other words is a *spiritual* one. That God be glorified in our efforts is our desire. And our experience has been that the Lord is indeed blessing those efforts, feeble though they may be. We think therefore that we have good cause for courage in pressing *ahead.* Look therefore for four issues from now on – one coming out in February (this one), another in May, still another in August, and finally one in November. And thank you for having provided the incentive.

Don Doezema

SPECIAL FOCUS

In past issues of "Perspectives" we have focused on places and events. In this and in some future issues we intend to make people also the objects of our special focus. While we see this to be entirely proper, we do understand that it must be done carefully. The delightful couple we approached for this issue impressed that on our minds, too, when they expressed reservations first about being singled out at all, and then, more particularly, about being named. *Their preference was to remain anonymous, in order that it might be clear beyond any shadow of doubt that the article was not a glorying in men. In their own hearts there was the firm conviction that all that they were, and all that they did, were by God's marvelous and free grace. Of credit for themselves, whether that be for being minded of spiritual things, or whatever, they wanted nothing. Only at our insistence did they at last agree to have their names appear – partly, perhaps, because they understood the ease with which anyone could, by the process of elimination, determine the identity of the family anyway, from the circumstances described. So, here they are –* Dewey and Dena Engelsma. *Much can be learned, we think, by a careful consideration of the difference between "their" day and ours. The things which we are so quick to see as necessities today were, not that many years ago, perceived to be the luxuries that they really are – luxuries to be enjoyed if and when the* necessities *of life (like school tuition) were provided for.*

John Kalsbeek, Jr., of the "Perspectives" editorial staff, conducted an informal interview with Mr. and Mrs. Engelsma. The questions which follow, printed in italics, are John's; the answers, of course, belong to the Engelsmas.

Forty-one Years of Tuition

By way of introduction, would you tell us a little about yourselves and your family?

Certainly. I would however like to begin by insisting that what has been accomplished in our life and family is due solely to the grace of God as He directed our lives. We have nothing in ourselves in which to boast. To God alone is all the glory.

But, to answer your question, we have been married now for close to fifty years. God blessed us with a large family. Our oldest child just passed his forty-seventh birthday and our youngest is twenty. For forty-one years we had children attending our Christian schools. Now, due to God's mercy, all of our grandchildren also attend Christian schools, for which we are deeply grateful to our covenant God.

For forty-one years in a row you paid Christian school tuition?

Yes, we did. The first year the tuition cost us $112 a year. Forty-one years later we paid $2,200 to send our youngest child through his last year at our Covenant Christian High School. Most of the years in between we had several children in school at the same time.

Forty-one years of tuition — that must have been an enormous amount of money!

We didn't keep track of how much we spent in all, so we'll never know how much it was. But both of us feel it was one of the best investments we ever made. We see the fruit of this investment almost every day in the lives of our children and grandchildren. We have to be careful not to think of sending our children to a Christian school in terms of a sacrifice. It's better to think of it as a blessed privilege given to us by our covenant faithful God.

Was there ever a time when tuition payments became a financial burden?

Not just once but many times we had to struggle to meet our tuition obligations. A couple of times we even borrowed money to pay off our tuition. One time when the tuition rate topped $1,000 for the first time, we thought it was going to be more than we could handle. For

years I'd been working eight hours a day, five days a week, and I knew I wouldn't be making enough to pay $1,000 a year. Yet at this time God provided me with extra work on Saturday mornings. It was cleanup work in the painting department. It was the dirtiest work available. I had to get up at 5:00 in the morning and usually I worked until close to noon. But it was work, and it provided us the needed funds to pay the extra tuition.

You even went so far as to borrow money to pay your tuition?

Yes, we did. Usually we borrowed it from willing relatives. Paying one's tuition should be a family's number one priority. It should be on the top of one's list of expenses, never on the bottom of the list.

Early in our married life we never thought of vacations. When they first came out with a week's vacation with pay, we took the week's vacation pay to help pay the tuition and then worked the 40-hour week for our regular wages.

Dewey and Dena Engelsma

What do you consider to be the chief value of our Christian schools?

That they are God-centered. We saw this in the songs that the children were taught. We saw this in the Christian instruction given in all the subjects by the Christian teachers God gave us. We rejoiced with tears in our eyes in the all-school programs which have become an annual event in our schools. By the way, those all-school programs are worth all the effort the teachers and students put into them.

We are often inclined to take our schools for granted. But that we must never do. When this begins to happen we tend to become less thankful for them. Already in the home we have to emphasize with our children that our schools are a gift of God. It's important that parents pray for the school and its teachers openly and often in front of their children.

Do you have any advice for our parents today?

The best advice we can give them is to keep their priorities straight. First things first. They have to be able and ready to deny themselves for Christ's sake and the sake of their children. They have to guard against being overcome by a desire for the pleasures and luxuries of this world. These are greater temptations today than when we were younger.

Parents should take an active part in the schools. They should be willing members of the School Board and the Ladies' Circles. They should attend the P.T.A. meetings, the parent-teacher conferences, and the programs given for their benefit, and visit the school whenever an occasion arises.

Finally, parents should be supportive of their school and their teachers – especially the teachers. They need parental encouragement.

FEATURE

Coincidentally, our feature article for this issue is written by Monica Lanting, who calls Mr. and Mrs. Engelsma Grandpa and Grandma. She's the recently married daughter of Lamm and Mary Beth Lubbers, who in turn have figured importantly in the life of our school in South Holland, Illinois. Monica wrote what follows, not as a "Perspectives" article, but as a paper for a college English course a year ago. She was attending Trinity College in Chicago at the time, having spent two years prior to that at Calvin College in Grand Rapids. She wrote an interesting paper on language development, and we're glad for her willingness to make it available for our use on these pages. (The reference to "Austin Dane" in her opening sentence, by the way, is to Dewey and Dena's first great-grandchild.)