

This is what Jesus did now to the disciples. They had abandoned Him and forfeited their right to the family of God. But by God's grace they grieved over their sins. And so Jesus was quick to put their grieving hearts to rest. He would appear to them later on that evening. But first He appeared to the women with the message, "Tell my brethren...."

And Christ continues to do this as the risen Lord.

All we that belong to Jesus are His brethren. We have been adopted into the family of God on the basis of Christ's perfect work on the cross. This makes us brethren to each other and to Jesus Christ. Together we are heirs of God.

But often we repudiate Jesus Christ and the Father, just as the disciples did. We do this when, for the praise and acceptance of men, we fail to defend Jesus' name. We do this every time we fail to rely upon Jesus' saving power, resulting in a sad turning away from the ways of God to walk with the children of disobedience.

We deserve to be disinherited, just as the disciples did!

But Christ has also removed those offenses by His death on the cross so that we are still members of the family of God and still Jesus' brethren. And the risen Lord Jesus continues still to assure us of that. By the power of His Word and Spirit He leads us to repentance and assures us that we are still His brethren.

An important directive!

Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.

The disciples must go into Galilee that Jesus might bring His little flock together once again. The little

flock of God, which numbered about 500, had been scattered as Jesus said it would be. But now they needed to be brought together again. Christ had work for them. He would use them to begin the great work of the new covenant of gathering the elect family of God from among the nations. In His death Jesus had laid the basis for this family and their inheritance. Now in the power of His resurrection He must gather them together. He would do that by the preaching of the gospel to the nations, effectively calling all those ordained by God the Father to be His brethren. But He would accomplish this through His brethren already on the earth. So Jesus called His brethren to Galilee. In Galilee they would be safe from the hostility that they had just witnessed in Jerusalem. There in Galilee Jesus commissioned them to go and preach the gospel. For by the gospel of the cross is the family of God gathered.

This implies a calling today.

The risen Lord is still gathering the family of God. He has already gathered many into the family. And He will continue to do so until the day of His coming.

Christ uses the family of God already gathered to gather still more. He will gather them from the generations of those already gathered. And He will gather them from those raised outside the family of God. Jesus still uses the gospel of His death and resurrection for this purpose.

The calling of the household of faith is to be faithful in proclaiming that gospel.

Then she can also look forward in hope to the final gathering of the whole family of God in heavenly glory.



EDITORIAL

PROF. BARRETT GRITTERS

A Call for Christian School Teachers

By this time, school boards have offered contracts for teaching positions in our Protestant Reformed Christian schools. Decisions have been made

to sign those contracts. Most positions have likely been filled. If that is true, we may be very thankful.

But there may yet be open positions. Of that, some schools will be

painfully aware. And more vacancies will certainly be created by retirements, female teachers becoming "keepers at home," and the ever-expanding number of classrooms in

our growing schools. There is also the encouraging creation or expansion of special education programs, which take more teachers and special training.

We need good Christian school teachers. Many of them.

My motivation to write is partly, but strongly, personal. My wife and I love our good Christian schools because of our ownership in them for many years as parents and now grandparents of children in these schools. All our children had the high privilege to be taught by good Christian school teachers whose faith and commitment to godly living mirrored our commitments and faith—a privilege I did not have in my youth, and a privilege not all have today. For twenty-five years we joyfully attended parent-teacher conferences, in part to express deepest gratitude to these dedicated servants for their work. Certainly our support for the schools was mixed with weakness, but we supported them in the keen conviction that this was our high calling as Christian parents. Hundreds of other parents have done this as well. Besides the cause of Christ's church, there are few causes as dear to our hearts as our schools. We thank God for the good schools and teachers. Our own parental (and now "grandparental") hearts yearn for good teachers until Christ returns.

But my motivation to write about the need for teachers is deeper than personal love for the schools and teachers. The health of the *churches* is related to the good training of our children. We need

good schools and good school teachers who will stand in the place of parents carrying out their parental, covenantal responsibility—for the sake of the churches. If the parents do not carry out this rich covenant calling of maintaining our schools, the churches will soon disintegrate. I write for the sake of the churches.

Young men and women in the churches, this is a summons to give yourselves for the sake of the schools! I beseech you, consider the need to train to be a teacher of the churches' covenant children.

Gifts

A good teacher needs at least two natural gifts, *intelligence* and the *aptitude to teach*. A teacher must be *intelligent*, that is, able to think carefully and understand deeply, especially in the particular field he or she teaches. The *aptitude to teach* includes so much that it may better be witnessed than described. It combines the ability to make truth understood, to *all* of the students (not just the intelligent ones), with conviction, all the while managing an energetic group of sinful children or young people... and with a good attitude. It's clear that an aptitude to teach is a gift not everyone possesses, although a good teachers' college will help a prospective teacher *develop* the gift if he has it.

A better teachers' college—a good Reformed teachers' college—could teach the teacher to *apply* the Christian and Reformed faith to all the subjects and to every aspect of the Christian life. Public universities cannot and will not train in this. Many Christian colleges may try, but

often have an improper perspective on the application of the faith to all of life, if they even have the Reformed or Christian faith correct.

Someday God may give our schools the blessing of a teachers' college. In the meantime, the important seminar ("On Reformed Christian Education") taught in the Grand Rapids area for many years by Mr. Jon Huiskens, and now taught by another former school teacher, Prof. Russell Dykstra, should be a "must take." Some effort could be made both to supplement this course with others like it, and to make this course available to teachers outside the Grand Rapids area.

But let us not rule out the possibility of some visionaries seeing to the funding of and construction of such a college. May some Christians include such a cause in their wills, and may men and women who love Christian education give sacrificially of their time and energy. A small beginning would not even need a building, a large number of instructors, and certainly not a full four-year curriculum.

A good teacher will also have many *spiritual* gifts. Natural gifts are not sufficient for a *Christian* school teacher. Just as in the gospel ministry, a massive intelligence and great aptitude to teach may be useless, even worse than useless, if they are not paired with humility, godliness, spirituality. Spiritual gifts are developed over the years, very likely in a strong Christian home. They include sincere *love* for God's cause and truth, an *experiential* knowledge of the Reformed

faith, a commitment to covenant children, a deep and genuine will to sacrifice as a servant for the families in whose stead he works, and a full knowledge of and commitment to the PRC. This—Protestant Reformed—is what I, the parent, am. It is what the teacher must be: fully informed and fully committed to the Reformed faith.

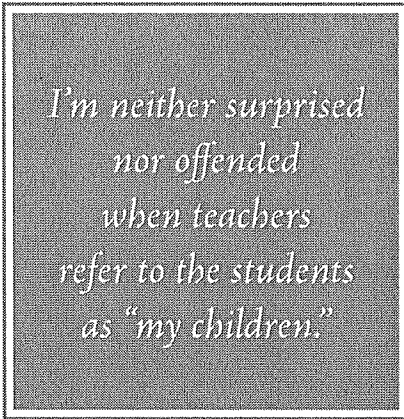
One spiritual dimension of teaching in the Christian school is the conviction that teaching is a *calling*. Be clear, teaching is a calling of God, for which God specially qualifies. I urge the young men and women who consider teaching to talk to older teachers about this important reality for teachers: the growing but important conviction that because God has formed his mind and soul for this high task in the kingdom, it is a work he cannot turn from. This doesn't mean that it would be a sin for anyone to leave the teaching profession; it only means that the teacher will be so aware of God's gifts and the schools' needs that he feels a compulsion he can hardly resist.

Spiritual gifts include the grace to *rear* the children. One unique characteristic of a good Christian school is that its teachers see their calling to function largely *as parents*. Teachers stand *in loco parentis*. And no parent is satisfied with mere intellectual growth. A teacher needs wisdom to teach about Christian friendships and about the relationship between boys and girls, and must have the will and wisdom to discipline. Teaching is a *parental* occupation. So I'm neither surprised nor offended when

teachers refer to the students as "my children." In a very important way, they are. We were always grateful to see this reality: the fatherly/motherly promotion of godliness, and the patient, sympathetic, and *humble* treatment of our children's weaknesses. The teachers understood what it meant to rear the children.

Hesitation

Not everyone is qualified to teach. But some who are qualified may not know it, or may see obstacles they judge to be too great to overcome.



*I'm neither surprised
nor offended
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Finances ought not be an obstacle. Most of our teachers, although they are not overpaid, receive sufficient to support themselves, the church, and the poor. The careful work of school boards and the generous gifts of the supporters have made this possible. If a man is not satisfied with a teacher's wage, he may lack one important qualification. One wise teacher gave me his take on wage: the average teacher retires neither opulent nor destitute, and perhaps even better off than most because teachers tend to be prudent money managers. However

that may be, I want to thank publicly the teachers willing to receive a wage not commensurate with their training and abilities.

Others hesitate because they fear criticism that comes with the position of "public servant." As I was preparing for the ministry, my father, who spent his life as a public servant—both as a teacher, a civil servant, and a long-time elder—told me bluntly, if not in these precise words, "Expect it. It comes with the territory." It takes thick skin to be a teacher. Not everyone is able to receive criticism—either legitimate or unwise. A warning can be issued to all of us here. Careless criticism will drive away the bad teachers, but good ones too. It will make some cynical, others fearful. In the end, improperly placed criticism hurts the critic. It will damage the critic's children. Worst, it undermines the cause of Christian education. It's "spitting into the wind." But a good teacher must be able to take criticism. The Lord even teaches them to profit through humble response to criticism. Remember David's response to Shimei's murderous slander: "So let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David."

There's also legitimate criticism. School boards and principals will regularly assess a teacher's work. What they miss, parents may address. A good teacher will grow from listening carefully to all critical analysis of his work. It's in the nature of being a servant.

Then there is the weight of the work. Teaching is strenuous, time-consuming, demanding in so many

respects. I suppose a teacher with a few years in can rest on his old lesson plans. One of our former seminary professors warned us that an older minister might get away with being lazy. But a teacher who is serious about his work will find it taxing, if not grueling. Besides the long hours of preparation and grading outside normal school hours, the emotional energy needed to care for the dear children is great. It makes me think of what Paul said when he explained the burdens of his ministry (see II Corinthians 11:23-28). I

paraphrase: "Besides those external troubles—shipwrecks, beatings, hunger, cold, assaults, and sleepless nights on a plank in the sea—there is the *anxiety* I have for all the churches" (where *anxiety* is not inaccurate). Like parents, teachers carry the children in their *hearts*.

So it's no more permissible to say that teachers work but six hours per day and nine months per year than it is to joke that ministers work only one day a week. Good teachers will be exhausted, emotionally and physically. Let no slackers apply.

But God will raise up young men and women with the desire to teach, and then give them the necessary gifts.

He'll also reward them richly, both in this life and in the life to come.

Let the churches do all in their power to encourage their capable sons and daughters to prepare themselves.

Next time, let me offer concrete ways our covenant communities can do that. ∞

GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD

REV. DANIEL KLEYN

A Goal in the Philippines: Self-Propagating Churches (1)

One of the main goals in foreign mission work must be to establish indigenous churches, churches that are able to exist on their own. The goal must be churches that are self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting.

In a previous article (November 15, 2011, p. 90) we looked at what it means to establish churches that are self-governing. Now we consider the second characteristic of an indigenous church, namely, self-propagating.

What is a self-propagating church?

Every church of Christ on earth is called to carry out the great commission. Every church must go forth into the world and preach the gospel. Beginning in her own land, every church must pass on the truth to others.

A self-propagating church is one that is busy in this

work. She wants others to hear, to know, and to have the truth. She is not selfish with the truth, but speaks of it boldly to others around her.

What must come first, of course, is that she is a self-governing church. She must be properly constituted as a church, for otherwise she cannot call and send forth men to do the work of missions. Closely related to this is the necessity of her being a church that is well grounded in the truth. For how can she teach others if she and her members (including her covenant children) are not well taught? A local congregation must be built up in the faith before she takes on the work of missions.

But once she is well grounded in the truths of God's Word, and also properly established as a Reformed congregation, a church self-propagates by doing evangelism and mission work. Emulating the Lord Jesus Christ in His love for and compassion toward the lost sheep of Israel (Matt. 9:36), such a church is busy seeking the

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accusers." It is to slander, fabricating additional details and motives so the stories they relate are more interesting. Such talk often accompanies gossip. False accusing is often occasioned by the desire to know what happened or by the urge to tell others what we know. The seriousness of this sin is often downplayed. But its seriousness is seen in the Greek word used: "diabolos" (devilish). It then is obvious that such behavior does not become holiness.

And the aged women are warned not to be "given to much wine," that is, in excess or enslaved to it. This language does not forbid any and all use of alcohol, but it certainly calls for self-control by those who are spiritually mature. Their maturity should give them the wisdom to use wine correctly.

Because Titus is to instruct the aged Christian women to teach the younger Christian women to love their husbands and their children, it is implied that the aged women must themselves also live such that they give evidence of *agape* to their husbands and to their children. This is not a natural love, but a spiritual knowledge of and joy in them as the objects of God's love.

The great purpose for godliness in the aged saints

The purpose for a godly walk by mature saints is so they can be effective "teachers of good things." Once we

are aged, we are not without purpose for living. The aged are not to be viewed as unworthy of attention or care. They remain vital parts of the body of Christ. Their experiences of striving to walk by faith in all circumstances has equipped them with something very important. They know what it is to live as a spiritual pilgrim and stranger. They know what it is to strive to exercise faith in suffering and hurt. They know what it is to sin and to repent. It may be that they went through some of the experiences of life in a sinful way, but also those experiences taught them. They have learned and they are still learning "good things." These experiences equipped them with useful, beneficial, advantageous information. They can help the younger saints.

But to be most effective in passing along the "good things" to the next generations, they must have the respect of the next generation. They cannot teach, if they are held in contempt. So the elderly must do everything they can to make it easier for the young Christians to listen to them. They must live in godliness and holiness so the young want to emulate them and learn from them.

The aged, then, must look for opportunities to teach. They must communicate good things to the next generations carefully, lovingly, and humbly. In this way they still serve the edification of the brethren according to the talents God has given them. ☺

EDITORIAL

PROF. BARRETT GRITTERS

A Call for Christian School Teachers (2)

The constant need for good Christian school teachers was the subject of my last editorial. Our Christian schools cannot exist without teachers. And without *good* school teachers there

Previous article in this series: *April 1, 2012, p. 292.*

is no purpose in having separate, Protestant Reformed Christian schools. Last time I issued a summons to young men and women to consider training to become teachers in our schools, to stand in the place of us parents (*in loco parentis*).

What amplifies this summons is retirements, some women teachers turning to motherly duties if

they marry and bear children, the gradually enlarging population of our churches, and the encouraging expansion of the special education programs. There is real need for Protestant Reformed teachers. I'm thankful to God there is no crisis, no dire shortage of teachers. Nevertheless, we commit ourselves to doing all we can to promote our

schools and the good teachers who make them what they are.

In this editorial, I mention some ways that our covenant community can create a culture that encourages capable young men and women to prepare to teach.

The Standard Bearer

I begin with our magazine. The *Standard Bearer* promotes our schools, praises our teachers for their kingdom and covenant labor, and will do all it can to continue this promotion. The *Standard Bearer's* promotion of good schools and good teachers is well known. From her beginning, the *SB* has explained, defended, developed, and promoted Christian education in a multitude of ways. Special rubrics on Christian education have come and gone—gone, I imagine, when writers believed they had exhausted themselves on the subject. The origin of the rubric “In His Fear,” I understand, was Christian education. For a few years, a rubric called “That They May Teach Them to Their Children” worked out principles and practices of Christian education. One of the *SB's* first special issues was on Christian education. And even a quick search of the *SB* index shows that literally hundreds of articles have been written by our men and women who love to promote this effort.

The pages of the *SB* are open for more to be written. I take this opportunity to urge Protestant Reformed writers to step up and renew our minds with fresh articles about Christian education's history (in this land and others), principles,

practices, current issues, threats, local efforts, and grand blessings. There are so many areas to consider that, for someone who reads broadly and has a keen interest in education, the *SB* could have an article every issue on some aspect of this vital subject.

The Local Consistory

All *SB* readers are aware of Article 21 of the PRC's Church Order. In recent years we have debated (with some vigor, and not a little pain) one important aspect of the article. What would be helpful is a series of articles explaining the *positive* ways consistories can “see to it that there are good Christian school...” If this article is a mandate to consistories, is it not reasonable that at least annually an item appear on the consistory agenda: “Church Order, Article 21”? Then, each consistory could appoint a committee to prepare a brief report on what could be and has been done to carry out the mandate of this article. I pray that the heavy burden consistories bear in these evil days will not cause them to dismiss this suggestion as unrealistic.

Certainly, elders and pastors in family visitation will think of the need for teachers when family visitation brings them to homes with young people. “Have you considered preparing to teach in our Christian schools?” I always reminded myself to ask young men about possible aspirations to the ministry. I even addressed young ladies to remember the possibility that God may want them to be the wife of a pastor or missionary. But I too often failed to

encourage these young people to consider teaching.

We preachers may be reminded to pray often and at length for all the different aspects of our schools. Since God's Word speaks to the education of our children, entire sermons—“school sermons” and “baptism sermons”—can be preached on this subject. Directly and indirectly in catechism classes, ministers can promote good attitudes toward the schools and Christian school teachers.

Elders might remember VanDellen and Monsma's advice under Article 21—the need *repeatedly* to urge parents to reconsider a decision not to use the schools, even to point out “gross inconsistency” in some parents. The *Church Order Commentary* refers to this as a kind of “discipline,” that of course stops short of formal discipline. Read the rest of the strong advice of these wise church order authorities under Article 21.

Is there more that consistories can do?

The committee to plan Classis West's officebearers' conferences could consider a conference on Christian education, at which one of the speeches or a sectional would focus on the consistory's positive duty in respect to Article 21.

The Federation Board of Protestant Reformed Schools and the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute (PRTI)

These two organizations are closely related, the PRTI being an organization of PR *teachers*, the

Federation Board an organization of PR schools. Both have the laudable goal of promoting and developing good Christian education.

The Federation Board hosts seminars on teaching, sponsors workshops for teachers, provides the Principles and Practices of Reformed Education course, publishes textbooks, and still keeps in mind the real need for a PR teachers' college. These activities help current and prospective teachers, keeping them focused on and enthusiastic about teaching, but they do not directly promote the need for new teachers.

The PRTI publishes *Perspectives in Covenant Education*, a fine little magazine that ought to have much broader circulation than it does. I encourage all readers of the *Standard Bearer* to consider subscribing to *Perspectives*. The contents of the last few issues give an idea of the magazine's worth. There are reviews of children's and young adults' literature (like *The Hunger Games*); editorials about giving tests or the significance of graduations; stimulating feature articles about *vocation*, geography, art, and "Course Goals and themes for Science Courses"; even photographs of graduating classes from schools across the country. To subscribe to this quarterly magazine, just send a check for only \$7 (in the US; US\$8, Foreign) to the Business Manager (see box at the right).

Can both of these organizations consider ways to *recruit* for our schools?

The Schools Themselves

One of the best means to en-

courage young men and women to become teachers is the good, godly teachers themselves. Just as a faithful pastor can be a powerful means to show young men that the pastorate is a desirable calling, faithful school teachers can draw young people into the teaching profession. Everything that is attractive in the teachers, and everything good and positive in the school, God will use to make the teaching profession desirable.

The opposite may be true too.

School boards and principals always pray for wisdom, realizing that careless decisions and actions can offend the students and their families. Unwise spending, for example, or sinful protection of a lazy or ungodly teacher, will make the school unattractive to the students. The teacher who is satisfied with the old notes and older knowledge (pastors and seminary professors know the temptation) needs loving but firm discipline not unlike church discipline, discipline that leads to change or "excommunication." I might pray that a poor teacher would, in the providence of God, rile up a young man enough that he vows to become a good teacher; but we do not want teachers who are reactionary or come with an agenda.

But positively, how many of us don't have happy memories of teachers who cared for us, devoted themselves to our instruction, loved to walk into the classroom each day, and tried never to let on that they might be having a difficult day? Doesn't it live in our memories that this or that teacher obviously did not teach for his own advancement

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but ours, did not come to school at the last minute and leave as soon as possible, but was available to talk to us? Or what about that teacher who confronted us in love so that we were not only turned from our foolishness but learned how to deal with folly?

Some of the most important recruiting of teachers is done by the teachers themselves. Thank you, Christian school teachers!

The Entire Covenant Community

Join with me, members of the PRC and friends of our schools, to stand behind this great cause of covenant Christian education. Join with me, people of God, sacrificially to support this cause so dear to the church of Christ. Join with me, non-tuition-paying members of the church, to commit to significant financial support, thus aiding our young, tuition-paying families. Do not allow me, my flesh and blood sons and daughters, and my sons and daughters in the faith...do not allow me to resign my membership in the school society, or become slack in attendance in the annual meetings. Join with me in remembering the cause of *special* education, so that all the covenant

children can be reared according to their needs.

What a thing of beauty—our homes and schools thriving under God's blessings. Then, "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

God of the covenant, bless our homes with godly parents. Bless our schools—extensions of our homes. And bless our schools with many godly teachers. ∞

A child's prayer
before leaving for school:

"Father, help us to respect our teachers, be kind to the other students, and work hard. Amen."

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

MR. CAL KALSBECK

Ideas Have Consequences: The Cult of Charles Darwin (4)

"And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment."

I Chronicles 12:32

Long before Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* gave aid, comfort, and "scientific" support for Adolf Hitler's gas chambers in Germany and Margaret Sanger's birth control program in America, Karl Marx wrote (January 16, 1861), "Darwin's [*Origin of Species*, ck] is very important and provides me with the basis in natural science for the class struggle in history."¹ Actually, *Origin of Species* did more than provide justification for Marx's concept of class struggle; it did so by removing the inconvenience of having to include God in the picture. In other words, Darwin's theory of evolution provided the added bonus of removing the need for a Creator. Or, in the words of Richard Dawkins, a modern-day apologist of Darwin,

¹ Karl Marx and Frederik Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (New York: International Publishers, 1942), 125.

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Previous article in this series: January 1, 2012, p. 163.

Darwin's theory "...made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist."

This was, of course, good news for Russia's Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin. "Survival of the fittest" applied to the human species obviously fit well as a basis for their concept of the inevitability of the revolt of the proletariat (working class) against the bourgeoisie (upper class). Stalin expressed it this way: "Evolution prepares for revolution and creates the ground for it; revolution consummates the process of evolution and facilitates its further activity."²

The history student knows a bit about the consequences of those ideas for the Russian people under Lenin and Stalin, the Chinese under Mao, the Cambodians under Pol Pot, and countless others whose leaders have acted in concert with the implications of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. While forever unknown in this life, even the most conservative calculations estimate that more than one hundred million lives of men, women, and children have been offered on the altar of Marxism. (Read *The Black Book of Communism* and *From the Gulag to the Killing Fields* for confirmation of these devastating consequences.)

It might not be justified to hold Darwin *directly* re-

² Joseph Stalin, *Works* (Moscow and London: 1952/3), vol. 1, 304.