

The Protestant Reformed Teacher

by Rev. David Engelsma

Rev. David Engelsma is the pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois. He is the author of a recently published book, *Marriage the Mystery of Christ and the Church*. He is a frequent contributor to the *Standard Bearer*. Pastor Engelsma served as instructor at a mini-course sponsored and financed by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Schools during the summer of 1975. This is the fourth in a series of five speeches on "Reformed Education." The entire series will be published soon by the Federation in a monograph.

In this lecture, we come to the heart of our subject. For we treat here, not only what the Protestant Reformed teacher is to be, but also what the position of the Protestant Reformed teacher is and what he, or she, does. We will take up the truth that the teacher stands in place of the parents and that this necessarily implies that the work of the teacher is essentially the work of rearing covenant children. From this follow important practical considerations concerning the credentials of a teacher, as well as certain considerations pertinent to parents.

It is fitting that we treat the heart of the subject of Reformed Christian education in connection with the teacher. Although it is a slight exaggeration to say that the school is the teachers (for God has blessed and used schools that suffered for a time with poor teachers), the thrust of the exaggeration is correct: Christian education is Christian teachers teaching covenant children.

After the building is up, the principles printed, and the teacher-training completed, Christian education begins - the mystery of teaching. And it is a

mystery. It is more than a good lesson plan. It is more than a brilliant scholar before children. It is a gift. A good Christian teacher and good Christian instruction are great gifts of the Holy Spirit. There was good reason why the original 21st Article of the Church Order of Dordt called for good schoolmasters: "The consistories shall everywhere see to it that there are good schoolmasters..."

The Teacher Stands "In the Place of the Parents"

It is an integral part of the covenantal conception of the school to view the teacher as standing in the place of the parents. The day school is a demand of the covenant, an aspect of the parents' calling in the covenant. Therefore, the school is an extension of the home, a parental school, and the teacher's status is that he stands in the parents' place, or office.

This defines the authority of the teacher with regard to the students: it is nothing less than the authority of the parent, nothing less than God's authority given to parents, nothing less than the authority referred to in the 5th commandment. This must be preached to the children by the pastor in sermons on the 5th commandment; it must be inculcated upon the children by the parents; it must be insisted on by the teacher himself.

For parents to connive at their children's disrespect for any teacher, much more to foster disrespect, is for parents to assist in making rebels whom God will cut off from the land and is for parents to cut their own throats (it is the parents' own authority - in the teacher - that they are undermining). There may no more be disparagement of teachers in the

presence of the children than a disparagement of each other by parents. As regards the teacher's weaknesses and faults, parents and students alike must always keep in mind the instruction of the Heidelberg Catechism as to how God requires us to respond to the "infirmities" of those in authority: "patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand" (Q. 104).

That the teacher stands in place of the parents is the historic Reformed conception of Christian education. Dr. H. Bouwman wrote: "The rule ought to be, that the school originate with the parents. According to the ordinance of God, the full task of rearing rests first of all upon the parents. To the many aids which serve to assist the parents in this rearing belongs especially the school. The school takes over a part of the task of the parents. It follows from this, that the school must stand on the same foundation as the Christian family, that is to say, on the ground of the covenant..." When Bouwman sums up what he has said about Christian schools, his first point is: "That according to Reformed principle, the schools must originate from the parents." As Biblical basis for this position, he appeals to Deut. 4:9,10; Deut. 6:7,20; Eph. 6:4; and Col. 3:20,21. (cf. Dr. Bouwman's *Gereformeerd Kerkrecht*, Vol. 1, pp. 520, 521, in the chapter entitled, "Scholen" - my translation of the Dutch.)

The Dutch educator, T. Van Der Kooy, wrote: "Considering the Christian school in its nature, we find as its distinctive feature that it pretends to be nothing further than a school; that is to say, an institution auxiliary to the family in the education of the children for their position in life. It is content with this supplementary function" (*The Distinctive Features of the Christian School*, p. 30).

It is necessary for us to maintain this view of the school over against a challenge

to it. The challenge is that the school must be viewed as an independent, sovereign sphere, so that the teacher is independent of the parents. The school then becomes a teacher's school, instead of a parental school, and the students, the pupils of the teacher, rather than the children of the parents.

This is the position of the A.A.C.S. (Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship). This becomes apparent in the educational creed of J. H. Olthuis and B. Zylstra. It speaks of a free, sovereign teaching office, apart from parents. (cf. "Confessing Christ in Education" in the *International Reformed Bulletin*, Summer 1970, especially Articles 6,9, and 10.)

But this is an incipient threat within the Reformed set-up, always. It was a threat in the Netherlands in the 1800's, so that the watchword of many Reformed believers became, "the school belongs to the parents" - and the intent was - not to the teachers! (cf. Van Der Kooy, p. 34) A sovereign school and independent teachers was suggested in discussion at the convention of the National Union of Christian Schools in 1930. After a lecture on "The Relationship Between Parent and Teacher," there was a discussion that centered on the speaker's assertion that the relationship between teacher and parent was that of employee and employer. Someone suggested that the teacher's position is "something like sovereignty within a certain, particular sphere of action." (cf. the annual of the NUCS, October, 1930, pp. 74ff.)

Where this notion creeps in, the teachers regard themselves and their work as independent, resent parental "intrusion," and fail to view themselves as servants of the parents.

The justification for this view is that the teachers are competent in the field of education, whereas generally the parents are not. In fact, in many cases, the

parents are not even well-educated. It is supposed that sovereign educators, unhindered by blundering parents, will make for a better school and better education.

It is essential that we turn down the challenge and retain parental schools, both in theory and in practice. An educator's school will not be better, but will spell the doom of the Christian school. For it cuts itself off from the root of Christian education, from its own life-source: the covenant of God with parents and the Word of God to parents. It will either lose support, the zeal of the parents and then inevitably their money, or it will lose its Reformed, covenantal character. The Christian school must fully and wholeheartedly show itself to be the home's extension - to the parents too. There is something seriously wrong when teachers and parents begin to think of each other as "us and them." The fact is that "we are they, and they are we."

Since teachers stand in the place of the parents, they are servants. We must avoid the endless wrangling, whether teachers are professionals, employees, and the like. Christian teachers are servants. They are servants of snot-nosed children, of uneducated parents, and of God; and they are servants of God by being servants of parents and children. Therefore, teachers are lowly, very lowly. But according to the law of the Kingdom, exactly in this lowliness they are very great, so great that sufficient honor cannot be given them. He who would be great in the Kingdom, let him be the servant, not the lord, but the servant of all, according to the example of Him Who washes our feet and died for us.

The Christian teacher must be humble, not puffed up over his degrees, knowledge, and abilities, but lowly on account of his sins. He lives in the consciousness: what do I have that I have not received? As a pastor, I am not unaware of what may be a sore temptation for the teacher: exposure to the constant

scrutiny and criticism of everybody, including those who are less qualified in the field in which they offer criticism. I read recently that one reason why so many men avoid or leave the pastorate is that in the pastorate a man is subject to the judgment and criticism of every member of the congregation. Sunday after Sunday, schoolboys, housewives, and ditchdiggers weigh his sermons and do not hesitate to find them wanting. This is a blow to pride. It is similar with the teacher. The answer, for the teacher, is: humility.

That the teacher is a servant does not mean that every whim of every parent is simply carried out by the teacher. This is impossible anyway. There is a Board and an Association. But it does mean that the teacher is to listen to every whim of every parent and to listen in such a spirit as indicates that he knows the parents's right to speak on the matter of his child's education and as indicates that he is ready to give account of his teaching or discipline.

The servant-position of the teacher does not mean that the teacher is allowed no liberty in the sphere of his labor, that he becomes a mere puppet of the parents. This is a warning to parents to let the teachers teach and not to be looking over the teacher's shoulder at every move he makes, like I look over the shoulder of the mechanic working on my car - to his great harassment and absolutely no advantage to myself. Within the framework of parental authority, there is ample room for the free, unhampered labor of the teacher. It is impossible to spell this out in exact detail, to formulate a codebook. Love, trust, and responsibility always run the risk of meddling on the one hand and an overstepping of the bounds on the other hand. The general relationship between parent and teacher has been pointed out. In his **Ons Program**, A. Kuyper wrote: "The parent determines the spirit of the instruction, the church determines the principle whereby that spirit may be

conserved, the state determines the minimum amount of education, but the method by which all this should be brought about is left to the teacher to determine." According to H. Bouwman: "As to the manner of instruction, the school itself decides, but the parents prescribe what must be taught and in what spirit." (Geref. Kerkrecht)

But the servant-position of the teacher does mean, as Van Der Kooy said, that "the Christian school...is content with its relation to the home. It respects the rights of the family. It does not usurp any prerogatives of the home...It never undermines the home." (The Distinctive Features of the Christian School)

The Teacher's Work is Covenantal Rearing

If the teacher stands in the place of the parents, his task is thereby set forth as the rearing, or upbringing, of the covenant child. For this is the task given to the parents by God. The parents may not and cannot assign to the teachers anything else than this task. Even if the parents set certain limits on the task of the school, the work remaining is, at its heart, the rearing of covenant children.

By rearing is meant the work with the covenant child that directs and guides and nourishes his growth unto a mature (or, as is often the rendering of our version, perfect) man of God. It is the upbringing of Ephesians 6:4: "And, ye fathers,... bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The way in which the covenant God brings to spiritual maturity the reborn child of the covenant is the oversight, direction, and guidance of others, namely, parents. Parents do this by instruction, discipline, and example; and the work of a teacher is to assist in this labor - to be busy in **this** task. The teacher's work is not only to impart facts, to give head-knowledge, to educate intellects, to teach subjects capably, or to

develop fully God-given abilities - although he may not do less than this or something entirely different from this! - but he must, in all of this, rear the **covenant child**. As the Dutch educators put it: "Alle onderwijs moet opvoedkundig tewerk gaan" (i.e., all instruction should have nurture as its purpose - cf. C. Jaarsma in **integrated education**).

Covenant education is supremely and always spiritual-ethical-practical labor. This is the message of every text in which the call to Christian education is given, Deuteronomy 6, Psalm 78, Ephesians 6:4, and all the others. We certainly may not maintain the covenant basis of education, but construe the education differently than that prescribed in this basis. The one child must, in the totality of his nature and in the development of every aspect of his nature, be spiritually nurtured. Parent and teacher alike must know this and labor in this consciousness and never for one moment lose this consciousness. When I send my child to school, and to you, the teacher, I do not say: "Teach my child to read and write;" but I say: "Carry out Deuteronomy 6 and Ephesians 6:4 in and through teaching my child to read and write."

This ethical-practical concern has ever been the heartbeat and power of the Reformed movement of Christian education. Not that it is uniquely a characteristic of Reformed **education**, for this characterizes the Reformed faith and life throughout. But it is true also of Reformed education. Here we better be all ears to the common man, the uneducated parent, the man who stammers and stutters when it comes to educational theory, but who speaks ever so clearly and powerfully when it concerns the essence and heart of Reformed, Christian education. We will rue the day that we shut him up or cut education loose from his spiritual-ethical concern, for that will be the day that Christian education dies. He knows why

he wants good Christian schools and why he gives liberally of his precious time (time that he has far less of than the scholar) and of his money (got through sweat and blood) for those schools. God's children must be godly taught; covenant children must be taught to fear God; separate children must be kept apart from wicked teacher and wicked children; sanctified children must be taught and disciplined to be holy.

Down through the ages, believing parents speak with one voice. You hear it in the father of the Book of Proverbs: "My son, the beginning of wisdom and knowledge is the fear of Jehovah - fear Jehovah, and keep His commandments!" You hear it in Luther, who raged against existing schools - Christian in name - for a practical reason: they corrupted the youth of the Church in mind and manners. It is heard in our Dutch forebearers of the Synod of Dordt when, in the original Article 21 of the Church Order, it called for "good schoolmasters who shall not only instruct the children in reading, writing, languages and the liberal arts, but likewise in godliness and in the Catechism." "... in godliness and in the Catechism!" It is heard in the early Dutch settlers in America. At the first meeting of Classis Holland, in 1848, the ministers and elders faced the question, "What shall we do about schools for our children?" The Classis' answer was: "We judge that the congregations should make sure that their children are trained in schools where the influence is definitely Christian..." (cf. M. Schoolland, *De Kolonie*, pp.198-204) We have heard the same voice in our own parents and grandparents. They have plainly expressed that our schools were born of their spiritual-ethical-practical concern that their children be reared in the fear of God. So much was this the case that there is some truth to the observation that the schools preceded the theoretical basis of the schools.

Covenant life often precedes theoretical reflection on covenant life.

In my judgement, our schools have a weakness here. I do not have in mind the school's failure in practice, as regards the rearing of the children. Certainly, these are no greater or more numerous than the failures of the home. But I refer to the idea itself of the school that prevails among us. There is an unhealthy intellectualism, a notion that the business of the schools is not only primarily academic, but even exclusively academic. There is a hesitancy, a fear to assert, and boldly to implement, that the main task of the Christian school is spiritual-ethical rearing. We do well to listen to the warning of the Dutch educator, Jan Waterink, against what he calls "a one-sided rational approach" in education. He suggests that this is an area "of fundamental importance in the practice of education." He gives the example of a child of limited intellectual abilities, who is nevertheless hounded in school to learn and to get better grades and who, as a result, becomes "peevish, surly, tiresome and later perhaps untrustworthy." What is forgotten in such an education of this child, says Waterink, is "the unity of life." Then, he goes on to give this warning (the emphasis is his):

"And thus we naturally come to the conclusion that there is a danger to life itself in a one-sided rational approach. The human intellect, which dissects everything, analyzes everything, counts everything and measures everything, is itself a product of a life-dissolving activity. Therefore any science and any pedagogy which arises merely from this isolated ratio is doomed to death; for though the man who tells you exactly how many sepals, and petals, how many stamens and what pistil he has picked from the flower you gave him may speak very accurately and very

scientifically, he is not speaking of the flower which God has caused to grow. For in nature, stamens and pistils, petals and sepals do not grow: God has made flowers.

"And he who understands this, who is able to attain the harmony between head and heart, who learns to know with his heart and to love with his intellect - and this is the knowing and loving repeatedly mentioned in the Scriptures - he will also experience the unity of life in education. He will not today be engaged in religious education and tomorrow in intellectual education, nor will he be occupied now in morally educating the child, and then in esthetically training him. He will understand that life is one, and that both in himself, the educator, and in the child which he is educating, this one life must express itself and develop according to the rule given by the Creator, in order that he may be, and the child may become, a man of God." (*Basic Concepts in Christian Pedagogy*, pp. 31-33)

How ought the Christian school to work at this calling to rear the children?

Not by periodic excursion into mysticism, along the lines of neo-Pentecostalism: and not by injections of the emotionalism and superficial piety of fundamentalism ("Children, put your history books away now, and let us sing, "Throw out the lifeline")

The Christian school rears simply by being true to the covenantal basis of the school, by being true to the Reformed faith. It rears by instructing the mind in the various subjects in the light of and on the basis of the Word, Holy Scripture, and thereby relating the subject to God and relating the student to God in his knowledge and use of the subject. The teacher can and should be detailed and explicit, if he is not merely to impart knowledge but, above all, rear the

covenant child. E.g., in science, the teacher ought to show that evolutionistic science is rooted in unbelief, thus bringing home to the student that in confessing creation he takes a stand for the Truth against the Lie and is involved in the great battle of all ages. He ought to point out the dark shadow of despair that evolution casts over all of human life - man is without God and without hope in the world. If he does not quote Bertrand Russell to the class, he will at least make plain to them the implication of the theory that now has educational, scientific, and indeed all human life by the throat in our society, as those implications were acknowledged by Russell, who himself, of course, embraced evolution:

"That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noon-day brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins - all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet nearly so certain (!), that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built...Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way;

for man, condemned today to lose his dearest, tomorrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little days...proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate for a moment his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the trampling march of unconscious power." (quoted by Gordon H. Clark in *A Christian Philosophy of Education*, pp. 56,57.)

The teacher ought to indicate that evolution produces lawlessness, existentialism ("Eat, drink, and be merry - this moment - for tomorrow we die"), and the hippie-life of irresponsibility. Then, he can contrast the doctrine of creation and show how the call to the people of God to a life of trust, hope, and good works is based on it. Good, thorough, Biblical teaching of the subjects will itself rear the children, by the blessing of the Spirit. If I may make a comparison for a moment with preaching, in the Reformed faith doctrine itself is ethical, i.e., the doctrine itself sweetly inclines the believer to holiness of life. Holiness is not "tacked on later," is not a "second blessing."

Secondly, the school accomplishes rearing by the teacher's concerning himself with other aspects of the child than his mind. No covenant parent sends a brain to school; he sends the one, entire covenant child. Teachers may counsel. They must. It is impossible not to. Teachers are derelict, if they do not. This is an aspect of discipline, and discipline is part of the covenant calling of parents, which they pass on to the teachers who stand in their place. Discipline is an important part of the calling of parents and, therefore, an important part of the teacher's calling. The importance of discipline is brought by the fact that the

word for child-rearing in the New Testament, the word, *paideia*, is sometimes used to refer strictly to discipline. In Hebrews 12, e.g., "chastening" is the word, *paideia*, i.e., the rearing of a child.

Discipline is much broader than 'spank' or 'write lines' or 'stay in at recess.' It is the structuring, or ordering, of the child and the life of the child. This is done partly by the inflicting of some pain when the child sins, but it is done largely by the words of parents and teachers, whether in praise or reproof or exhortation, which words are the Law of God applied to the child.

The teacher must deal with laziness, irresponsibility, sullenness, anger, disrespect, pride, cruelty, and mob-spirit. As a parent, I beg you, I command you, "Help me here! Stand with me, here! Stand for me and my wife, here! Admonish! Discipline! I.e., rear my child! Foolishness is in the heart of my covenant child, but your rod and your rebuke will drive it far from him.

I make bold to suggest that a future "mini-course" on discipline would be very profitable.

Thirdly, the Christian school rears a child by the teacher's direction of the child in his use of his knowledge and abilities. The school is concerned that the child have a critical, discerning mind: how to use time; what kind of books and magazines to read; what kind of music to listen to; the proper use of the money he will make through his knowledge of math; etc. If my son uses his knowledge of history to help set up the Kingdom of Antichrist or if my daughter uses her ability to communicate to deceive others and aggrandize herself, my one, great purpose with my children's education has not been realized, even though he is Ph.D. in history and she, the most highly acclaimed author in society.

This, the rearing of covenant children, is the responsibility of the teacher's office. For this service, he is given his

authority. To do this, the teacher must love the children. He must love them as the parents do and carry out all the instruction in love. It is true, when I take my child to you, I say to you nothing less than this: "Rear him!"; but I say this also, and I say it first: "Love him, as a covenant child of God!"

The Teacher's Credentials

If the work of the teacher is rearing children of the covenant, the teacher must have spiritual credentials. He must be full of the Spirit and grace of God. The man or woman to whom I entrust my child - not merely my money or my property or even my bodily health and life, but my child! - must be worthy, must be trustworthy. Luther saw this long ago and spoke of "honest, upright, virtuous schoolmasters and teachers offered by God." He also warned those who rejected good, Christian schoolteachers, in a Christian school, that they would "get in their place incompetent substitutes, ignorant louts...who at great cost and expense will teach the children nothing but how to be utter asses, and beyond that will dishonor men's wives and daughters and maid-servants, taking over their homes and property..." prophecy fulfilled with a vengeance in our day. (cf. "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," in *Luther's Works*, Vol. 46, p. 218.)

The teacher in our school must be Reformed, knowledgeably, soundly, and thoroughly Reformed, i.e., Protestant Reformed. He may not be merely "Christian" in a broad sense, a sense in which he or she has distaste for the Reformed faith. He may not be loosely "Reformed," having no eye or concern for the maintenance and development of the Reformed faith in the Protestant Reformed Churches. He must, on the contrary, be confessionally Reformed, with a love for the Reformed truth and principles as we know them and confess them and with an

eagerness to teach them and apply them in every area.

Whether or not a teacher has these credentials must be determined. The early Dutch synods proposed that a consistory have a committee of elders for school-surveillance, to see to it that the teachers were soundly Reformed as well as capable and to see to it that the instruction in the schools had a Reformed character. This, in addition to the fact that the teachers had to sign the Formula of Subscription. Bouwman gives us this interesting information:

"The Church leaves the matter of the instruction entirely up to the school-association, and asks for herself only the right of inspection of the instruction." "The consistories must try to exercise surveillance (*toezicht*) both over the ability of the teachers and over the religious character (*gehalte*) of the instruction." "...surveillance of the church over the instruction is desirable for these three reasons: a. because the foundation of the school is the Word of God and the confession of the church, and the church has the calling to see to it whether the school is faithful to this foundation; b. because the parents have bound themselves at baptism to instruct their children in the doctrine of the church, and it is the calling of the church, to make certain that the parents fulfill their baptism-vow; c. because parents with their children are always subject to the surveillance and discipline of the church, not least as concerns instruction...this surveillance does not have to do with the instruction as such, i.e., with the lesson-plan, etc., but with the Christian character of the instruction...the manner in which the surveillance is exercised is determined by mutual agreement. To that end the consistory might be given the right to appoint

one or two members to the Board of the school or to appoint a special committee of surveillance." (Geref. *Kerkrecht*, Vol. 1, pp. 520,521)

This goes in the direction of parochialism and hierarchy. Not the church, but the parents have the responsibility of determining the credentials of the teachers and the character of their instruction, and the parents carry out this responsibility through an Association and a Board.

This means that there is a heavy responsibility on the Board and on the Association. The Board must make the spiritual qualifications of the applicant their concern. In their oversight of the instruction in the classroom, they must make the Reformed character of the instruction their concern. This requires Reformed Board members - men elected to the Board because of their spiritual qualifications, as well as their educational abilities. Since Boards rely heavily on administrators, sensitive Reformed administrators are called for.

I am not altogether satisfied with the way in which we parents get teachers for our schools. The Association of parents has little, if anything, to do with the hiring of teachers and little, if any, say-so in the matter, less, in fact, than a congregation does in the calling of a pastor. Decisions of a Board should have to be ratified in some way by the Association before teachers are hired.

The teacher's credentials also include his ability to teach. Not every good, Reformed, well-meaning man, or woman, can teach. The teacher must know his stuff; must be able to work with children; and must be able to get the stuff he knows through to the child.

The possession of these credentials demands training. The ideal is our own college for the teaching of teachers. In the meantime, prospective teachers should use the best Christian colleges available. In addition, our most experienced and

best qualified teachers could give instruction to aspiring teachers during the summer months. Ongoing training is in order for all our teachers. There should be frequent faculty meetings to discuss the Reformed world-and-life-view. This is worth pursuing.

Some Implications

Some important, practical implications should be drawn out from the teacher's standing in the place of the parents and from the teacher's calling to rear the children.

There must be the closest intimacy and cooperation between parents and teachers. This will be expressed and effected by meetings and conversations, not mere public meetings, but private meetings as the need calls for. In my experience, we parents have the greater fault on this score. We often operate under the notion that the teacher replaces us; we abdicate in favor of the teacher; we regard the school as a substitute for the home. Then, we do not even avail ourselves of the ordinary means of cooperation with the teachers, PTA, conferences, and association meetings. As far as the teacher is concerned, he ought to call the parents regarding problems and consult with the parents regarding moral flaws (sins), and he ought to do this early.

Cooperation is the normal way. I echo, with all my heart, Van Der Kooy's remark: "It is my fervent hope that we may be spared the unfortunate conflict between parents and teachers which has sometimes been predicted. These ought by all means to stand shoulder to shoulder in the fulfilling of the sacred calling to educate."

Essential is the unity of home and school, of parent and teacher, as regards the child and his rearing. The home and the school must be one in mind and will, and above all in heart, as to who the child is, what the required instruction and

discipline are, and Who God is. At this point, the church's work is crucial: to preach to home and school alike the mind and will of Jesus Christ. The unity of our homes and schools in the truth is a rare thing today - pray God that we not lose it!

It is also implied that the teacher must be awe-struck with his calling, just as the parent is. He should feel that he would not accept such a position for a million dollars and that he could not leave it for two million. Having this attitude, he will depend on God for the ability to do the work and will pray for the grace constantly. He will also be diligent. He will give it all he has. If ever there were a calling that warranted sacrifice and effort beyond the call of bare duty, teaching covenant children is this calling.

Finally, teachers are to be highly honored. They should be paid well. They should be respected. Luther said it in his inimitable way:

"I will simply say briefly that a diligent and upright schoolmaster or teacher, or anyone who faithfully trains and teaches boys (and girls! -

DE), can never be adequately rewarded or repaid with any amount of money, as even the heathen Aristotle says. Nevertheless, this work is as shamefully despised among us as if it amounted to nothing at all. And still we call ourselves Christians! If I could leave the preaching office and my other duties, or had to do so, there is no other office I would rather have than that of schoolmaster or teacher of Boys; for I know that next to that of preaching, this is the best, greatest, and most useful office there is. Indeed, I scarcely know which of the two is the better. For it is hard to make old dogs obedient and old rascals pious; yet that is the work at which the preacher must labor, and often in vain. Young saplings are more easily bent and trained, even though some may break in the process. It surely has to be one of the supreme virtues on earth faithfully to train other people's children..." (Luther's Works, Vol. 46, pp. 252,253)

P O T P O U R R I

Teachers and parents are invited to contribute short, helpful articles to this section of *Perspectives*. Mr. Roland Petersen, principal of Covenant Christian High School and chairman of the music department, writes a brief article of advice for elementary teachers.