children have with others; and the children must see this same loving kindness permeating all actions of the adults.

It is very difficult to rebuild a self-esteem that to some extent has been damaged by unthinking, careless, impatient, or even cruel remarks or treatment. Dobson offers some comprehensive strategies through which parents and teachers can cultivate or build self-esteem in every child. Some of these are:

1. Examining the values and the emotional climate in your own home to insure they are in harmony with God's Word.

2. Helping your child to compensate for weaknesses by providing avenues for recognition and development of strengths.

3. Disciplining without damaging self-esteem.

4. Preparing for adolescence.

5. A message for discouraged adults.

While following these suggestions, godly parents remain conscious of the sinful nature both of themselves and of their children. The fundamental sin of pride, which caused Satan to fall and which Adam and Eve passed on to the human race, must not be minimized or ignored. Every one of us wants to be number 1. If we succeed in being the top one, we are sure to boast of *our* achievements. If we are unsuccessful, we view the achiever with a jealous eye and are inclined to complain of our position in life. Both attitudes are sinful. We and our children must constantly be reminded that it is our Heavenly Father who gives to each of His children the abilities necessary to live and work to the honor and glory of the Giver. Boasting or complaining demeans God's gifts to us. A genuine faith in God and trust in His great love for us give hope and encouragement to us even though we are most unworthy. Our value to our Father in heaven is so great that He sent to earth His only begotten Son who willingly gave His life to redeem us.

This is the Christ who tells us that "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." How lovingly and kindly we would treat one another if that admonition of our Savior lived in our consciousness each moment of each day.

PARENTS' CORNER

Mr. Ophoff, in the article that follows, identifies himself as a tuition-paying parent and a former school board member. He

writes, however, more from the perspective of the latter, having just recently completed a three-year stint on the board of our Adams Street Christian School in Grand Rapids. During those years he served, at various times, as chairman of the Transportation Committee and of the Education Committee and as a member of the Building Committee. I suspect therefore that memories of 10 PM phone calls, from disgruntled parents, about misbehavior on the bus, or about the bus driver being too early and "going right on by," or about perceived injustices in the classroom, are all still fresh in his mind. And he remembers well what it felt like to advertise a work bee at school. . . and then find oneself part of a five-man work crew (building committee plus two) when the big day (which, regrettably, was usually the evening before the first day of school in September) arrived. For a man who takes the work seriously (and Ed was one who did), board membership involves a lot of hard, often frustrating, work. We're glad therefore to hear, in our parents' corner, from one who knows what it's all about.

Parental Involvement in Education

(or Who Runs our Schools, Anyway?)

Ed Ophoff, II

Several observations come to mind when, as a current tuition-paying parent and former board member, I think of the running of our schools. First of all, there is the matter of delegated authority. In an ideal world, all of us parents would like to oversee and supervise directly the teaching of our children. That is our right. In fact, it is our obligation in accordance with our baptismal vows. Unfortunately, however, the little matter of providing for a family and making a living gets in the way. Few of us have the time to do justice to two full-time obligations. Consequently, we band together as parents, form associations, elect boards, and start Christian schools. For many years, dedicated Christian parents have met their obligations and educated their children in that way in our Protestant Reformed Christian schools.

Sometimes, however, parents interfere with the elected board's operating the school within its guidelines. By challenging and

questioning day-to-day decisions of the board or the administrator they undermine the authority they delegated. Some suggestions to the board and/or objections to board decisions are in order, and they should be taken seriously. But discretion should be exercised, and proper channels followed to address grievances. Do not, for example, address to the board a problem concerning a teacher if you have not first talked to the teacher involved, and followed that, if unsatisfactory, by a conference with the principal. If contacting the board still becomes necessary, then a visit to a board meeting is usually the best way to handle the problem. A quick phone call to an individual board member will often be less than effective. In fact, it can even make a bad situation worse. In any event, do not call a board member late in the evening. No board member likes to get a 10:00 PM phone call about a problem that occurred during the day which, due to the lateness of the hour, he will be totally incapable of dealing with until the next morning. Unless the building is on fire, delay that call until the next day.

The other error some parents fall into is more common and more serious. It is that of apathy. Parents elect a board at an annual meeting, pay their tuition, and feel their obligations have been met. What often amazes me is that when personal problems involving the school arise, our schools are very definitely parent-run; but call for a work day to spruce up the grounds, and the attitude that then prevails is "that's what the board is for." Our parental responsibilities require that we make every effort to help when given that kind of an opportunity.

The schools which we are privileged to run should be very important to us, and all of us should be actively involved. If we are too busy to play an active role in our children's education, then we are too busy. Perhaps a rearrangement of priorities is in order. It is to our shame that P.T.A. meetings are sparsely attended, that annual society meetings draw perhaps 25% of the total membership, that fathers can find almost any excuse to refuse a board nomination. Is this school, which was set up by our fathers and grandfathers, really important to us?

In conclusion, we as parents should support our board and its decisions, use proper channels to alleviate grievances, and always keep in mind our collective goal — to educate our children in a Christian setting, distinctively Reformed.