross that the other has to bear: "To the adversities and crosses belong also the weaknesses and sins which the married must bear in each other. Husband and wife are often a cross for each other. And if the wife herself is not the cross for the husband, or the husband himself the cross for the wife,

that he, or she, must carry, then both of them surely have some characteristic which is a disappointment and a vexation for the other. Where is there a husband or a wife who perfectly answers to the expectation, or is completely in accordance with the ideal, that one had formed in his imagination? The virtues find in marriage a certain favorable opportunity to unfold and develop; but also the defects and weaknesses come to view nowhere so clearly as in the intimate sphere of the family. Many a man who seems great and strong in the eyes of men is weak in his house — small of soul and narrow of spirit. Many a woman who in visiting resembles an angel is in her house a plague to her husband. Who is able to comprehend the failures here, in married life and in the sphere of the family? Who is able to count the sins against each other with which husband and wife often make themselves guilty?" (*Het Christelijk Huisgezin*, pp. 111, 112)

Besides the sins of husbands and wives against each other, there is also the suffering caused parents by sinful children, especially the almost unbearable anguish due to the incorrigibly wicked child. Among the olive plants may be an unfruitful branch. Did not our Lord say that He came to bring a sword and that that sword may cut into

our family ties? "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother. . . and a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. 10:34ff.). But what bitter grief when believing parents must echo God's own lament, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Isaiah 1:2).

Scripture reveals this testing through sorrow in the history of the covenant home. Adam and Eve must see Cain murder Abel in unbelief, and perish under God's curse. Noah is mocked by a son, and curses a grandson. Jacob looks back on his life as "evil," in large part because of family trouble. Rachel dies in childbirth. And Mary, blessed among women, has a "sword pierce through (her) own soul," because of her Son.

There is grief in the Christian home; there is no grief like it.

But the family sorrow does not destroy the family happiness. God tests our happiness, whether it is rooted in Him. By the sorrows, by the burdens, unbearable in our own strength, God teaches us to seek our strength in Him, teaches us to cry out, "Lord, do Thou build my house," teaches us to fear Him more; and therein is more happiness, also for the family.

Threatened by the Devil

Our happiness is also threatened by the Devil, who takes advantage of every opportunity we give him by our folly, carelessness, and disobedience. I remind you that the promise of happiness is made to the God-fearer, who is walking in God's ways. The promise, though it heartens the man who is struggling against his many weaknesses, gives no comfort to the man who is despising God's ways for family life. There is a foolish troubling of his own house by a husband and father (Prov. 11:29); there is a pulling down of her own house by a foolish woman (Prov. 14:1).

Such is infidelity, whether secret or public.

Such is the cold, unfeeling attitude, or harsh, cruel behavior, of the husband, on the one hand; and such is the domineering attitude, or contentious behavior, of the wife, on the other hand.

Such are both the main weaknesses in child rearing. Laxity troubles one's house — letting the children have their way, defending them always against accusations by teachers, covering up their iniquities. So also does over-severity destroy the happiness of the home — government by terror, harsh discipline, rigid restriction, unreasonable rules. The main warning to fathers in the Bible is that we not provoke our children to wrath (cf. Eph. 6:4).

Luther noted this danger, and its usual consequences: "Experience teaches us that youths reared in extreme strictness become much worse when loosed from restraint than those who have not been so strictly reared. So utterly impossible it is to improve human nature with commandments and punishments. More than this is required to do so." (*What Luther Says*, Vol. III, p. 1563.)

Husbands and wives grievously trouble and effectively pull down their house by drunkenness.

"He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house" (Prov. 15:27).

An especially destructive weakness is the introduction into our family of hatred, strife, and evil-speaking, whether against the neighbor, or against some authority, or against the Church.

Walking in such ways, we cannot expect happiness in our family. We have, in these cases, given place to the Devil, the Destroyer of happiness. What is worse, God Himself will bring judgment upon our house. He brought judgment upon David's family: "the sword shall never depart from thine house" (II Sam. 12:10). He will not spare our families, if we despise His ways. Infidelity destroys trust and, likely, the living together of husband and wife. A tyrannical father will be plagued by hostile children. Parents given to greed

must mourn worldly children. And a household delighting in tearing others to pieces with the tongue will smart under God's rod of turmoil and internal division itself.

There is no shortcut to family happiness, only the way of the fear of God and the day-in, day-out struggle to walk in His ways.

Brothers and sisters, we do well to conduct self-examination with regard to our house!

This may not lead to our looking to our own efforts for the blessing. The blessing that brings happiness is to be sought from the Word of God.

The Source of Happiness

House and happiness come from God's blessing; and His blessing is His living, mighty Word. This Word of blessing proceeds out of Zion, i.e., the Church; and, therefore, the promise of family happiness in Psalm 128 declares that "the LORD shall bless thee out of Zion" (vs. 5). For family happiness, we need the Word of God, maintained, confessed, and preached by the true Church.

This Word of God is nothing more and nothing less than the Reformed Faith. This Faith confesses an infallible Scripture which authoritatively praises marriage and the family and which authoritatively regulates family life. This Faith proclaims the Word of

the antithesis, so necessary for the happiness of the family, not only to guard our family life from worldly behavior, but also to guard our thinking about the family from the opinions of the world — the opinion that one should avoid family life because of its cares; the opinion that sexual pleasure justifies forsaking one's mate and children; the opinion that motherhood is second-class status for a gifted woman; the opinion that having children may be sacrificed to ease and comfort in this world; the opinion that the great god, Self, stands firmly on the family hearth.

The Reformed Faith preaches the Word of the covenant of grace in Jesus the Christ, which includes as an essential element that the covenant God gathers His Church from the children of believers and rears them to spiritual maturity by the instruction of the believing home. Divine election pursues family lines; the blood of the cross flows down the generations of the God-fearing; and the Holy Spirit of regeneration and sanctification broods upon the houses of saints, as His nest. The great and glorious doctrine of the covenant undergirds and envelops the family.

Ours as Reformed is the Word of truth about marriage. Lose this, and we lose the family! God has been gracious to us Protestant

in the home of the man who
fears the Lord.

By His Word, the Lord Himself builds the covenant home and blesses it with happiness. In dependency upon Him, the covenant people are to pray for the promised happiness of the family — the young man and young woman for the home they will establish; husband, wife, and children for the family realized among them; and the Church for the families of her fellowship. "Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1).

202

2025 RELEASE UNDER E.O. 14176

make us the more aware of, the deceptive, crafty, even devious forces which are furiously and relentlessly bent on seducing us in order to destroy the church." For the answer of Scripture, we'll have to wait for the summer issue.

Perhaps, however, we can include another article, written in a similar vein, in this issue's "Parents' Corner." Not only is there a similarity of topic, but the circumstances which led to the writing of it are quite alike. Whereas Mrs. Langerak's was prepared with a view to presentation at a Mothers' Circle Spring Breakfast, this one was made for a Ladies' Circle Hostess Supper, held in Loveland Protestant Reformed Church. The latter is by Mr. Dan Lanting, who writes with obvious experiential knowledge of "The Joys of Parenting." We thank him also for his willingness to share his work with us for the benefit of the readers of Perspectives.

Feminism

Evelyn Langerak

We live in an age when it is increasingly difficult to be a consistently Biblical Christian woman because we are so surrounded with the godless, self-centered un-Biblical thinking of feminism.

Feminism is a totally self-centered life system aimed at rejecting God's role for women. As women began to perceive homemaking and motherhood as an isolating, unfulfilling, self-sacrificing experience in which the woman becomes utterly dependent upon her husband, she began to think, "Do smart women really stay home, making themselves financially insecure, emotionally dependent, surrounded by toddlers and a peanut butter

cuisine?" All the action seemed to be out there in the men's world; while she felt bored, restless, and unfulfilled, yearning for more scope for her talents. Feminism claimed to be the answer to the housewife's dilemma, and women were captivated by the freedom feminists promised.

To many, feminism is seen as a non-religious movement of some wild fanatics and weirdos striving for fairness for women, helping woman to take her place along with man as an equal human being. But is it that simple? What is feminism? Feminism is a religion from the Devil. To feminists, the measure of all

things is woman. Woman is god, possessing divine beauty, power, and dignity. The burning question for them becomes "What will fulfill me as a woman? Anything that interferes with my sovereign fulfillment is to be destroyed!"¹ They are busy exchanging God, the Father, and Christ for an idol made in woman's image. This is what they predict. "God is going to change. Women are going to bring an end to God. As we take positions in government, in medicine, in law, in business, in the arts and finally, in religion, we will be the end of Him."²

The anti-Christian, self-seeking philosophy of feminism has colored the whole perspective of life, including the meaning of marriage, family life, child care, religion, ordination, friendship, homosexuality, abortion, equal pay, employment, vocation, educational opportunity, care for the aged, etc.

For the first time in American history a marriage is more likely to break up than to last until death does it part. It is predicted that by 1990 up to 50% of all children will have experienced divorce and remarriage in their families. Feminists reject the God-ordained institution of marriage of male and female in which the husband exercises headship and rule in love and the wife submits in love for the Lord's sake. They substitute a self-

seeking arrangement of equals, for the purpose of romance and companionship, wherein the woman is free to pursue her own interests, without subordinating them to those of her husband and children.

The feminists have succeeded in making our modern society profoundly hostile to children. To quote a noted feminist author on the subject of our modern lack of affection for children and lack of support for their mothers, "We do not refrain from childbirth because we are concerned about the population explosion or because we feel we cannot afford children, but because we do not like children."³ "Squirming, squealing, demanding infants who emerge to mock the lovers"⁴ are the chief obstacle to woman's total liberation. Yes, babies are the scourge of the age — for those wrapped up in selfish individualistic interests. Motherhood is relegated to the realm of "hobby" — something to do during spare time and that hurts your career if given too much attention. Large families and an adult lifestyle do not mix. Having babies and raising them take precious time away from their ungodly, superficial goals in life of pursuing self interests and making their own name for themselves.

These seeds of rebellion have produced bitter fruit. At present eight million women with children

under six are in the labor force and the number is expected to rise to over twelve million in three years. Mothers are refusing to stay home with their children and are seeking answers to the questions: Who is taking care of the kids? Whose job is child care — fathers, church, government, friends, neighbors, relatives? Over 50% of all mothers with children under the age of three are leaving them in day-care centers, with some providing 24-hour care. Child care has become a 10-billion dollar business. In response to a need, "Chicken Soup," the first child-care center licensed to care for ill children, recently opened. Many more are sure to follow. Churches which are the leading providers of day care are faced with a dilemma caused by the impact, upon the child, of "other than mother" care. The abuse of children in day-care centers has received national publicity and has frightened parents. Latch-key children are the fastest growing special interest group in schools. A telephone counseling program called "Chatter" assists latch-key children with emergencies and helps them deal with loneliness.

Still the women's movement persists and fights for survival. In order to survive, feminists recognize the importance of passing their beliefs on to the next generation. In the name of sex-fairness, all the major school textbook publishers are rewriting

their books to promote a feminist world. Books are written for teens. Mothers are talking to their girls. What are they explaining to them? "Girls have a lot to learn: they must learn to be stupid, inferior, passive, leaning, and adorable. The bringing up (or rather, bringing down) of girls qualifies them to become, not mature, intelligent adults with the right to call their souls and dreams their own, but only make them part of that vast, domestic army that nurtures, supports, takes care of everybody else, that is a housewife. You are brought up to please other people — your parents, teachers, boys, husband, and then, so you don't get out of practice, your children. And you're supposed to please them all of the time. (That's called charm.) The reason for charm is so that when you find yourself doing dishes, scrubbing floors, changing diapers, and all those other mindless, boring, repetitive tasks you will always seem to be happy. Then you will not just be a housewife, but a happy housewife, which pleases everyone enormously. Girls are you tired of being inferior? Then join the battle against the enforced making of every woman into a wife, a mother, a housekeeper, and a second-class citizen."⁵

Many women are uncertain about what their relationship to the feminist movement should be. They see worthwhile efforts, yet

are troubled and repelled by radical feminism. Is it possible to take the "good" from the movement without becoming involved in its radical excesses? Women feel guilty about leaving their children. Experts are conducting studies and appeasing pricked consciences. Are you afraid that your child will forget you're his real mother? Don't worry — research shows that no matter who the caregiver is, a child will invariably prefer his parents.⁶ Furthermore, elementary school students whose mothers work outside the home excel academically, act independently, achieve success socially, and attend school more regularly than children of mothers who stay at home.

As Christian women, daughters of our King, Jesus Christ, we must reject feminism as anti-God, anti-Christ, and bent on destroying families and His church and cause. Let's turn to II Peter 2 and listen to what God says concerning it: "But there shall be false teachers among you who shall bring in damnable heresies and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, while they promise them liberty (or freedom), they themselves are

the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." So we see that the freedom which the feminists pursue is only a terrible bondage to sin and the Devil.

Ours is a horribly wicked, rebellious world. Our children need parents who love God and His Word and who faithfully instruct their children in its truths. Mothers we, too, must speak to our daughters and teach them by word and example the only true freedom — listening to God's speech and walking according to it, doing the will of our heavenly Father.

1 Mary Pride, *The Way Home* (Crossway Books, Westchester, Illinois), 1985, p. 9.

2 Naomi Goldenberg, *Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religions* (Beacon Press, Boston), 1979, p. 10.

3 Germain Greer, *Sex and Destiny* (Harper and Row, New York), 1984, p. 2.

4 Scanzoni, Letha Dawson and Scanzoni, John, *Men, Women and Change* (McGraw-Hill, New York), 1976, p. 364.

5 Dale Carlson, *Girls Are Equal Too* (Atheneum, New York), 1973, p. xi, xii, xiii.

6 "Stop Feeling Guilty," *Red-book*, March, 1985.



The Joy of Parenting

Dan Lanting

Parenting is defined as the work of a parent in raising a child or children. God's command in creation has always been for man to raise a family and subdue the earth. Not everyone, however, has the call to become a parent. Some, for various reasons, in God's providence, hold other special places. For those of us whom God has called to parenting, we must cheerfully assume the responsibilities of bearing and raising children through the means which God has provided.

In marriage, the Lord Jehovah brings together two special mates to share the responsibilities of being faithful covenant parents. Being parents in the 20th century has both benefits and drawbacks. It is much easier to provide for the child's health today than before; but it is more difficult to develop a spiritually strong and sound child. Throughout most of history, a child was at his parents' side while he grew up. Today the family is threatened with fathers having to work away from their wives and children, and maybe even away from the sphere of the covenant. Fathers find it hard to find time to have

a big part in the instructing of their offspring in the everyday wisdom of life. Many of us, and most of our parents, have experienced growing up in a less industrialized environment. In generations gone by, the family usually stayed together, in the family farm or business in small towns; but today most of us work for wages, and the day-to-day rearing of our children is in the hands of mothers and teachers.

However, we must trust in God's grace to supply us with what we need to find joy in becoming parents and in mastering parenting. From holding a newborn infant struggling for its first few breaths of earthly air, to seeing the children off on their own — the believing parent has, every day, abundant evidence of God's blessing and mercy. The joy is unspeakable when we hear young mouths speak of a Holy God and of the love for Jesus Christ in their hearts. We must bring up our children in the fear of God — which proves to be the joyous way to live this mortal life, as we follow the light of the Word, trying never to show a lack of faith in our Creator.

God shows to us parents our

own faults, weaknesses, and strengths in the way each child behaves, how he reacts to chastisement, and how he tries to live a holy life. What our children really need is our time for listening, talking, sharing, and growing together. On the bottom line, they do not need physical things that create a "fun" time for them. They like to be challenged, to be taught the truth, and to be loved as a friend. They really don't need the latest fads, a bike, or a car, a game or whatever; but they need a heartfelt assurance of being part of our life. Take away all of their earthly things except for food, water, and shelter, and they will cling to their parents. Take away their parents, and life will mean nothing to them.

What a joy it is for us as Protestant Reformed parents to know that God has included us in His covenant, and that He calls Himself our heavenly Father, giving the promise to us and to our children. Parenthood is overwhelming at times, since our children are born in sin and struggle with it. But that is the real joy of life, knowing that we have the truth to share with them, making life so much more the richer.

How wonderful it is to see that God gives each child his special talents, and how He is pleased to develop those talents through the means of us as parents. Mothers

can go to bed dead-tired at the end of the day with a mighty peace in their hearts, knowing that the child is sleeping soundly after having grown in God's grace another day. It's easy to run out of patience, at day's end, with the task of training the little ones, and instructing the older ones with the proof of God's word; but we can sleep securely knowing that God will give strength, hope, and joy for the morrow. What a reward mothers can look forward to in heaven, having been chosen by God to labor faithfully in the home and to give themselves to serve the children given to their care in God's Holy Name.

Parenting teens poses many challenges because at times they want to run the world while they still know it all. Patience and trust in our Father's Word gets us through that time of a family's maturing in life. What memorable moments in life when our children (in their adolescent years) confess faith in the triune God and in His Word, in antithesis to the darkness of this world. I think we would gladly go through it all again for the joy of that moment. When we look back, one lifetime is like just yesterday, and the young man or woman seems to have only arrived out of the womb; but time has brought them there so quickly.

That is why we must live each day as if it were the last day we

young men and women who still profess their faith in the same heavenly Father of our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. Thanks be to God Who in His covenant faithfulness sends the Comforter to guide us in the truth and to enable us to teach it to our children. ■■■



BULLETIN BOARD

The third annual Young Writers' Day is being planned for this summer. An information sheet concerning it was distributed to the appropriate schools early in the spring. It seemed to us that it might be of interest to our readers to know what it is that is being provided; so, on our Bulletin Board today we find the scoop as it appeared on the aforementioned flyer.

Young Writers' Day

THEME: Writing to One Another

WHAT?

Young Writers' Day is sponsored by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Schools. The activities of the day will include: devotional times, writing experiences, pizza lunch, and organized play time.

WHY?

The objectives of the day include the following:

1. Provide an enjoyable writing experience.
2. Help young writers develop a positive attitude toward writing.
3. Direct young writers to communicate by means of poetry and letter writing.
4. Provide each young writer with a booklet containing the writing of all the participants.

A second point I wish to make is that the situation described by Mr. Huisken has a serious effect on our churches. It already has had a noticeable effect on our reading of good religious writings. Even the *Standard Bearer* is considered by many to be "too deep"; and soundly Reformed books of the present and past are not even considered by most. As a rule we are unaccustomed to thinking through a problem, and this has a disastrous effect on our ability to interpret the Bible on our own (i.e., without commentaries or a minister). But the really frightening possibility is the ease with which the lie could supplant the truth in this environment. What damage could not a man bent on bringing heresy into the church do, if he were a gifted speaker with a quick mind, and one who gave evidence of being a learned scholar? Without a broad knowledge of church history, we would probably not recognize the old heresy in new clothes (for there is still nothing new under the sun). And, not accustomed to thinking things through, would we even *catch* the lie mingled with the truth? I am very thankful that God has given us some exceptions — young men and women who like to read and study and who can and do think for themselves. As a rule, however, we are not inclined to those activities.

I hope, therefore, that we see the dangers that accompany the decline of our graduates' interests and abilities in these crucial areas. May God grant us the wisdom not only to take heed to the warnings sounded by Mr. Huisken, but also to take appropriate *action*.

I see that this "letter" has gotten almost as long as the "introductions" to some of the *Perspectives* articles, but I hope you can find room to print it anyway.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Russ Dykstra

FROM GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN:

What a precious magazine you put out! I had no idea that there was such a worthwhile magazine! I especially enjoyed the "boney" one by Gary VanDerSchaaf. You know, I never had opportunity to attend school beyond the 8th grade in Byron Center. And we never saw any instruction under "science." But Gary's insight into the Scriptural point of view of our skeletal system was an eye-opener, and truly was appreciated.

I did not realize that within me were osteocytes, osteoblasts, and osteoclasts working their little heads off for me! Looking forward to the next issue!

Sincerely,
John Faber

Nature Trail tickets, nine Lincoln play dollars, several music awards, some library awards, "Neater Eater" awards, playground-behavior awards and innumerable Scratch N Sniff stickers, stamps, stars, and smile faces.

Just how far reaching this program is becomes evident later when she writes:

The children can redeem trail tickets and play dollars for group prizes, like a free recess. Thanks to the involvement of local merchants, students can also earn a free order of french fries or free admission to the roller-skating rink.

Skreslet also describes a system in Cleveland in which students are given \$40 for an A, \$20 for a B, and \$10 for a C. The money which the students earn will be credited toward a scholarship fund.

Skreslet hits the bull's eye when she says:

What I think we're seeing in Cleveland and at the Lincoln School is the well-meant but distorted application of a current business principle — the vogue that stresses "excellence" and its corollary, "competitive-ness." We've convinced ourselves that the way to safeguard America's position in

commerce and science is to appeal to young people's hunger for the rewards the marketplace can provide. Thomas J. Peters, in his influential book, "In Search of Excellence," writes: "Get the incentives right and productivity will follow. If we give people big, straightforward monetary incentives to do right and work smart, the productivity problem will go away."

Skreslet finds this positive incentive program troubling for several reasons. She is troubled that "well-behaved, attentive children are being bombarded with rewards for doing what schools routinely expect." She also finds it uncomfortable philosophically that "good behavior must be reinforced so systematically — that without tangible incentives, first graders won't return their library books when due. Or that they won't learn the alphabet without stickers, stars, and candy bars." She does not like what this system says about students either. "It also says that students are so materialistic, so unmotivated and lazy that they will not learn without a bribe. I find that an insulting idea."

Skreslet also sees problems for some unfortunate youngsters who "mess up" and for those improperly motivated.



But... the examination must have been easy, since students

today are expected to know much more than they were 90 years ago. Right?

Wrong! Stare for a moment at the following questions, samples of those which faced 8th grade Kansans back in 1901. There were 84 questions in all, and the young scholars had to pass 80% of them in order to qualify for an 8th-grade diploma.

Mathematics: Find the square root of 277,729 and the cube root of 43,612,208.

Physiology: Explain completely the process of digestion.

History: Name the presidents in chronological order. Explain the Missouri Compromise, the Dred Scott decision, or the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

English: Write a poem while the test supervisor grades you on posture and penmanship.

Were those really the good ol' days?

* * * * *

The troops on the next page don't date quite that far back. But by now, shall we say, they have been around for awhile. So, also has the photograph which we used for printing. It looks in fact as if it had been carried home in someone's back pocket. After the parts were taped together, however, we were hopeful that it was indeed printable.

October 28, 1954. That's a generation ago. The teacher, Miss Alice Reitsma, has since then passed on to her eternal reward. The 8th and 9th graders that year now have children of their own in Hope or Heritage. . . and/or in Covenant High. . . in college. . . and beyond. Reflecting again on Mr. Meulenberg's article in "Special Focus," we cannot but be impressed by the faithfulness of our covenant-keeping God. Fathers and mothers they are now. And teachers and preachers — a college professor, three grade school teachers, and two ministers (not all of them in P.R. schools or churches).

Do you see any familiar faces in there? (Hint: the three future grade school teachers were all sitting at or near the back; the two future ministers — in the front. Just a coincidence. . . probably.)

■□■



SAVORING SCIENCE

Mr. Faber's contemplation of the works of God on the second and third days of Creation-week he shares with us in two separate "musings." They were intended no doubt to be for two separate issues; but, for the close relationship of the content, we'll take the liberty of including the two of them in one.

Our hope is that his continued wondering will inspire us, his readers, to do the same. For, though the works of God's hands are most emphatically beyond our comprehension, they are intended for our serious consideration, in order that, when we give them that, we might exclaim with the psalmist, "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" and "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8).

Musings

John M. Faber

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

While I was a-musing about the story of God's work on the second and third days of creation I realized that I could understand the words, but I could not comprehend the meaning thereof. God said that He made a firmament. I can somewhat comprehend that because I can see it. That is, I can see the blue of the sky; and I know that the sky is all the space around the earth. Space! But then I wondered if it were an endless space. My thinking said that it must have an end. But I mused that it could really be unmeasurable because

its Creator is unmeasurable. But, whatever; I'll never travel in space to learn if it has an end and my space ship could fall over the edge; I don't know.

Then I wondered the need for it. I realized that God's Word told of the primary reason for that firmament. It was to separate the waters above the firmament from the waters below it. Those two bodies of water were the original waters of creation. The lower half I can comprehend for I can see those. I can plainly see the beautiful clouds, the sparkling rivers and lakes, and the mighty oceans. They all belong to that "below"

category. But the waters *above*? Were they those waters that came down to make the Great Flood that covered the earth to destroy it in Noah's time? The apostle Peter must have mused about that, too; but the Holy Spirit taught him to write that the earth was standing in the water, and out of the water. That should make it clear. Or does it? Maybe some theology professor has a head smart enough to understand it. But my head is in a whirl. It is all mystery to me. Then I remembered that the writer to the Hebrews told me that I can understand it *by faith*. Good! Now I can stop bothering my thinking about that. What a relief! I don't even know why the sky is blue!

I further mused that the Creator was thinking about a future home for a future people. So He invented dry land on which they could live. Then I wondered how He did that. Well, He commanded and part of the round earth rose and part sank below sea-level. Then I wondered about the difference between a human inventor and the Almighty Inventor. Men-inventors need materials to think about, and to work with, to make an invention become real. But God has only to speak and His inventions become reality. Then I mused about the function of that dry land. God knew! He spoke to the dry land and He caused it to bring forth.

So it did. It brought forth. It brought forth all kinds of plants — the whole vegetable world of cabbages, cauliflower, cucumbers, lettuce, spinach, and potatoes, as well as bushes of beauty like roses and lilacs. He also at that time caused the earth to bring forth the large plants like the sycamore, the elm, the oak, and the tall palm trees. Then I mused that God knew what He was doing. He was planning for that future mankind that they might have food from the vegetables and the fruit trees. I cannot imagine a world without peaches, plums, and pineapples! And I considered all the various wood-bearing trees, so that His people might have wood for fuel, for furniture-making, and for bridge-building. I can see that now, looking back; but God saw that, looking ahead!

Then I thought of God making the earth capable of growing thorns and thistles. Of course He did. His eternal plan included the Fall of man and man's redemption. It included the curse; and on the background of that curse He planned a New Earth on which His People would dwell eternally.

Oh God, how great Thou art!

* * * * *

Yesterday when I was musing about the creation of the plant world, I thought that it must have taken God a long while to make

so very many plants. Foolishly I wondered if God had to say "tree" a thousand times for a thousand trees to come forth. Then, to add to that confusion, I thought that there were thousands of *each* kind of fruit tree and of each kind of trees of the wood like elm and ash. But I was thinking wrong about "how long" did it take. Long, in this case, is a period of time. And then I mused correctly that God is not *in* time; He needs no time; He doesn't even take time to do something. Then I wondered if He "thought them up" in His mind, and said, "Let there be trees like I have in mind." Something like when He said, "Let there be light."

Then I thought of the time when Jesus needed no time to "create" bread and fish to feed five thousand hungry people. At Jesus' time it took a whole summer to raise wheat, and a couple of hours to grind and bake it; and it took a couple of years to grow fish big enough to eat. But our Lord did it in a moment. Then I thought that if I had been there when God was creating all that wheat and fish I would not have seen a thing. I can imagine that Peter was watching Jesus quite carefully when all those broken pieces of bread and fish kept coming from His fingers. Peter could not see a thing! Of course, no one could detect such

miraculous doings; that's why it is called a wonder.

Then I mused about that special plot of ground called the Garden of Eden. There God planned the best of temperature, the best of humidity, the best soil for growth. There every branch and twig and blossom were designed to reveal God's love for the man He was to place there as king of creation. That Garden was specifically designed for the complete comfort and the daily sustenance for that man that was to live there. The garden paths were just right for that man to walk with God in the cool of the day in perfect fellowship!

I further mused that I cannot even remotely imagine the pristine beauty of the grass, the varied colors of the flower beds, the aroma of the roses beside the path! But if I, who live in this sin-cursed world, can find such beauty and sensuous pleasure in the present time, then that original, fresh-from-the-Hand-of-God plant and flower garden must be unimaginable in my feeble mind.

Then I thought that while God was creating "living things" on the Third Day He was anticipating the "living creatures" that He would make on the Fifth and Sixth Day. The whole plant world was being readied for the creature world — food for worms

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

Musing on such foreknowledge, such insight, such preparedness, such “seeing ahead” as He was providing for the coming life, from bugs to slugs, from frogs to snakes, from animals to man, is too much for me to grasp!

Dear Miss Koole
2068 Cranbrook Dr. N.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49505.
Deadline for next issue is June 1.

Grand Rapids, MI 49505.

Deadline for next issue is June 1.

From a colleague comes the following question: "There seems to be a growing conviction in some quarters that the school year in our country is too short — at least when compared to that of other countries, the students in which are reportedly outdistancing their counterparts in the U.S. in a manner most disturbing to Congressmen, columnists, and school administrators. What do you think, Miss Koole, is that an undue emphasis on academic achievement? Or is it a legitimate

ANSWER:

considered the chief and only good in life because only the best educated persons are considered for work that leads to success and wealth.

Almost every waking hour is spent in studying, and even the greater part of any "vacation" period is also devoted to studies — although the environment may be a camp setting. One of the students, who had previously lived in the U.S. for several years, commented on Japanese education as consisting of more memorization than of development in the thinking process. She believed that Japanese students miss many of the "extras" that make for a well-rounded education.

That extreme and that attitude we should avoid.

Much of the education in our country tends to swing toward the other extreme. Everything seems to be more important than education. Just getting by is far more prevalent than a desire to achieve academic excellence. The legitimate place of memorization is deprecated or negated. Yes, our school days are shorter, our vacation periods longer, less homework is required (and that at a much later age) than in any other country. Of the 365 days in a year, less than half are school days. Many persons, and educators included, realize that it is becoming apparent and urgent that more time be spent in the

classroom. And some school districts (Rochester, New York is one) are planning to do just that. It will involve a much greater expenditure of tax money. Rochester plans to raise the maximum annual salary of its teachers to around \$75,000.

Would I advocate longer school days and a longer school year? I think we should have both in moderation. What I would prefer is a summer school structured quite different from that of the regular school year. There are many worthwhile subjects that could better be taught in a less structured way to smaller groups during a summer period. If one divided the summer into three or four three-week periods and limited the students to one of those periods, some of the following subjects could be taken: art, music, physical education, work on the computer, video viewing, beginning of a spoken foreign language, games in math and reading, geography and history games, science experiments, etc. Many of these things are necessarily curtailed in our crowded school day.

I discussed this with my fourth graders and almost all of them were very enthusiastic about the proposal. Even the students that need much help during the school year said that summers can become "very boring." I believe these same students would benefit

There are many who deplore the waste of empty schools during the summer. And there would be as many who might question the cost of educating small groups in the summer in the variety of subjects suggested. I believe it could be worked out if parents could be convinced that it would be beneficial for their children, and that it is proper stewardship of the time and abilities and responsibilities that God gives us.

From a Grand Rapids Parent:
 "We received a note from school regarding a sale on the *World Book Encyclopedia*. We are vitally interested in encouraging and helping our children in whatever ways we can. Should an encyclopedia be a priority item in our home for our children? At what age will children begin using an encyclopedia and in what ways will children be using an encyclopedia?"

My advice is to take advantage

From the third grade on, teachers will assign simple or more complex topics or reports that require students to use supplementary materials. The encyclopedias provide the most concise and most easy to locate information. Answers to many questions can usually be found in an encyclopedia. Also, the colored pictures make it easy to identify animals, birds, plants, and such.

Both parents and teachers should be alert to provide children with opportunities for learning using the encyclopedia. ■■

from the TEACHERS' LOUNGE

*Are you a right-brained person? If you are, and if you are in fact **strongly** right-brain dominant, then you're probably an intuitive thinker. You probably also are a whiz at non-verbal communication, are not very time-conscious, have excellent visual memory, are creative and imaginative. . . and had trouble in school. (That's academic trouble, not social or behavioral.) A genius waiting to be discovered you may have been, but you would nevertheless have had problems learning all those lessons.*

*Did you know all of that? If you didn't you'll know a lot more about brain hemispheres and about right/left dominance after you read the article which follows. Or perhaps we should say the **series of articles** to follow. We had originally thought it was going to be only **one**. Aware of the fact that Mrs. Antoinette Quenga, 1st grade teacher at Hope School in Grand Rapids, had developed some interest and picked up some expertise in this area, we asked her if she would write an informative article for **Perspectives**. In reading the manuscript which she graciously submitted, I reached the top of the last page and wondered how she could ever answer, in the little space remaining, all the questions she had prompted in my mind. I was very pleased therefore to read, in her last paragraph, that there would be a "next time," another installment. I'm looking forward to reading it. . . . think you will too.*

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Antoinette Quenga

The topic I have been asked to write about is somewhat controversial, capable of misunderstanding, subject to some built-in re-

sistance, which is often the case with a new idea or discovery put to a new use.

When I had my teacher-training

many years ago, most of the education courses were how to teach this or that *subject*, rather than how to teach the *child*. I am indebted to one of our school parents for introducing me to a different approach to learning. She gave one of our teachers a book dealing with a right-brained approach to learning. This teacher subsequently gave me the book and I was on my way to the most fascinating study of how children learn in my entire teaching career. Since then I have attended several workshops given by the author of this book, and other seminars on the brain — how it develops from the time of conception and its process of maturing. With the recent burst of high-tech research, the invention of all kinds of instruments for measuring brain waves (such as CAT-scan), dominant right-brain, left-brain hemispheres, and hemispheric specialization, researchers and educators have learned that each child's learning pattern is as distinctive as his own fingerprints. Recently more of you are becoming familiar with what is called "right-brained," "left-brained" hemispheric organization.

In order to make some practical sense out of this vast body of knowledge, I will first describe the brain hemispheres and how they relate to our modern school curriculum.

The brain looks much like a walnut with two hemispheres and a connector called the corpus callosum — an extremely important piece of tissue because this is the avenue by which information is passed from one side of the brain to the other. It is a bundle of nerves deep within the brain with what appear to be fingers on each end spreading and connecting the different areas of the brain. Along with other organs of the body, this one also matures as the child grows, and it becomes easier for the child to pass information back and forth. Girls will usually mature before the boys. Before four years of age, the brain seems to be symmetrical — both sides can perform the same functions. About the time we send children to school, the hemispheres begin to specialize. Hand dominance becomes apparent. The language area — both speech and comprehension — is localized usually in the left side. The auditory processing center (ability to hear and distinguish sounds and remember them) is just above and behind the language. The center of vision is in the back of the head and bypasses the corpus callosum. The visual memory section is located in the right side. The motor controls are along both top sides of the brain, and the sensory on top of the head. The motor nerves control

movement — left-brain, right side; right-brain, left side. The sensory nerves control skin, bones, joints, muscles, movement of the body through space.

The reason these facts are noteworthy is that every child has his own special pattern of learning — no one way better than another, just different. (Traditionally, the school curriculum has favored the dominant left-brain learner.) Dominance refers to the hemisphere or area which is activated first and processes first the information coming in.

As a result of this knowledge, researchers have discovered that there are three major modalities for learning, usually one of which will be dominant. These are visual, auditory, and haptic (kinesthetic-tactile). Understand that all these modalities are used — we are whole-brained people — but one of these ways will usually be stronger. Teachers who are able to determine which modality is dominant are going to use the strong area for basic learning because that's the easiest, while they will use the other ways to reinforce the learning. To illustrate, if you are right-hand dominant, you are not going to use your left hand for your most difficult task.

One interesting thing about left-brain, right-brain dominance is that the two styles have very different thinking character-

istics. Also keep in mind that this is not an either/or situation. There are no absolutes in brain function. When we observe the characteristics which I shall describe presently, keep in mind that the hemispheric functions can be described somewhat on a continuum. Some people are strongly left-brained, some balanced, some alternate back and forth, while others are strongly right-brained. Often these right-brained children are slow starters, or even learning disabled, because educators do not know how to reach them through their special way of learning. Often they turn out to be the gifted and talented, the world's "geniuses."

Since the school curriculum caters to left-brain characteristics, you can see why the left-brained children have the advantage because the information does not need to cross over and back. What are these school subjects? Reading, phonics, spelling, verbal memory, handwriting, locating details, following directions, listening, ability to use symbols. All of these are left-brain skills. Right-brained areas are not so easily defined: visual memory, creativity, imagination, art and music, shapes and movement through space, color sensitivity, feelings and emotions.

Left and right-brained children have different thinking characteristics. Left-dominant will

approach life in a part-whole picture at once, then the parts. Left-dominants will approach life in an orderly, logical, sequential fashion, while the right-dominant think and do things in a random fashion and are intuitive thinkers. They get the answers but they can not tell you how they did it. Often they are unfairly suspected of cheating. Left-brains usually don't have trouble communicating verbally; right-brains may be specialists in non-verbal communication. Left-brains are reality-based. They will adapt to the way things are, whereas often the right-brain will be fantasy-oriented, make up their own story endings, and attempt to change the environment to meet their own needs rather than to adapt to it. Left-brains are time-con-

scious, always right on schedule. Right-brains generally have trouble handling time-related tasks. Ten minutes or an hour is all the same to them. I'm sure all of you know people with some of these characteristics.

Although this article is already lengthy, I have but scratched the surface of this whole area of brain research and hemispheric specialization. Next time I shall focus some attention on the importance of physical co-ordination in the learning process, some observations that are often clues to right-brain dominance, and then some learning strategies to help right-brained children organize their activities to make coping with a left-brained world a little easier.

■□■

From a teachers' lounge in a far corner of the country we have another contribution from Peter Adams. Mr. Adams teaches in Covenant Protestant Reformed School in Lynden, Washington. Struggling with what is ever one of the main burdens of a Christian teacher, namely that of bringing the Scriptures into the subject matter of the regular classes, he suggests that the solution may lie in reversing the matter. That's an interesting concept. For Pete's ideas on that, and on the rationale for teaching Bible in our schools, read on:

Teaching Bible in the Christian School

Peter Adams

We recognize in our Protestant Reformed circles that what makes a Christian school truly Christian is not necessarily that it teaches the Bible directly, but that all

the subject material is taught and understood in the light of God's Word. We also agree that the church through her officebearers is commissioned by God to teach

and preach the Scriptures and that spiritual teaching and instruction are to be the foundation of the Christian home. Why, then, have a Bible class in the Christian school at all? And, if it has one, what should a teacher do with it?

Our schools are run by parents who have been given the responsibility and authority to rear their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. If the parents through the school board direct Bible to be taught as a regular class, then there is the warrant to have it.

There are practical reasons to have a Bible class as well. There is an environment that is special to a school, that provides good opportunities for learning God's Word. There is daily instruction that provides continuity. The children are more likely to ask questions when they don't understand because they do that the rest of the school day. Homework can be given to involve the students in digging out truths for themselves. Tests are given to promote review and can provide further learning opportunities. Speaking as a parent, I sense that much of what my one school-aged child knows of the Bible has come from her school class.

As a teacher, I have found that having to prepare for Bible class is edifying to me spiritually. When one is forced to try to find the central thought of a passage and organize it in a logical

fashion, the coherence and value of God's written revelation continually comes forth. The knowledge gleaned may be passed on then to the students.

A word of caution that applies to any class but particularly Bible: Bible class must not be merely an academic exercise. Here is a time for the teacher to share his own personal feelings and experiences which give the practical application and warmth to Scripture that it should have. Students will tend to share their own thoughts as a result, and lively and profitable group discussions often arise.

In teaching both Bible and various science and history courses over the last few years, I have seen an interesting phenomenon occur. The goal of the school in getting Biblical truth into the regular classes may be reached by getting the regular classes into the Bible course. When going through the book of Romans for example, the trends in godless societies that are found in chapter 1 can be greatly emphasized. The principles which were noted can be recalled repeatedly during history class as the rise and fall of various nations are studied. Christian psychological principles are presented in Romans 6-8; likewise the Christian understanding of government and authority is presented in chapter 13, and so on.

Romans, I feel, should be one of the essential books covered because it contains so many

applications; Revelation should be included for the broad outline of history it contains; and the first part of Genesis must be taught emphasizing its implications in biology and geology and history.

Teaching Bible in the Christian school then need not be considered extraneous or unimportant. Properly executed, Bible class will be the most valuable time spent during the school day.

■□■

The Least of These

(Reprinted from *Hope's Highlights* — April, 1987)

Her name was Gladys.

The names and faces of my seventh grade classmates have long since faded from memory, except for one or, perhaps, two. But even though Gladys was a grade below me, I remember her name and face vividly.

She was a little shorter and thinner than the other girls. Not much, though; not really enough to set her apart. Her hair was often disheveled and a little bit stringy. Her dresses were often faded and sometimes showed obvious signs of repair. As I remember her, she always looked sad.

A group of us boys were standing around loitering one recess. One of the boys saw Gladys some distance away, standing alone, and with the casual cruelty of boys that age said, "I'll bet Gladys has cooties." That brought him the attention he was looking for, and immediately another boy repeated more loudly, "Gladys has cooties."

Then, of course, we all began to chant the awful words together and to move closer so that Gladys would be sure to hear.

Gladys turned away and made believe she didn't hear us, but we kept on and on. Gladys cried. She tried to get past us to go into school, but we blocked her way and called her a baby. Finally, shaking with sobs and with the speed of desperation, she dashed into school.

Now we began to worry: would she tattle on us? Suddenly it didn't seem quite so much fun. Fear (I wish I could say awakening conscience) made us begin making excuses to each other. She doesn't have to bawl over a little thing like that. We didn't hurt her any. We were only having a little fun. We wouldn't have done it if we had known she was going to bawl. Half-expecting her teacher to come out of the door in a rage and call us in, we began to move apart and each to think of his

FROM THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE

personal excuses. I didn't start it. I didn't say it very loudly. She didn't even hear me.

Through all the years since that day, I have seen again and again that small face twisted in despair, the tear-stained face, the reddened eyes. I began to realize that there are no excuses that can cover the wrong that I had done to another person that day.

Why did we do that cruel thing? We are so concerned about ourselves then, so self-centered. We tell ourselves that we will seem more important to ourselves and to our friends if we demonstrate how low someone else can be. We are afraid something like this may happen to us, and we think we are protecting ourselves by hurting someone else.

Why did we pick on Gladys? I think there were two reasons. One is the simple fact that she was different, and different to a youngster (and to oldsters, too) is bad. She wasn't like us. The other reason is equally simple: she was vulnerable. Because we knew that we could hurt her,

and she could not defend herself, we felt we had to attack her.

Why wasn't there anyone to defend Gladys? Any person who would defend Gladys would risk his own status before his friends. No one had the moral courage — yes, the Christian character — to come to her defense. It's one of the hardest things in the world to do — to risk one's social position — but one of the most essential things for a Christian to learn.

I think of Gladys going into school alone with the taunting pack at her heels, and I'm terribly ashamed. I'm reminded of what Jesus once said, "If ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Now you understand why I react strongly when I find children being cruel to one another. I don't want anyone to carry such a burden on his conscience.

Fred Hanko, Sr.

■□■

*"Let's hear it for trying something new!" writes Karen Buiter in an article which we've borrowed from a **Heritage Herald** of last year. Though one wouldn't guess it from the article, Miss Buiter is hardly yet a veteran teacher. She was at the time, in fact, in her second year of teaching — at Heritage Christian School in Hudsonville. And she was already enjoying the thrill and satisfaction of seeing students respond enthusiastically to a teacher's doing more than just "teaching the book." Sometimes it may take a little longer to complete a unit, when one "tries*

something new"; but the difference in retention makes every minute of it worthwhile.

Trying Something New

Karen Buiter

South America. I wasn't sure I knew enough about it to teach it and the students weren't sure it sounded like the most exciting topic. After all, it wasn't something familiar like the Netherlands; or the United States. . . . But that's where we landed several weeks ago in our Social Studies book, and we've been there ever since.

As it turned out, it has opened us up to some new learning experiences we may not have tried had it not been for this unit. For example, when we studied the resources, students discovered how dependent we are on South America for certain crops: sugar cane (we tried it raw!), bananas, cocoa, and coffee beans just to name a few. We also learned that the potato was first grown there.

When we studied the people, we had a South American woman "visitor" come in to tell us about growing up in the Andes Mountains. Instead of opening up our book to read (that can get kind of old), I decided to speak from her viewpoint. Never have I had such an attentive audience! Suddenly their teacher, without a change of voice or appearance, was a native of South America. The world of make-believe, which third and fourth graders are so good at, was

before them, and it seemed more like a story than "just social studies."

As we studied the history of South America and learned what a strong influence the Spanish have had there, I knew it was time to brush the dust off my Spanish vocabulary and give it a whirl with the class. Now when I say, "¿Hablas Español?" (Do you speak Spanish?) my students can respond "Sí" (Yes), and to "¿Cómo estás?" (How are you?) they can say "Muy bien!" (Very well). They can't be negative, because I didn't teach that in Spanish! Within a few days, the students had learned the numbers to the tune of "Diez Inditos" (Ten Indians) and several other short phrases. It was amazing how fast they picked it up, since multiplication tables can be drilled over and over and still go unknown! I guess the sounds of these foreign words rolling off their tongues, and testing them out on unknowing others, was much more fun. There's certainly something to say for the new and different! Why spend time on Spanish? Hopefully it will stimulate an interest they can take up later when foreign languages are often expected. If they encounter foreign language at all in the

public, there's a good chance it will be Spanish with the large migrant population.

Finally, in conjunction with pictures of women weaving seen in our book and on films, we decided to try our hand at yet another new skill and include a little art in our unit as well. We had done paper weaving much earlier in the year so the students were eager and quite confident it would be a simple task. How hard could it be to go over, under, over, under...? We started out with a cardboard loom and wrapped it with the warp, or vertical lines of yarn. This was easy and the students were still quite sure of themselves.

Our next job was to take the woof, the horizontal line of yarn, and begin the actual weaving. Now came the challenge and the frustration: twenty-eight students each with a thirty-six foot strand of yarn, and one person trying to give oral instructions. "I have a knot!" "My needle came off!" "I think this row is wrong!" "I can't find my end!" "What did I do??" ... That first day we all went home certain this project was more than we could tackle. I was a little dismayed with the several tangled piles of yarn and unrecognizable "things" that were supposed to be art!

But by the end of the week when all the first false attempts and tangles had been undone, and the first few rows were securely in, a neat thing happened. Stu-

dents were begging to do it during their free time. No more, "What can I do now?" There was quiet productivity going on. A few boys asked to work on it at recess! (Boys with yarn and thread—and during baseball season??) I overheard one who usually is indifferent when it comes to art, say to another, "This is the BEST art yet!" I saw students start helping others solve their weaving problems. Students learned what it meant to wait patiently for help on a tough tangle. I heard lots of "Neat!" and "Cool!" as the first few began to see their variegated-colored yarn start forming patterns, and I watched some students who often have difficulties with academics get complimented for the great job they were doing.

The first "mini-rugs" are coming off the loom now. It hasn't been what we thought at first. It has turned out to be hard work. But hopefully woven into what others might see as just a tiny piece of woven yarn, and tucked somewhere back in their minds, are some lessons learned about South America and trying something new. Let's not be too quick about passing up something just because we're unfamiliar with it, or it doesn't sound exciting, or we don't think we can handle it. Let's hear it for trying something new!

■□■

NEW RUBRIC

That's right, we're going to try something new. The Spring issue of our magazine will see the debut of "Dear Miss Koole."

You can probably guess already from the title the nature of the rubric. Do any of you parents have a question about education that you'd like to have answered by a seasoned veteran? For that matter, maybe some of our teacher-readers have a vexing problem of some kind, which she would like to see treated in a more or less formal fashion. Whoever you are, whatever your question, here's your chance to hear from a professional. Write "Dear Miss Koole" and you'll see your answer in print in *Perspectives*.

Winifred Koole is a veteran's veteran. When Adams Street School opened for the first time in 1950, Miss Koole stood in front of one of the crowded classrooms. She stayed at Adams for 13 years, then moved to Hope School and has been teaching there ever since. Just a couple of years more, therefore, and she'll be able to chalk up number 40 in the profession.

With that kind of background, she'll be able to speak knowledgeably on a host of different subjects. . . not on everything, of course, since her experience has been limited pretty much to the Intermediate Grades. But at every level she has friends easy to consult. So. . . you can expect an authoritative answer on any topic of interest.

Needless to say, you'll not be able to use this medium for questions to which you need an *immediate* answer. (For those, just pick up the phone and call your school principal.) But for other types of questions, we'd certainly like to hear from you — not so much because we want to be of help to an individual reader, but because we can take for granted that what is of concern to one reader will almost certainly be of concern to a good many others. No problems are unique. This rubric therefore will give us an opportunity to address the kinds of issues which arise out of the trenches, so to speak, not just those which come from the ivory towers. But. . . we need your help.

How can you help? Send your "Dear Miss Koole" questions directly to Miss Koole, at her home address:

2068 Cranbrook Dr. N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49505.

And remember, please, that a lot of work has to go into the writing, organizing, typesetting, printing, and mailing of each issue. So, try to meet the following deadlines for submitting questions:

Spring issue — March 1; Summer issue — June 1;
Fall issue — September 1; Winter issue — December 1.

PERSPECTIVES

1150 Adams Street S.E.

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

Address Correction Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Jenison, MI
PERMIT 71