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In this issue of *Perspectives* is an article by Beverly Hoekstra concerning the survival of Christian education. This article is in the form of a Christian approach to demography (i.e., the study of social statistics and population movements) as this relates to the right and possibility for Christian schools to exist in this present evil world.

The article by David Harbach provides interesting and valuable insights into the mysteries of learning. With the Psalmist we say, "we are fearfully and wonderfully made."

Language development, one of the chief concerns of the Christian school teacher and the Christian parent, is the burden of the articles "Wordless Picture Books" and "Vocabulary Growth." These articles by two veteran primary grade teachers should provide helpful ideas for both teachers and parents. □

## STRATEGY FOR SURVIVAL GEOGRAPHICALLY FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

by Beverly Hoekstra

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### INTRODUCTION

We are living near the end of the ages. We desire peace, but there is war. We desire serenity, but there is conflict. We desire order, but there is confusion. War, conflict, and confusion are the promise of God near the end of the ages. Because He has molded us to be His Own, by grace we receive war, conflict, and confusion with joy knowing that as we are active in war, conflict, and confusion, seemingly temporarily in despair, yet, through and in Christ we have the victory over them and will one day enjoy perfect peace, perfect serenity, and perfect order that this world has never known, forever.

## OUR CALLING

It pleased the eternal God to create the world and all basic content therein including every creature, chief among them, man. He created all things by calling into being the things that were not as though they were. All things responded to the Word of His mouth. There was nothing that could resist the Word of His mouth.

Then out of the human race God had made, He called again. He called a peculiar human race with an irresistible spiritual calling, again a calling that could not be avoided, changed, or manipulated by the called subjects, His peculiar people. They heard His Call. There was only one thing that the called of God could do: answer His Call. The Call was irresistible.

Through time God calls His people by His Word and Spirit. By His Word He makes Himself known to the called so that they know Him and His Will concerning the way they must live. By His Spirit He works in them to make them willing to keep His sayings by doing what He requires of them.

The called believe Scripture to be the revealed Word of God. Scripture is not a book which suggests a preferred pattern of life. It is a book which commands a certain pattern of life, with no alternatives. It is the voice of God saying, "Listen to Me!" The special people called with the irresistible calling can only say, "I listen." God says, "Do." The called say, "I will."

When a person is presented with a suggestion, he has a choice as to whether he will take the suggestion or leave it. When a person is presented with a suggestion that is preferred, he still has a choice to take it or to leave it. If he chooses to take it, he follows the preferred suggestion. His choice can then be called a preference. This means he likes his choice, maybe very much, but it is still understood that he chose his pattern of behavior.

When a person is presented with a command, he obeys or disobeys. He has no choices, no alternatives, no preferences.

When God calls His people, they have no choice. They come. The calling is irresistible. There is no choice. They believe His Word. They also become doers of His Word.

We believe we are the special people called by God to recognize His Word as our only basic authority. We not only respect that Word, but we have no choice but to keep His Word by obeying it. As the things created were called and could only appear, so we are called and can only obey. There is no alternative. What He says, we must do. The commands He gives, must be obeyed, nothing less, nothing else. There can be no reasoning of "maybe," "we will see once," "if the situation allows," or "it depends." We must obey. Because He makes us willing,

we will be abused or put to death instead of disobeying His commands. The Word of God stands. The calling is irresistible. Such persuasion is called a conviction.

One of the commands of God to His people is to bring up their covenant children in the best possible godly method and manner before God. Parents present infants or children before the Lord and His Church to promise that they will put forth their efforts and endeavors to instruct and to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord.

In one serious attempt to execute this calling and promise, Christian parents have established schools. At various times in history and in various places, the purpose of the establishment of such schools has somewhat varied. We are concerned now with our Protestant Reformed Christian schools; which have come into existence historically because of an apparent change from the sound convictions of others who once seemed to hold the Scriptures as the basic sole authority in their lives. Simply stated, the purpose of our schools is to teach the arts and sciences in a godly, disciplined method and manner. We believe that in these schools our calling to teach that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge is best accomplished. This to us is important since we also believe that there is no knowledge apart from Him and all knowledge is His.

We feel duty bound to continue to maintain these schools both spiritually and physically. Finally, in the face of opposition, we must pray for grace to exert ourselves to maintain our schools as well and as long as we can, not giving ourselves deliberately to spiritual and physical death by surrendering to the enemy when this is not necessary and the time is not ripe.

This is our calling, our conviction.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### *Law:*

Amendment 1 of the *Constitution of the United States* reads as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Amendment 14, Section 1 reads as follows: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any Law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Amendment 14, Section 5 reads as follows: "The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article."

Thus, then, we are said to have religious freedom and rights. Under Amendment 1 we have religious liberty or freedom. This liberty or freedom gives us the right to individual and collective freedom of religion. Implied therein is also the liberty or the freedom to have and to hold the principles involved in the convictions thereof, including the exercise of that freedom to educate our children according to the principles of our convictions.

Under Amendment 14 we have religious civil rights. These rights prohibit discrimination or individuals from denying citizens the right to exercise the practical implications of their convictions so long as they are carried out according to the laws of the land. No one may stop or hinder the active functioning of our schools according to our convictions, but we should lawfully be able to enjoy, in maintaining them, the privilege of all lawful protection equal with every other law-abiding citizen, such as equality of status under the law, equal treatment in the administration of justice, and equality of opportunity and access to employment, education, housing, public services and facilities, and public accommodations.

*Location:*

We, then, have and have had the freedom to locate where we believe God has placed us. We have exercised this freedom regarding and observing local laws as well. We did this in answer to our convictions. As a result we have one school in California, one in Colorado, one in Illinois, two in Iowa, three in Michigan, one in Minnesota, and one in Washington. Some of these schools have been maintained for many years. We thank God that He has supplied us with the spiritual, lawful, and monetary means to have these institutions.

**FORCES PROMOTING A CONFLICT**

The forces of the antithesis, the forces of the world against the Church of Christ and her manifestation in the Earth, even the anti-Christ, are always at work gnawing away at the edges of the Church and Her endeavors and Her manifestation in witness and conviction to attempt to bite at the heart to destroy Her. This is especially true today at about quarter to 12 on the Clock of God. According to Scripture, this is the time for perilous times to be upon Her. The days of our existence may be nearing an end. Forces representing and manifesting the spirit of our modern age are upon us both from within and from without to attempt to attack the quality and quantity of

our instruction and the existence of our schools. We must be aware and beware of them, remembering that we have the victory over them in Christ.

*Forces from Within*

First, there are those who question, seemingly, about every existing idea, behavior, method, style, institution, as well as other related phenomena. Why does this or that exist? Why is this thing this way or that way? We must examine why the persons do this questioning.

This questioning can portray the marks of a person irresistibly called of God. He has the command of God to try the spirits to see whether they be of God. Also in answer to His call to obedience, if he finds that he or a fellow saint holds an idea, behavior, method, style, or institution that is contrary or hindering to the keeping of the law of God and in love to Him, he will cleanse or sanctify his way and advise his fellow saints accordingly, and if the occasion should require a replacement of idea, behavior, habit, style, or institution, he will replace the broken one with one that is according to the Law of God and done in a manner that does show love to Him.

This questioning can also portray the marks of a person ruled by himself, influenced by fleshly friends, and perhaps at worst even influenced and ruled by the Devil himself. His questioning is often to sneer, to poke fun of, and to promote change merely for the sake of change. If this action becomes a practice, it will promote chaos and confusion. He is often making an attempt to destroy for the purpose of destroying, rebuilding, or promoting the establishment of a new order. A person doing this in this late age often does so to promote the cause of his own will though he will not tell his observers that he is doing this. He is like a wolf in the clothing of sheep. He will often present his suggestions of change to be in the interest of promoting human welfare. Those suggesting this change sometimes gain the sentiments of those in authority who in turn approve and promote fleshly human welfare.

Also in the cloak of promoting human welfare is the idea that it is bad to prohibit a person or group from thinking their own desired thoughts and from performing a certain desired act upon which one or more have previously contemplated, irrespective of what the ideas or act may be. Undesirable acts are said to be desirable. Unlawful acts are said to be lawful. The practice of permitting the undesirable and the unlawful can be termed permissivism, as we shall call it. Persons practicing this act upon many or seemingly almost every existing idea, behavior, method, style, or institution of society may be termed permissivists. Here again, a person promoting permissivism does not and

will not come before society as a permissivist. He would seldom, if ever, use the terms permissivist and permissivism himself. Yet, he will hope that his ideas spread like contagion.

It is not uncommon that overtones of modern philosophies and mannerisms play their off-beat tunes among the saints of God. They are heard in their churches and in their godly institutions of instruction and learning. These tones are easily received by the saint, especially in his weaker moments. And who is there that is not weak? We even teach little children humbly and truthfully to sing, "I am weak, but He is strong."

One of the common examples of permissivism is the allowing of unlawful behavior among students. In some cases it is denied or gotten by with after a so-called explanation in the cloak of innocent piety. In other cases it is excused because it is considered the thing to be doing and looked upon as a proper standard, when in fact, it is known that the act could not be considered proper conduct at all according to the Law of love to God. Thus the allowing of the worldly spirit of permissivism will and does reduce the quality of the disciplined atmosphere, thus also reducing the quality of our instruction.

Another force is the force of materialism. It may well have sprouted from the spirit of permissivism, in giving every individual his way to do and to have and to think as he wishes as though it is all right. In the world materialism is simply having any material object a person would like or want. Spiritual materialism is the setting of one's heart on the material that he has whether it be very much or maybe not so much or on the obtaining of future treasured possessions. It is the matter of the heart, not the matter of quantity and quality of goods.

Materialism is very common in state schools, but since we too are influenced by the spirit of the age in which we live, this force too will have struck its off-beat drone in our covenant schools in some form or manner. Many earthly things are thought to be wanted or needed both by schools and individuals. An unreasonable effort is sometimes made to attain to the having of them.

In some cases a school is erected to extravagance to contain numerous commodities said to be for teaching. Large numbers of teaching persons and gadgets are on hand. An excess of instructors or aids have to remain busy doing something, thereby robbing the student of his time in learning to think and to practice for his own benefit. When many gadgets are present, often most of them are little used, and many of them, not at all. Some of them will be proven to be a detriment, while the rest of them will teach very little. Elegance is much in evidence while in reality the educational standards are being lowered.

Materialism can be a threat through the individuals attending a

school. One example is when children have a great variety of clothing and other belongings causing school to become a fashion show promoting a heavy run on extravagant show-and-tell items which may or may not detract from the proper instructional and learning atmosphere, but certainly will not enhance it. Another example which we will name is when individuals shorten school instructional hours to buy desired items or if students are taken from the instructional atmosphere to be employed to earn the monetary means to obtain extraneous items. Thus we can see that materialism is a force that can lower the quality and quantity of the instruction of the covenant student.

#### *Force from Without*

The final force which we shall name that is promoting a conflict, is a force over which we have little or no control. It is the force of government pressure. The government, that is called by God to protect its citizens against the evil doer and to praise those who do well, has taken an interest in many things that are said to be for the welfare of the citizenry. Among them is education.

The government has a voluminous voice in the schools of the state even to the extent that the state school employees are at times uneasy because of it. The same force may be close at hand not only to take a nip from the exterior, but to take a vital bite at the very heart of the godly school to force her out of existence.

There are many ways in which this vital bite can occur. There are numerous types of legislation that could cause this. It is perhaps appropriate to name a few examples patterned after current legislation. One possible example would be the passing of excessive legislation on how to implement activities in the classroom, perhaps time-wise or material or subject-wise, the latter with either faulty theories and philosophies or with superfluous courses. Another example would be to require us by law to take federal funds and tell us how to use them in the classroom. Still another example is the possibility of the government requiring so many costly stipulations in edifices, administration, or classroom management and equipment that the expense cannot be met. It is also possible that all minority schools be required to close. This brief list is not considered to be conclusive but does exemplify expansions of the current pattern of legislation and political discussions.

Should existence become very perilous for legislative or for other reasons, lawfully we are supposed to be able to appeal to the courts. One may even do this for conscience sake. After all, do we not live in a democracy? Do we not have the lawful liberties to have these schools according to the legitimate laws of the land as set forth in the *Constitution of the United States*? Is the government not by, of, and for us

as well as the rest of the citizenry? Are we not law abiding citizens with the right to justice? But it may not help us to maintain our schools. The might of majority rules in the courts. This means, practically, that you may have your freedom and rights so long as your religious ideas are not in conflict with the ideas of the majority of the people who are voted into governmental offices or positions. Thus the fact that we live in a democracy may itself impose a threat upon us.

The majority are not ruled by the Spirit of Christ. The fear of God is not in them. They are ruled by their own hearts. They at best control themselves, are influenced by their fleshly friends, and finally instigated by the Devil himself, their father, who is being let loose in this era of the latter days. They rule, persecute in rule, even in an upperclass self-esteeming way, but they do not regard their end. Expect the worst for the future of the existence of our covenant schools.

Thus we can see how the force from which we may expect legal physical protection may indeed become our physical and spiritual enemy. The majority rules in our law-making and law-interpreting governmental offices or positions.

## GOALS

Our basic goal is to continue to teach the arts and sciences in a godly, disciplined method and manner. This is why the ruling parents established these schools in answer to their calling, conviction, and promise. These schools are to be kept undefiled from the way of the world and maintained in existence as long as possible.

First, we will attempt to maintain our schools in spiritual purity. We will fight against the forces from within of permissivism and materialism, and any other evil that would afflict them. Our children must continue to receive instruction in the arts and sciences, knowing the Scriptures in all things, so that they know that they as well as all things created belong to God and that all things serve His eternal purpose. They must know the Scriptural perspective of authority. They must also know how to receive and to use every good and perfect gift to the honor of God and to His glory.

Second, we will strive to maintain our schools as long as possible. If forces from without would force us out of existence locally, we should try to know, if possible, whether there be a place where we can go to continue to exist for awhile before the very end of time is upon us when we know that we will no longer be able to exist. If we give in before hand, we lose the battle. If we fight to the end to exist, then the battle is won, not of our own power, but by the power of God that works within us to will and to do His Will.



## WAYS TO ATTAIN OUR GOALS

The task to attain our goals is insurmountable. We cannot approach it. The days are evil. There will be more intervention than cooperation. Yet our direction will be very positive in the way of prayer and supplication remembering we are weak but our God is strong. Our might is not our own. We have a calling, a conviction. Our God will supply us with all things needful.

Being deeply conscious of our calling to attain our goals, we will first, as diligent stewards, attempt to maintain the Scriptural perspective of authority and the thankful use of our earthly gifts ourselves, both as parents and as instructors. Also, we will not give in to government forces when this is not necessary, attempt to be aware of acceptable alternative locations for temporary existence if this is necessary and possible, and maintain our schools as long as we can even in the face of spiritual, political, or economic opposition.

The forces that afflict our schools from within are forces against which we have to fight a spiritual battle. As the stewards of God we have considerable control over them. Let us pray for the grace with which to fight and for the necessary portion of His Holy Spirit to sanctify our way that we may be unspotted from the way of the world and through the cross be presented spotless before the Judge of the Earth. This means that we will be found diligent to question every idea, method, behavior, style, or institution to see whether it be of God, to consciously promote the teaching and the practice of the Law of God.

We will continue to provide appropriate places for instruction and maintain them. They should be intelligently equipped with such commodities as good heating, light paint, sanitary equipment, and fire doors. School rooms should provide ample room, lighting, chalkboard, and perhaps, if possible, an overhead for large student bodies. In the classroom there should be an adequate supply of books, flash cards, and other related phenomena. Equipment such as projectors can prove to be useful but should not be mandatory. Their use is limited. The available materials take much time and peculiar space to review, more than books. Often the time required to screen them is not warranted when compared to the help and assistance they provide in the classroom. Many of these materials are corrupted with modern worldly attitudes and false teachings of the current age. To produce projector material by a current staff would reduce effective teaching because of the time it would involve. Besides, children usually develop better study habits by hunting material in books. Finally, personal teaching is more effective than gadget teaching.

Instructors knowing the arts and sciences, capable of opening the Holy Scriptures to the student bodies in the teaching of them, will

still be employed. These instructors must show themselves to be filled with the Holy Ghost in that they know intellectually and live practically according to the precepts of God as set forth by His Holy Scriptures. They must be busy trying the spirits of ideas, habits, customs, methods, styles, institutions, and other criteria to see whether they be of God and transfer this knowledge with the arts and sciences to their students.

In this way the Christian student will be taught to better know the spirit of this age and the related problems in this world which are reflected in modern arts and sciences. He is inexperienced. He must know what is, what to expect, and what to do about it. He has found, does find, and will find this out for himself also, but it is more effective that he also be taught them by more knowledgeable veterans in the area.

There is the ever growing problem of wicked or inappropriate language in printed materials of all kinds as well as in social and business contracts. He must know of the various possibilities and be trained to know how to think so that he can deal effectively with them, whether he be among the saints or apart from them.

The Christian student must know that the spirit of the anti-Christ, the power of the Devil, is strong, stronger than in any other time in history. The anti-Christ attempts to overthrow any power of law, decency, and order. Permissivism portrays a prime example. The student must know of the spiritual danger and evil of permissivism as well as of materialism and how they may and do attack him personally even unaware, as well as the school that he attends. He must know how to fight them in his personal life and also as part of the saints of God.

He must be aware that he is living near the end of time. Maybe it is like quarter to twelve on the Clock of God. He must know that persecution is in the world and that the time may come that he too may be involved. He must also know the position of his government toward him, his school, his church. What will become of him? What will become of his home, his school, his church? Must he flee? Where?

Among other academics a knowledge of geography is greatly enhancing as part of our strategy for spiritual and physical survival. It should appear near the top of the Christian student's priority list. This will help him to know where things are and, to some extent, (perhaps sufficiently so) why they are the way they are. It will help him to know better, and in the fear of God, to better know where to go in the case that he must in fact flee geographically, whether it be to maintain his spiritual identity individually or collectively with his Christian friends, or to maintain his physical existence.

A knowledge of geography will help the student to know the kinds of places to which he may have to flee. Perhaps there will be a temporary haven to which he and his fellow believers can go where they can

legally find a place, even to colonize, to effectively fight the spirit of the world and perhaps flee the enclosing pressures of the government, so that maybe, even for a fairly extended period of time, formal Christian instruction may be continued. His knowledge of geography will also help him to know how he and his fellow believers may have to make a living in their newly adopted environment.

The Christian student may have to flee to another state or country. He may have to sneak from area to area, from state to state, or even from country to country without proper credentials, landing at any coast, rather than in a proper port. He may even have to flee to a remote place, maybe to a cave or to a remote wilderness mountain area.

The student should also be prepared for a situation where nothing is prepared, but may have to flee for life in a moment's notice. There is now no way to know how or where this may be. The times may change so fast and so much that one could not know, much less plan, such phenomena ahead though beforehand he should have studied records of political entities to see what the policies of emigration and immigration had been. After all, he should have been taught to be a law-abiding citizen.

This does not mean to say that the Christian student's formal instruction must prepare him for every possible emergency. This would be impossible. The basic demands of geography for this particular purpose can be limited to the physical, political, and economic aspects. He should know the physical aspects of the various areas of Earth, such as the lay of the land in regard to the seas and the interior terrain. A knowledge of climate may also prove to be useful. He should also be familiar with political entities and their customs on emigration and immigration and their basic economic, social, and religious ways of life. The complete curriculum of geography as we should carry it on from year to year should go beyond these basics, but these basics should be reinforced from year to year to refresh the memory of the student or to inform him of current changes or trends.

A child well prepared will usually grow into a well-prepared adult, and hopefully, a well-prepared parent to teach his children preparedness. This will be true not merely in the promotion of his geographic information, but especially in the ways of the Lord, as He works His purpose on Earth, particularly at the end of time, and beyond the ages.

In a typical speech or writing of a strategy it is usually considered proper at this point to relate how the attained goals should be implemented. In our unique situation, our work as formal instructor will end when the covenant school can no longer exist. There still may be occasion to instruct the youth, or perhaps even adults, in other ways for awhile. It is not as though we too have struck an off-beat drone of

failure. For the flesh the time may be difficult. Our faithful God will take care of His people then as always. In contrast it will be time to await and to hear the perfect joyfully clear note of the trumpet of God announcing the final coming of Jesus with the Victory Sceptre in His Hand.

## CONCLUSION

The time will come when our Protestant Reformed Christian Parental Schools can no longer exist. How this will take place, one cannot predict with reasonable surety. In the trying hour that intervenes, our faithful covenant God will supply us with the grace to remain faithful and will direct our prayers to Himself in the Name of the King of All Glory above. In obedience to the King and with His help may we persevere to the end in the maintaining of our covenantal schools and in the instruction of our children. Our hope and trust is in Him in Whose Cross we glory as it towers over the wrecks of time. God will give us the grace to continue steadfast in the way of the King, to be governed by Him alone, and through Him to look forward to the reward of everlasting joy and righteousness that He has earned on the Cross. We are weak to live in the way of so great a King. Our strength is in Him Whose ways are beyond our ways, Whose grace never fails, and Who will carry us in His everlasting arms to the realms of everlasting day where He will be the Light and we shall enjoy perfect peace, perfect serenity, perfect order, and perfect government, forever. ■ ■

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“...the nurture which is required of the Christian parent is not in the realm of what is desirable but is mandatory. God ‘commanded’ the fathers. Christian nurture is not an optional extra. We are required to see to it that what our children are taught accords with the Word of God. A vigorous perpetuation of what is true is commanded not merely generally or ecclesiastically but domestically. If we would not tolerate our children being exposed to erroneous doctrine from the pulpit nor should we be prepared to accept their exposure to atheistic and materialistic values, presented as being true, in the classroom. The same God Who has commanded purity of doctrine in the Church has commanded a nurture consistent with that doctrine in the home and by extension in the school.” (quoted from *Newsletter*, Christian Parent-Teacher League, December, 1980. Roy Mohon writes this in a 65-page booklet, “Train up a Child.”)