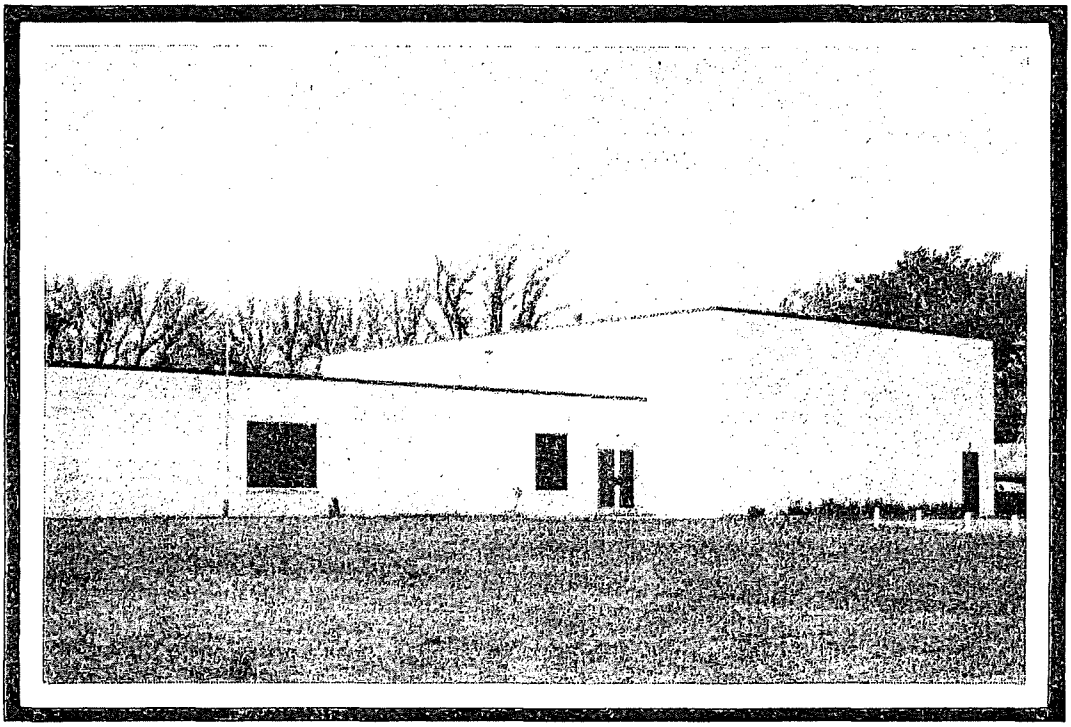
Perspectives

in Covenant Education

The entrance of thy WORDS giveth LIGHT: Psa. 119:130



WINTER, 1986

PERSPECTIVES IN COVENANT EDUCATION

VOLUME XI Winter, 1986 Number 2

Published tri-annually in the fall, winter, and spring by the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute.

Perspectives Staff:
Don Doezema
Fred Hanko
John Kalsbeek
Mary Beth Lubbers
Gary VanDer Schaaf

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:
Perspectives in Covenant Education is a journal regulated and published tri-annually, in October, February, and June by the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute. The purpose of this magazine, in most general terms, is to advance the cause of distinctively Christian education as it is conceived in the Protestant Reformed community. More specifically, the magazine is intended to serve as an encouragement and an inducement toward individual scholarship, and a medium for the development of distinctive principles and methods of teaching. The journal is meant to be a vehicle of communication: a vehicle of communication, not only within the profession, but within the Protestant Reformed community and within the Christian community in general.

EDITORIAL OFFICE
Don Doezema
1904 Plymouth Terrace S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Business Office
Prot. Ref. Teachers' Institute
c/o Adams Street Chr. School
1150 Adams St. S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Business Manager: Judi Doezema

EDITORIAL POLICY:
Perspectives in Covenant Education exists for the purpose of furthering the cause of Protestant Reformed Christian education. This principle therefore regulates the entire contents of the journal. *Perspectives in Covenant Education* will publish any article written by a teacher, parent, or friend of Protestant Reformed education, provided the article is in harmony with the stated purpose of the magazine. The journal will publish articles whether theoretical or practical. All manuscripts must be signed and all authors are solely responsible for the contents of their articles.

SUBSCRIPTION POLICY:
Subscription price: $4.95 per year ($6.00 per year outside the U.S. or Canada). Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order, and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Subscription Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

REPRINT POLICY:
Permission is hereby granted for the reprinting of articles in our magazine by other publications, provided that a) such reprinted articles are reproduced in full; b) proper acknowledgement is made; c) a copy of the periodical in which such reprint appears is sent to our editorial office.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SPECIAL FOCUS
Hull Protestant Reformed School 2

FEATURES
A Plea for Teachers to be. . . Teachers 6
Crumbs? or Sawdust? 12

PARENTS' CORNER
Home Computers 21

VIEWPOINTS
Home Education. . . No 24
Home Education. . . Yes 26

CURRENT ISSUES
One-Room Schools Make a Comeback 28
MTV – A Favorite in Public School Cafeteria 29

FROM THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE
School Band: An Enrichment of the Curriculum 30

BULLETIN BOARD 33

SPECIAL FOCUS

Pictured on the front cover of this issue of Perspectives *is our Hull Protestant Reformed Christian School. We did that because Hull celebrates an anniversary this year. To those of our schools which have been in existence since the 40's or 50's, ten years might not seem like much. But the fact that Hull is one of our younger schools does not at all detract from the significance of its 10th anniversary. The families of our Hull School do well at such a time, not only to think upon, but also to take public notice of God's continued faithfulness to them. It is* God, *after all, Who gives to His people children of His covenant, and Who provides the means for establishing and maintaining institutions of learning where those children might be instructed in the fear of His name. We rejoice therefore with Hull in their commemoration of that great faithfulness of our God.*

Ron Koole, principal in Hull School since 1980, reflects briefly here on this milestone. For the occasion, his wife Sherry wrote a poem entitled, appropriately, "Thanks Be To God." She speaks as a mother, and as one who is properly impressed by the great wonder of receiving and rearing God's little children. Few people, I suppose, are able to articulate it the way Sherry does in poetry, but the verses will strike responsive chords in the hearts of all those who are similarly overwhelmed by so great a gift and responsibility. We're happy therefore to include her poem in our "Special Focus."

The family picture includes Ron and Sherry, of course, and children (from left to right) Daryl, Joel, Rhonda, and Kristin.

Hull Prot. Ref. School

The 1985-'86 school year marks the 10th year of covenant instruction in our Hull (Iowa) Protestant Reformed Christian School. In the fall of 1976 our doors were opened to three staff members and 48 students in grades Kindergarten through eight.

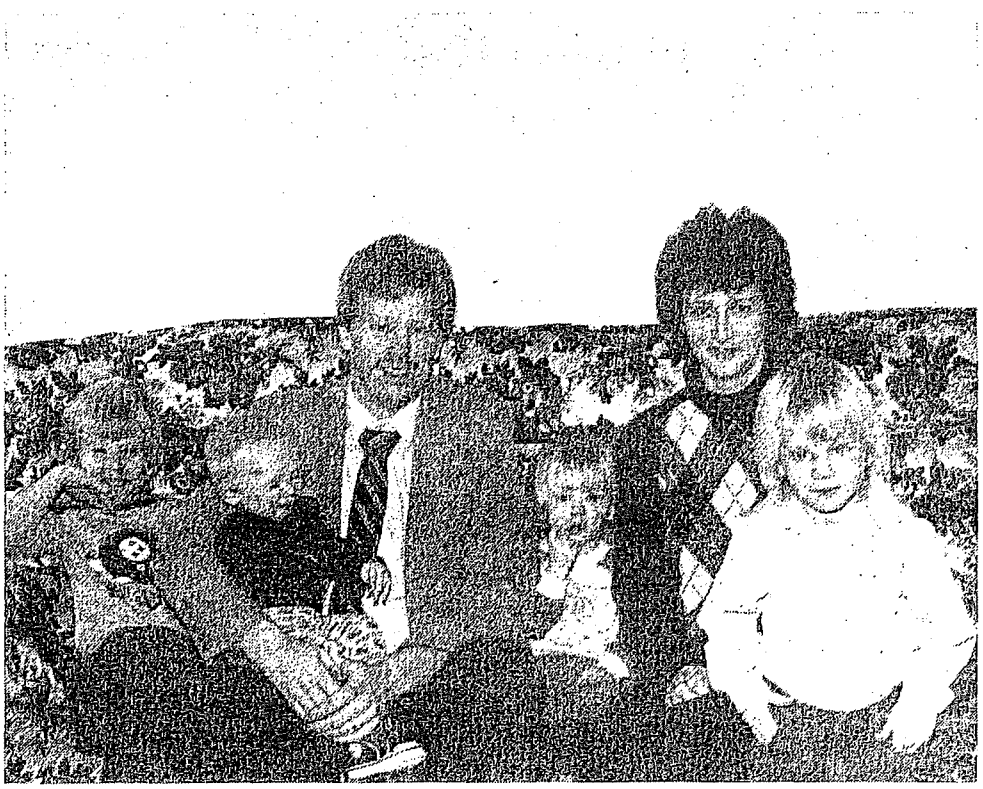
The history of our school really began with the formation of our school society in June of 1973. The following year the society purchased a six-acre plot of land on the west edge of Hull – actually in a suburb of Hull at the time, known as Highland Park. In the spring of

1976 the construction of our four-classroom school began. The school year began before the completion of construction, and dedication was not until October of that year.

It might be a temptation to look at facilities and numerical student growth (61) and boast of what has been accomplished in ten years. But the thoughts of the child of God, at the times of anniversaries and milestones, are drawn away from self. Our attention is focused on the faithfulness of God. "O magnify the Lord with me, Let us exalt His Name; Yea, blest the man that trusts in Him, Confiding in His grace" were just a few of the words sung at the dedication, as they have been our experience over the past years. What a privilege of God's grace it is to be able daily to teach our children of the sovereignty of God in salvation, the providence of God in history, and the handiwork of God in creation.

To celebrate this anniversary the school's Ladies' Guild sponsored a fall singspiration and is presently planning a Hostess Supper and program. May we ever be thankful for God's faithfulness in times past and pray for His blessing and grace for the future even as He realizes His covenant with believers and their seed.

Ron Koole



Thanks Be To God

Sherry Koole

Thanks be to God enthroned above
For all the blessings of His love;
For all we have and all we own
Are gifts from God and God alone.

His is the land we sow and reap
He owns the sea and oceans deep.
Our God determines life and death
He is the Giver of each breath.

The children that we call our own
(For it's we who raise them till they're grown),
Are gifts from God enthroned above
Ours for a time to raise and love.

Thanks be to God for gifts so rare
For as He puts them in our care,
He commands of us to raise these youth
To walk and live the way of truth.

This really is an awesome task
And in our prayers we must ask
That God will lead us in the way
To raise these youth from day to day.

Their daily instruction is one we share
With preachers and teachers who also care.
The teacher is used as a daily tool
To instruct our children while they are in school.

Thanks be to God for the gift we have here
Of our own private school and one we hold dear.
As we start our 10th year let us make it our prayer
That our children will grow in the Truth they learn there.

Thanks be to God for the teachers of Truth
Who daily instruct our precious youth,
Who teach them God's Word throughout all of the day
In all that they do and in all that they say.

In the home, in the church, and also the schools
Parents, preachers, and teachers are used as God's tools.
Let us all work together with dedication and love
And we'll all share a joy worth speaking of.

To know that our children are walking in truth
That they heeded instruction from days of their youth.
O what greater joy could there possibly be
Than knowing our children are walking uprightly?

Tell me, what in this life could ever compare
To the gifts and the joy we in fellowship share?
But for all that we have and all that we own
Let the thanks be to God and to God alone.

FEATURES

The first of our two feature articles was written by Russ Dykstra, a senior in the Protestant Reformed Seminary. His plea for "teachers to be teachers" concerns his long-held conviction that the nature of the teaching profession is such that it requires full-time *effort on the part of those who are called to it; that teachers therefore ought not to be gainfully employed in any part-time job during the school year; and that schools should see to it that teachers do not* have *to "moonlight" in order to be able to provide for themselves and their families. The fact that he speaks as one who was himself not only a teacher, but a teacher who had to* raise a family *on a teacher's salary, makes his arguments all the more compelling. He knows from personal experience the hard work and long hours required in striving for excellence in teaching. He wrote the article, by the way, between 11:00 one night and 5:00 the next morning. It must be that seminary students are not unaccustomed to that*

kind of effort, for the late hours had no apparent effect on his lucidity (though we don't know how he fared in New Testament Exegesis the next day). Anyway, we thank him for this thought-provoking essay.

A Plea for Teachers to be. . . Teachers

Russ Dykstra

The work of teaching covenant children is truly a great work. This is evident, first of all, from the point of view of its importance. How many times does not Scripture admonish parents to train up, to nurture, to teach their children – or rather, the children God has given them for a short time? And that awesome responsibility teachers take upon themselves when they agree to stand in the classroom in the place of parents. But teaching is no less a great work considered from the viewpoint of the tremendous difficulty involved in teaching, both intellectually and spiritually. Every Christian teacher knows that his is an impossible work apart from God's grace. And it is that greatness of the work of teaching which prompts me to make this plea that teachers be teachers, that is, that teachers not labor in outside work, especially during the school year, but devote themselves to teaching, the work to which they are convinced God has called them.

The vocation of teacher (and this refers to the Christian school teacher throughout the article) is a special calling. In a sense, of course, any job is a calling from God, to labor in His service. God is sovereign, controlling every part of our existence, and He leads each of us to his own particular calling and place in this life. Each of us confesses with the psalmist, ". . . in Thy thought my life in all its perfect plan was ordered ere my days began" (*Psalter,* 383 from Psalm 139). In any occupation to which God leads us, and indeed in all our life, the Scriptures teach that we are to labor in God's service, doing "all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17).

Although all that is true, we nevertheless maintain that teaching is a *special* calling. In fact, the vocation of teaching has much in common with that of preaching. It is not exactly the same, of course, for the minister is called officially by God through the church to stand as the am-

bassador of Christ and to speak His Word authoritatively, and no teacher claims this is true of him. But notice that teachers, like ministers, have lives of service to God which make them servants of God's people. They serve God by directly serving God's people. Notice, too, that teachers are born and not made. A good teacher is really "a natural," and education and training only serve to refine and develop his God-given abilities. On the other hand, no amount of training or schooling can make a non-teacher into an effective teacher; the necessary talents and the desire are gifts of God. Also, we must not overlook the special place which teachers have in the life of the church. Their work is of primary importance in the development of the covenant seed. Think of the influence teachers exert in such areas as the children's spiritual development, their world and life view, and their goals in life. It is no wonder that the Reformed fathers included article 21 in the church order concerning "good Christian Schools." And the article originally required consistories to see to it that there were "good schoolmasters" to instruct the children (adopted 1786, Synod of Den Haag). Good, Reformed teachers are crucial for the church.

Having pointed out all those special aspects of the vocation, we have not arrived at the heart of the teacher's special calling. The heart of that calling is that the teacher stands in the place of the parents (as was noted in the initial paragraph), and in so doing helps the parents fulfill the direct command of God. Do you see the specialness of teaching, then? God does not command His church to have in its membership carpenters, factory workers, doctors, office workers, or painters (and this is not to denegrate their value). But God *does* command parents to teach their children; and what each parent is unable to do, he asks the teacher to do *as in his place.* The teacher helps the parent "train up a child in the way he should go. . ." (Prov. 22:6). The teacher helps fulfill the command given to Israel recorded in Deuteronomy 6:7 — "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." This duty is not removed from the parents — they have the final responsibility. But the teacher agrees to share in it, and in the place of the parent, to bring up these children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

Thus the work of the teacher is a Divinely enjoined work. Teachers labor with the heritage

of Jehovah, the children of the covenant, the future adult church. This is clearly God's work, i.e., work commanded by Him and for the direct benefit of God's cause and kingdom. That is why teaching is a special calling. And it ought to be obvious to all that such a high calling demands tremendous dedication, hard work, and all the time teachers are able to give.

But there is a complicating factor in the work of teaching today, namely, the evil days in which we live. The explosion in the development of sin not only makes the work of the teacher more important than ever before, it also makes his labors more difficult. I doubt that any experienced teacher would disagree with the statement that it is more difficult to teach today than it was 20 years ago. By "teach" we refer not to the work load, but to developing spiritual character, teaching the proper world and life view, and helping students set proper goals in and through the daily instruction. For the covenant child is exposed to so much more anti-christian influence today, and the most ungodly acts, words, and opinions are brought right into his home via the television. And this situation will not improve, but will almost certainly continue to worsen. We repeat: This makes the work of the teacher increasingly more important and difficult.

The conclusion which may be legitimately drawn from all of the above is that the high calling of the teacher demands diligence, excellence, and much time from the teacher, and that demand is accentuated by the evil days which we face. I submit, therefore, that it is inconsistent with the above for a teacher to work outside of school. This work does not refer to work in the church, e.g., as elder or deacon (which is also clearly *God's* calling). Nor does this refer to coaching, which is itself a form of teaching. Rather this refers to gainful employment one or two (or more?) nights a week or on weekends. I submit, secondly, that it is also inconsistent for a school to ask or allow, as the case may be, one person to hold the two high and difficult callings of full-time mother (is it possible to be a part-time mother?) and full-time teacher. These situations, I maintain, are not consistent with the high calling of the teacher, with the demand of time for preparation and development, or with the difficulty of rearing children in this age.

I wish to pause here to dispel any fears or misconceptions concerning this article. Some readers may be surmising that this is an attack upon teachers; and perhaps even some teachers feel this is a

personal attack upon them. I suppose that the nature of the article makes that thought at least understandable, because there is an implied "If the shoe fits, wear it." But please notice three things in this connection. First of all, this is not a personal attack on anyone. I have deepest respect and Christian love for the teachers in our schools, and I appreciate the instruction they give. They often labor in difficult circumstances and without great parental enthusiasm or support. Secondly, this article, as will become evident, is not addressed solely to teachers, but to administrators, school boards, and parents as well. And finally, the purpose of the article is not to attack teachers, but to promote the welfare of our teachers and our schools.

To illustrate the inconsistency of teachers working other jobs, let us examine the possibility of persons from other professions working second jobs. Consider the field of medicine. Would we not be upset if our doctor was not knowledgeable about the latest medical developments, because he worked a second job? Or consider the ministry. We would certainly be furious if our minister worked a second job. We rightfully expect him to devote himself entirely to his work, to his special calling. Is it different with teachers? Notice that doctors and ministers have this in common: they must always be growing and developing in their respective "fields."

That common element is found also in teaching. As soon as the teacher stops studying, stops reworking lessons and reformulating ideas, he becomes stale. The teaching becomes lifeless, a mere repetition of old lessons. This can continue for a while, and, if one has been given a good intellect, for quite a long while. We may be able to fool the students (though not as well or as long as we think); we can perhaps cover up enough to impress a visitor from the school board, and, to a lesser degree, the observing principal. But there are two whom we cannot fool at all. We cannot fool ourselves; every teacher knows when his work is less than it ought to be. And we cannot fool God. God calls us as teachers to excellence; He demands wholehearted service. Therefore each teacher ought to be dedicating himself to education as much as possible, not to education *and* another occupation.

In spite of all that has been pointed out, some might argue that working a second job is beneficial for the teacher because it gives him a diversion, some time for relaxation. The other job perhaps provides more physical and less mental work, and is, therefore, good for the teacher. There is an element of truth to

that argument. I confess that one autumn during my teaching days in Iowa I worked for a farmer on Saturdays. I found the work relaxing, and I thoroughly enjoyed the diversion from the mental strain of teaching. But I soon realized that the work was stealing precious study time from me. I concluded that it was wrong, and had to stop. Work, or any other activity used for diversion, must be extremely flexible, so that the teacher is able to neglect it for months, if need be, when he is too busy with school work. Any regularly scheduled second job will take away from the teacher's time needed for development, if not for daily preparation.

Others may argue that the second job is necessary for financial reasons. In other words, teachers are simply not paid enough; they must work to "make ends meet." Now in many instances (though not in all) I find this difficult to believe for two reasons. The first cause of doubt is found in my own experience at "making ends meet." In the four years of my teaching I was paid well under the salary guidelines set by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Schools, and we lived comfortably. We were not rich or getting rich, but that was not our goal anyway. The second cause for doubt is that many of our teachers with large families have not resorted to working second jobs (except in the summer, though some have driven school buses, certainly a less than ideal activity for a teacher). I realize that these same families did not have an easy road financially; too many of our teachers have struggled and continue to do so today. The fact remains, however, that many have not taken on extra work during the school year.

That brings me to my second point concerning teachers' salaries. I believe that as teachers we ought to be willing to sacrifice for the privilege of teaching the children of God's covenant. Teaching is not merely something *we* decided to do; it is *God's calling* for us. And teaching *is* a privilege. Not because it is an easy 9-to-3, five-day-a-week, nine-month job; to the contrary, the work is so demanding that few parents desire to trade vocations with the teacher. But it is a privilege because teachers are directly serving God and the cause of His kingdom, and are working with the heritage of Jehovah. Next to the eternal reward that God has in store for the faithful teacher, the sacrifices he makes are small indeed.

Finally in this regard, teachers who moonlight for the sake of money run the risk of contradicting their teaching with their walk of life. As teachers we decry

the materialism we see in students at an early age and we strenuously oppose this wrong attitude. If we are busy after school making extra money, are not our actions speaking louder than our words?

But, where it is true that teachers are not paid enough to meet their needs, there is only one thing to say – Shame on us parents! We have the responsibility before God as Christian employers to provide for the needs of our teachers. It is as simple as that. Now, I can almost hear the groan from the throats of hundreds of parents who are already paying thousands of dollars in tuition. But my answer to that groan is twofold. In the first place, why shouldn't we pay teachers enough? We are willing to pay a high price for so many other things. Think of what we will pay a good doctor to care for our children (yes, we grumble, but we pay). Why not so with teachers, in whose hands we place the nurturing of our covenant children for seven hours a day? In the second place, we must be willing to sacrifice too (although the word "sacrifice" really is not appropriate when we consider the fact that all that we have is not ours, but God's, and a relatively small part of our money goes to the church and school). We must be sure that the financial squeeze is not the result of our over-extending ourselves in the pursuit of earthly goods or pleasures. But I am confident that when all the believers seek first the kingdom of God, the money will be there, if not from each individual family, then from the whole of the church. We must strive to pay our teachers as much as we can.

And certainly this is desirable. As parents, do we want mediocre teachers who are ill prepared, using old materials year after year, grading papers and tests weeks after students hand them in? Then we need only to remunerate our teachers insufficiently, and we will have many on our staffs (though not all!) just like that. But if, in accordance with God's command, we want the best available training for our children, i.e., dedicated teachers, who are well informed, well prepared, and diligently fulfilling their calling, then we must pay them enough, being sure that we more than meet each teacher's needs. And then we must insist that our teachers be teachers.

It is that challenge with which this article concludes. The challenge, to teachers, but also to our school boards, parents, and all who support covenant Christian education, is that our teachers be entirely devoted to their God-given calling to teach, without the need or the desire for outside work. Let us strive for this. Certainly we all desire our

teachers to develop and grow. Many have pursued and obtained higher degrees which most, if not all, our school boards also encourage and reward. This must continue. But development is more than obtaining degrees. Development results from hard daily work; it comes from time consuming, dedicated study and restudy of our material in the light of God's Word. The work is admittedly difficult, but the way of faithfulness to God's calling and admonitions will also result in His richest blessing upon our teachers and our covenant schools.

Our second feature article comes from what was a chapel speech delivered by Cal Kalsbeek at Covenant Christian High School about a year ago. A couple of friends of Perspectives *suggested that we ask him for his manuscript. They did that because the speech had dealt, in an effective way, with some of the things which constitute real temptations for young people in the church of Christ today, and which therefore are of vital concern to our parents (many of whom, we trust, are becoming* Perspectives *readers). What Mr. Kalsbeek did was to challenge the students to ask themselves what it really was on which their minds and spirits were feeding. We print his speech in the hope that it will serve a dual purpose, namely, to be informative in itself, and also to demonstrate something of what our schools try to accomplish with respect to instruction in values. Here it is:*

Crumbs? or Sawdust?

Cal Kalsbeek

The title I've chosen for my chapel speech this morning is "Crumbs? or Sawdust?" Let me first explain what I mean by those terms. You may have heard the story about the farmer who was talking one day to a visiting neighbor about a prize horse that they were looking at in his pasture. The farmer had many good things to say about how well the horse worked in the field, but he had one major complaint: the horse ate too much. The farmer went on to explain how he was correcting the horse's appetite problem by supplementing the horse's daily diet with sawdust. It seems that each day the farmer would add more sawdust and at the same time give him less grain. He bragged about how well his new feeding program was working, and how the horse

seemed oblivious to the change in his diet. About a month later the neighboring farmer observed that the pasture where the farmer kept his prize horse was empty and asked about it. The farmer replied, "The new feeding program was working fine, but just when I had him on a total sawdust diet the dumb thing keeled over and died."

Now for the "crumbs." I think the best way for me to explain what I mean by this term is to read Matthew 15 verses 21-28:

> Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: Yet the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

It's not my intent this morning to explain this passage in detail. Rather I would have you focus your attention on the crumbs that are mentioned. Obviously the woman is not concerned here with physical crumbs of bread. Her concern is for the spiritual food which the Jews had, but which was not available to the Gentiles. So each time in the course of this speech that I mention "crumbs" remember that I refer to this good, wholesome, spiritual food which this woman so greatly desired.

Now that you have an idea of what I mean by sawdust and crumbs, I must put a question to you: What are you eating these days, sawdust or crumbs? And what about me, what am I eating? And what am I feeding my children? A few weeks ago, as you know, the Lord gave my wife and me our eighth child, Heidi Jean. God has entrusted her to our care, to feed and nourish both physically and spiritually. God's word concerning this feeding is that we may not give her just anything. Rather, He gives us His Diet Book, the Scriptures. There we have His perfect menu given in the minutest detail, a menu which we must follow without question. I'm tempted to respond in despair, "But, but. . . what if. . . ?" Or I'm tempted to rebel and say, "But God, You've put me into an impossible position! Can my Heidi be expected

to eat and live according to this Diet Book when there are so many things in this wicked world that seem so much more attractive? And what will this world be like 15 or 20 years from now if the Lord tarry? When I was in high school things were pretty tame compared to today. And what will the next 20 years bring? Does my Heidi Jean stand a chance? Is it even remotely possible that she will seek the Crumbs from the Master's table when the world in which she lives makes the sawdust so attractive?"

God gives an answer to those questions when He says in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." That's it! That's the key! We must give her a steady diet of those crumbs so that she will develop an appetite for them. And then we must go forward in the confidence of God's promise.

For you, young people, that steady diet of crumbs has been fed you by your parents for many years. You are at the stage in your life now that you must pick up the spoon and feed yourself. You prefer that anyway, don't you? But what is it that you are feeding yourself – crumbs? or sawdust? In the rest of this speech I will direct your attention to four specific areas of diet, and in each case you will be required to answer for yourself whether it qualifies as crumbs or sawdust.

First, I would like to spend a little time with our diet of alcoholic beverages. Great is the concern of your parents, this school, your church, and even the State of Michigan with the use of alcohol by young people. Recently Miss Lubbers gave me this red folder which was sent to us by the State of Michigan. Let me expose you to some of the enclosed material. The cover letter reveals that the purpose of this packet is to inform our young people concerning the dangers of drinking and driving. Let me read some of what is found in a section called, "Talking to Your Teenager about Drinking and Driving." (At this point in his speech, Mr. Kalsbeek quoted rather extensively from the above-mentioned publication, citing grim statistics relating to the sometimes fatal consequences of alcohol consumption. We will not reproduce all of that here. [ed.])

We as Reformed Christians might prefer to emphasize that it is against the law for teenagers to drink alcoholic beverages, rather than emphasize as this material does, the *fear* of the results of drinking. At any rate you should be aware of the facts presented, if you are not already.

Enclosed in the materials from the State of Michigan was this bumper sticker. It says: "A Lot of Teens are Dying for a Drink." Will

my Heidi Jean be one of those? Will you? If you had to label alcohol one or the other, what would you call it, sawdust? or crumbs from the Master's table?

A second area of diet that I will address this morning is the area of drugs. The Michigan Substance Abuse Information Center has compiled the following facts about teenagers and drug abuse:

* Nearly two-thirds (62%) of all American young people use an illicit drug at least once before they finish high school, and 40% have used drugs other than marijuana.
* Approximately 2.4 million young people, age 12-15, have used marijuana at some time during their lives; 770,000 of these young people have used marijuana in the past month; 1.8 million have used marijuana in the last year.
* At least one out of every 20 high school seniors smokes marijuana on a daily basis.
* Current use of cocaine among seniors was 6% in 1984.

Now I'm sure that those percentages do not accurately reflect the number of Covenant students that have been, or are currently, involved in drugs, but there are students here that fit into most, if not all, the categories mentioned.

In this connection the March, 1985 issue of *Discover* magazine had some startling things to say in an article titled "Coke: The Random Killer." Allow me to read some excerpts from that article:

* Cocaine is one of the most dangerous drugs on the underground market. It's physically debilitating, whether you snort it, swallow it, inject it, or smoke it.
* For the casual user... the most frightening finding to emerge from the last decade of scrutiny is this: taken in any form, and at any dose from 60 milligrams – about two lines – on up cocaine can be fatal.
* The deaths to date have been totally random. We have no way of predicting who'll die from the drug and who won't. It could be a regular user or it could be a first-time user. Some people die after a small dose, and some after massive doses. It depends on their tolerance.
* In addition, there are an astonishing number of cocaine-related deaths in which the drug isn't the direct cause. Fatal motor vehicle accidents are common....
* Our statistics show that by the end of this year one out of five high school students will have tried cocaine before graduation, and ten per cent of suburban high school students will be regular users.
* The evidence is everywhere and people have to relearn it: cocaine isn't the champagne of drugs. Cocaine kills.

Some time ago I had contact with a former Covenant student who had been a user of cocaine. From his personal experience he testified of its horrible influence. According to him the drug could make the user believe that he had unlimited power. No wonder we read in the newspapers from time to time about young people on drugs who leap from buildings to their deaths. Will my Heidi Jean be one of those? Will you? And if you had to call drugs one or the other, what would it be, crumbs? or sawdust?

Alcohol and drugs are, of course, items of a very physical nature. For them to do a person harm one must in some way assimilate them into his blood stream. The next two areas of diet that I want to address might be termed mental food. A recent writer to the "Public Pulse" column of *The Grand Rapids Press* wrote something that applies here, I think:

> It is always amazing that people who are careful that babies' bottles are sterilized, that their food is pure, the air unpolluted, and their seatbelts are fastened, – in short, that their child's physical health is protected – are completely unconcerned about the health of children's minds. They allow all kinds of uncleanliness to enter children's minds via television, movies, comic books, and even school.
>
> . . . I would like to make a plea for purity in the mental diet of young people. . . . What is more important to a human being: his body, which lasts a few decades and returns to the ground, or his soul, which lives forever?

For our first area of mental diet as so labeled by the author of that article, let's examine two of the examples mentioned: television and movies. I've been told that about 80% of our young people regularly attend movies. How accurate this figure is only the Lord knows. Nevertheless, you and I both know that a goodly number of you do regularly attend movies. Now I don't expect anyone here to change his viewing habits as a result of what I have to say about it this morning, but I do expect you to be informed.

Allow me to ask a question. What movies have you seen lately? You need not raise your hands, but let me read through some of the movie titles that are currently showing in the Grand Rapids area. Have you seen: "Beverly Hills Cop"? "Choose Me"? "Code of Silence"? "Desperately Seeking Susan"? "The Gods Must Be Crazy"? "Gotcha"? "Just One For the Guys"? "Lust in the Dust"? "Rappin' "? "Rustler's Rhapsody"? "Sticky"? "Witness"?

I need not tell you what your parents, teachers, and ministers think

about the viewing of movies and much of the current television programming. You know what they think, but do you know what people of the world are now saying about it? In a *U.S. News & World Report* article titled, "Why Children's TV Turns Off So Many Parents," we find some rather startling statistics. They report that ". . . the average child between 2 and 11 watched a record 27 hours and 21 minutes a week. . . compared with 23 hours and 18 minutes a decade ago." The article goes on to report that ". . . violent acts on television . . . increased 65 percent in the last four years. The group counted 46 acts of violence an hour on NBC's 'The A Team.' " In this same vein a recent article in *The Grand Rapids Press* under the title "Violence of Television" also had some interesting things to say. Allow me to read a few paragraphs:

> Some observers believe that as a result of more than three decades of television, viewers have developed a kind of immunity to the horror of violence.
>
> By the age of 16, for example, the average young person will have seen 18,000 murders on television. One extension of this phenomenon may be an appetite for more varied kinds of violence on TV. . . .

So what? You've heard similar stuff before. Does it really make any difference? Does what you see on TV have an effect on you? More and more studies show that it does indeed make a difference. Concerning this the article "Why Children's TV Turns Off So Many Parents" informs us: "A new study, by the Task Force on Children and Television of the American Academy of Pediatrics, says TV contributes not only to violence but also to a high rate of drug and alcohol abuse and encourages smoking and obesity. The report pinpoints advertising on children's programs and prime-time broadcasts as major influences." Further, the article "Violence on Television" reports, "Only last September, the Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence concluded that 'the evidence is becoming overwhelming that just as witnessing violence in the home may contribute to normal adults and children learning and acting out violent behavior, violence on TV and movies may lead to the same result.' " Later in the article another study is mentioned which concluded that there is "a link between televised violence and real-life violence."

. . . What about my daughter, Heidi Jean? What effect will TV and movies have on her? Do you think God will be pleased if I give her a steady diet of this kind of food? If you had to classify it as one or the other, what would you call it, crumbs or sawdust? And what about

you? Even the world admits that TV has a detrimental effect on those who watch it. You're only fooling yourself if you think that you escape unscathed! Could it be that you're on a sawdust diet and are just as oblivious to it as the farmer's horse?

The final item of diet that I will address this morning is that of the popular music of the day. Have patience with me as I expose you to what a number of people have written in recent weeks about it. I quote the following from an article in *Human Events* magazine:

> The other day I was sitting at my desk paying the bills and tapping my foot to a pleasant little tune by Melissa Manchester called "Nice Girls Do" when I suddenly realized that what "nice girls do" is have sex if it's with the right guy in "the right situation." Well, as you can imagine, my ears perked right up at that. You should perk your ears up, too.
>
> Tune in to a popular music station for a few hours and listen carefully to the words you hear. Perhaps you'll hear Olivia-Newton-John telling you to "get physical" and communicate "horizontally." Perhaps you'll hear Billy Joel singing a catchy little ditty about how Catholic girls are oppressed by the Catholic obsession with chastity. Perhaps. . . a duet with Barbara Streisand that urges women to leave their husbands when they get bored with them.

Newsweek recently published some articles on rock music. Kandy Stroud wrote an article titled "Stop Pornographic Rock" in which she demonstrates, by quoting some of the lyrics, how ghastly much of it is. She clearly shows that "Tasteless, graphic and gratuitously sexual songs saturate the airwaves. . . ." Do they find ready access into our homes and cars? An equally shocking article found in *Newsweek* is "Rock's Mystery Prince." This article calls Michael Jackson, "A well-publicized bundle of contradictions, who flaunts slapstick pornography onstage and praises God in the same show." I'll refer to these articles again a little later, but right now let me challenge you to look them up and read them if you haven't already. If you are at all spiritually sensitive, those articles will nauseate you. If you read them and are not nauseated, I suggest that you do some very serious self-examination – especially concerning what you are listening to, and the impact that it is having on you.

Well, now that I brought it up, do you think the music one listens to has an impact on listeners? Does it *really* make a difference? The evidence that it does indeed have a tremendous impact is overwhelming. A few quotes from the above-mentioned *Newsweek* articles will serve to illustrate this:

> * . . . rock is turning sex into something casual. It's as if society is encouraging its youngsters to get sexually involved.
> * It would be a mistake to think that Prince's religious message isn't hitting home. A friend recently found his teenage daughter in the bedroom playing the album "Purple Rain" backward, like her pals at high school, in order to hear the secretive coded message Prince had left there. She was shaken to hear Prince, say, "Hello, how are you? I'm fine, cause I know that the Lord is coming soon, coming, coming soon."
> * Another friend reports that her adolescent son will not listen to Prince because he is upset by the cultlike fervor with which classmates recite the lyrics.

Also in connection with the impact of rock music, I recently read about a scientific study that was done to determine what impact music has on plants. Although I have no way of knowing how valid the results of that study are, the findings were rather interesting. I'll read those results as described on page 118 of David A. Nobel's book, *The Marxist Minstrels:*

> One unusual standard of musical competence and taste might well turn out to be the family plant. In a series of experiments in which potted plants were exposed to everything from Bach and Beethoven to hard rock groups the results were predictable. "What acid rock did to the petunias shouldn't happen to our teenagers," was the conclusion!
>
> The article entitled "Music that Kills Plants" begins, "For nearly two years now, Mrs. Dorothy Retallack of Denver has been killing off assorted potted plants by making them listen to rock music."
>
> In her series of experiments, Mrs. Retallack discovered that just three hours of acid rock a day shrivels young squash plants and flattens philodendron and crumbles corn in less than a month. Wonders Mrs. Retallack: If the sound of rock does that to plants, what is it doing to our teenagers? "Could the discordant sounds we hear these days," states Mrs. Retallack, "be the reason humanity is growing neurotic?"

Well, what do you think? Does rock music have that same effect on people? Maybe even on you? Probably not? How do you know? In another place in the book *The Marxist Minstrels* a case is made for the brainwashing effect of rock music. Is that within the realm of possibility? Whether or not that is true may be in question, but there is no question that the rock performers themselves believe that their music has an impact on those who listen. A book I have here, *They're Out to Steal Your Children,* that was written by Ray Allen quotes rock per-

former, David Crosby as saying in the Rock Star Rolling Stone Interviews: "I figured the only thing to do was to swipe their kids. . . . By saying that, I'm not talking about kidnapping, I'm just talking about changing their value systems, which removes them from their parent's world very effectively." This book is replete with other examples of the impact which rock performers believe they have on their unsuspecting audience.

I ask you again, do you think you are immune to the effects which rock music has on others, and the intended effects of the authors? And what about my Heidi Jean? Will God be pleased if I expose her to the world's music, or do less than everything possible to keep her from listening to it? If you had to classify rock music as one or the other, what would it be: Sawdust, or crumbs from the Master's table?

We've come a long way together this morning. With regard to the items of diet that we have discussed, I wonder if it's possible that these words of wisdom from an unknown author are true? "Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character."

Maybe you say, "Give us a break! Everyone is doing those things. And besides we gotta have some fun." If that's your attitude, what Charles Spurgeon writes is just for you:

> "But Sir, you are too strict!"
>
> Will you say that when the eyes of the Almighty are glowering on you? "Sir, you are too precise." Will you say that to God Almighty's face? Can you say that at the judgment bar of God at the last day? You will not dare to do it then. Ah! When Christ comes a second time there will be a marvellous change in the way men talk. Caiaphas, come and condemn Him now! Judas, will you kiss Him now? Barabbas, see if the people prefer you to Christ now!
>
> Swearer, you have been a bold man; curse Him to His face now. Drunkard, stagger up to Him now. Infidel, now tell Him there is no Christ, tell God there is no God. Laugh at the Bible; smirk at the minister.
>
> What is the matter? Why can't you do it? Because you have fled to the rocks and to the hills crying, "Rocks, hide us! Mountains fall on us; hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne."

So, there you have it! Just what *are* you eating these days? Sawdust? If you are, be warned! The farmer's horse didn't know it was doing him harm, but you do! Or do you taste of the crumbs from the Master's table: the bread of life? That will more than suffice for my Heidi Jean. . . and for you. □■□

PARENTS' CORNER

Jack Feenstra is a man whose work requires some knowledge of computers. In addition, he is the father of three grade-school children (Heritage Christian School) who enjoy putting their home computer to a variety of uses. We asked Mr. Feenstra therefore to write a short article explaining why it might be advantageous for parents to invest in a computer for the home. To the question, "Should I, or shouldn't I?" Mr. Feenstra answers "Yes, if." For an explanation of that, read on.

Home Computers

Jack Feenstra

Computers are one of the most fascinating inventions of mankind in recent years. The vast majority of the population do not understand computers, and to them a wall of mystery shrouds this invention. Nevertheless, it is of widespread usefulness to man.

Many people imagine that the computer can think by itself; however, it cannot. It cannot learn by itself, nor is it self-sufficient. It can only do what man programs it to do. It is but a machine. It cannot function on its own, any more than an automobile or a typewriter can. It can only retrieve information stored within its memory. Herein lies its powerful usefulness. The vast amount of information that can be stored and recalled varies with computer models and computer attachments. The blinding speed at which stored information can be recalled is mind-staggering.

The computer and its attachments are referred to as hardware. Any programs, usually stored on a disk or magnetic tape, are referred to as software. Programs, very simply put, are special instructions for a computer to perform certain tasks with its stored information or with information the user gives to the computer while using that program. Specialized programs are available by the thousands. These programs range from those that are work-related, to fun type games, to educational teaching aids. Using a purchased program not only saves the computer-user time, but it also makes operating the computer very easy.

Computers are all around us. Their use in industry today ranges from the small shop, to giant corporations, even to our local grocery stores. All of these de-

pend on the computer for their everyday activities. Our children will be more dependent on and involved with computers than we can even imagine today. For this reason nearly every school has one or more computers for its students to learn on, to play with, and to become familiar with. Nearly every student in our schools in Grand Rapids from the fifth grade through high school has had time with a computer. It is amazing how rapidly they can learn to operate a computer and run their favorite program. Their acceptance of the computer is quite natural. To them, the computer is as commonplace as a typewriter is to most adults.

Many parents have asked teachers about the benefits of having a computer at home for their children. Will it help their son or daughter in their school years or in preparing them for further studies or for their life in the labor force? The answer to this is YES – IF. An affirmative answer, in other words, is qualified by whether or not their son or daughter has a strong interest in computers. Learning to use a computer takes time and a strong desire to learn to use it. The machine does not work as does a radio or a television by merely turning it on for entertainment. Time and effort are required to learn the necessary skills to run a computer. Continued use of the computer is needed to maintain these skills.

The home computer can be a good investment for a family. It is a fact that most occupations will require some understanding of computers in the very near future. Currently, many high schools and colleges require their students to take a minimum of one computer course to meet graduation requirements. Many college courses cannot be completed without the use of a computer for calculations and problem-solving assignments. Students also find the computers extremely helpful in report writing and printing. Programs called Word Processing allow reports to be written on the computer and stored in its memory or on a disk. The report can be put aside and restarted very easily with the computer. The program allows spelling corrections, sentence or paragraph restructuring, and text additions to be made very easily. At the completion of the report, the whole report can be printed by the computer on a printer, error free.

The computer can be used as a learning tool at home for the student. Many programs are available on virtually every subject. For the young student, excellent programs were written to help them understand basic math principles. Programs to challenge and teach students the

multiplication tables are also very fun to use. As students move into higher grades they can utilize programs for advanced math, for English, for science, and for nearly every other subject. These programs make learning at home easier and enjoyable. What a difference in learning the multiplication tables or English rules if you play a timed game on the computer! The game involves more of the senses and eliminates the difficult, boring memorization of raw facts.

Home computers can be a very educational tool and fun to use. We need to be comfortable with computers because they are and will continue to be a part of our lives. The computer can be a valuable investment for the home if the time is taken to learn how to use it.

VIEWPOINTS

The matter of home-schooling is not exactly a burning issue among us. There are, however, many Christian schools that are finding it necessary more and more to make some kind of provision for families who prefer to keep their children at home, at least for their first years of schooling. What should be our attitude toward the question? Some might wonder about the propriety *of home education, where we have established our own schools. Others may argue that our* first thought *should be to educate our own children in our own homes for as long as we can. We'd like, therefore, to give some attention to this question — in "Viewpoints" in this issue, and perhaps in a couple of "Feature" articles in a later issue.*

For this issue, then, we've asked two mothers to address the question from their own particular perspective. Thelma Westra, whose youngest child has just recently graduated from Covenant Christian High School, looks back over the years during which she was a busy mother raising eight children, and she says, in effect, "I'm surely glad we had our own schools." Ruth Nobel, who coincidentally is also a mother of eight children, takes a different view. Looking back over eight years of teaching her own children, she's ready to say not only that home schooling is a viable alternative but that it's to be preferred. *Her oldest daughter is now doing well in her first year at college, after*

finishing the 12th grade under her mother's instruction, and scoring 28 (a high *score) on the ACT. Ruth was careful in her article not to boast of the accomplishments of her students. Nor was she ready in private conversation to* volunteer *information concerning their achievements. But, when asked, she did admit that the National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalist to whom she referred in her article was indeed her second oldest daughter, who is now in the 12th grade at home.*

There are of course questions which come to mind in all of this. In a future issue, as was suggested, we'll try to go into those questions in a little more depth. For now, in what follows, our two writers have ably demonstrated at least this much, that there are two ways of viewing the issue.

Home Education. . . No

Thelma Westra

I would like to state my position on the question of home schooling versus the organized school system. Although I feel that there could be instances in which teaching one's children at home might be preferable, I believe that, in most instances, by using the Christian school system – and more specifically, the Protestant Reformed Christian School system – our children are receiving a more well-rounded and academically superior education.

As a parent of eight children who have taken advantage of our Protestant Reformed Christian schools, and having had my own education in the Christian school system, I confess that I really have no firsthand knowledge of home schooling; but I'll give you my viewpoint of what I see to be valid reasons for choosing our schools.

Had we opted to educate our children in the home, I'm sure that the task would mainly have fallen to me. My husband left for work by 7:30 AM, and from that time until dinner at 6:00 PM the care of the children was mine. Also in the evening hours, the main responsibility still fell on my shoulders since societies, consistory work, and school board meetings claimed much of his time. (I realize that had we been educating our children at home, his school board time would have been cancelled. However, I'm sure that mother would still have been the main "teacher.")

In this connection I'd like to remark that to me teaching school is not a distasteful chore – it's

something that has always held great appeal for me. However, when my firstborn was ready to enter school I also had a three year old and a small baby. Had I decided to teach at home I'm sure that I could not have done justice to that task along with my care of the other children plus other household duties. Perhaps there really are "supermoms" who can educate one child in each of the following grades: 12, 9, 7, 5, and 2 and give ample time to three pre-schoolers, serve fabulous meals (within the budget, of course), and keep a spotless house; but I do not believe that I'm one of them.

The teachers in our schools have generally spent *upwards* of four years beyond their high school education preparing themselves to teach our children, and they have specialized in the areas in which they plan to teach. Besides this preparation (which parents seldom have), a good teacher gives more of his time in day-by-day lesson preparation, and often will take summer courses or seminars. In order to more or less duplicate this, a parent should prepare lessons every day for *each* subject for *each* child separately (e.g., a trigonometry lesson for a 12th grader certainly is a far cry from the kindergartner's number concepts, and one can hardly expect a second grader to appreciate Shakespeare).

I understand that excellent material is available for home study, but certainly these materials and many more are accessible to our schools also.

Another great benefit of our schools in my estimation is the interaction between students. Although siblings can be "good friends" as well as being brothers or sisters, there is something very special about our child's first school friend. Many companionships begun in school blossom into lifelong friendships. . . and the boy/girl relationship may culminate in something still more special — a life's partner. But aside from these future benefits, I believe that classroom situations — working competitively, sharing "our class" comaraderie, learning to cope with one another's weaknesses, feeling that one belongs to this special group— all these things are also invaluable assets.

Of course, we instruct our children in the home. We must never forget that we have this beautiful calling. This takes place from infancy onward. We awaken each morning to this calling, and we instruct our children not only by word but by the example of a godly walk. Their formal education I prefer to turn over to the capable and dedicated teachers with which the Lord has blessed us. □■□

Home Education. . . Yes

Ruth Nobel

I believe that among Reformed Christians it has been a commonly accepted principle that the education of a child is the responsibility of parents (cf. Deut. 6:5-7, Baptism Form, q. and a. 3). Therefore, it would seem a natural, correct, and logical approach for parents *first* to prayerfully consider home education, *before* the other options which are available. Instead, I feel that many parents give it little thought but simply fall into the accepted pattern of largely delegating this responsibility. Among those who do consider it, there is often instant rejection based on a feeling of inadequacy. I would like briefly to attempt to dispel these fears, so that parents can make a more informed decision on how best to fulfill their baptismal vows.

Home education has many obvious advantages. There is a low pupil-teacher ratio, which allows for individual attention, a feat difficult to attain in a classroom setting. The child can be allowed to proceed at his own rate, which has been held up as the ideal situation. There is no time wasted in travel, nor money wasted on "trendy" clothes. Parents have a superior knowledge of the child, a great asset in teaching. Parents can instill their own Christian philosophy of life, without excessive peer pressure. Students in TV-less homes need not feel odd, nor do they need to lose sleep over being in or out of a clique. Family togetherness is encouraged in a day when it is under attack from every side.

Many have proposed several disadvantages of home education: lack of socialization, no gym or laboratories, lack of teacher certification, and inadequate preparation for college. We should remember that not all socialization has positive value. Sad to say, fellow students may be disrespectful to teachers, habitually unkind to peers, excessively materialistic, or fanatically sports/TV crazy, to mention only a few undesirable and readily transferrable traits. Many parents would like to be more selective in choosing their children's companions. Home educators recognize the need for friends and supply opportunity: church-related activities, family gatherings, having friends overnight, having family-with-family visits, instead of just adults-with-adults. Also the quantity of socialization (the *constant* presence of *many* others) can be a hindrance to gaining an academic education.

Children are able to maintain physical fitness without a gymnasium. Biking, swimming, tennis, volleyball, ice skating — a long list of healthful activities are available either at home or in the park. We should keep physical education in proper perspective — the goal of a healthy mind in a healthy body does not demand maximum proficiency in all sports and certainly not the hero-worship which often accompanies sports in a school setting.

Science laboratories below college level have two primary functions: they add interest and reinforcement to the textbook, and teach basic manipulation of equipment. Many experiments *can* be conducted at home. Skills not learned at home can be picked up in a person's first college science class.

Just as having a teaching certificate does not endow one with the ability to teach, similarly, *not* having the certificate does not make one *un*qualified to teach. The same God Who gives us our calling is willing and able to give the abilities to fulfill it. Parents have a devotion to their children above what they can expect anyone else to have. This is a basic ingredient for a good teacher. Concerning subject material, they have previously learned it themselves, and will be able to recall and teach it with the excellent texts, teachers' keys, and manuals available. A college education is not only unnecessary, but may even be a disadvantage, when one considers how John Dewey's humanistic philosophy has permeated most education courses.

Many are concerned that a home education will hamper the student who wishes to continue his education. We should consider results. I am acquainted with children in home schools who score several grades above their age level on Iowa Basic Tests. Others have scored high on the ACT and SAT, and, accustomed to independent study, are doing well as college freshmen. There is presently a home-educated National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalist, waiting to hear of Finalist standing. Of course, there are also the less studious "home-schoolers," who plod along, learning the necessities and little more. But hopefully they, as their counterparts in the Christian school, will be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

There is one more consideration — what about the state requirements? May we educate our children at home if the state says no? This topic could occupy many pages of discussion. I would like to point out only that in Scripture education is described as a parental responsibility, not a government function. If we then

go to the State to ask permission to instruct our children, after God has commanded us to, are we not elevating government above God? When a conflict arises, I believe our position must be that we obey God rather than men.

As with any human endeavor, home education has its problems: teaching mothers become weary, their children become bored, etc. However, I hope this article has shown that home education solves a lot of problems faced by the conventional school and provides a workable alternative to it. The parents may be assured that, though their teaching is done in human frailty, with God's blessing, they may hear "well done, good and faithful servant. . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

CURRENT ISSUES

Just a reminder: Suggestions for "news" on which to comment will be appreciated by the writer of this column. News items, or copies thereof, may be sent to his home address: 171 Baldwin Dr., Apartment D, Jenison, MI 49428.

One-Room Schools Make a Comeback

In a nation that lives by the motto, "Bigger is better," it is refreshing to see that the value of something small has been recognized by experts. During the '60's and '70's one-room schools were being quickly eliminated. Students were bused to central schools which were equipped with the latest educational tools.

Brian Dykstra is a teacher at Hope Protestant Reformed School in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Although no society for education in Protestant Reformed circles operates a one-room school, there are several societies which operate multi-grade classroom schools. Since multi-grade classroom schools are closely related to one-room schools, what is said about one can apply to the other.

The December 2, 1985 issue of *Time* points out that parents and education officials have been working to save one-room schools, since their value is being acknowl-

edged. Among the reasons cited for supporting one-room schools is "a reawakened national concern for some faded educational verities, among them the close teacher-pupil contact."

Apparently educators did not feel that graduates of one-room schools were given as good an education as those from a traditional school. This accusation has proven to be false according to recent studies. *Time* reports, "To the surprise of many educators, the youngsters tend to score handsomely when they move on to high school."

I had the opportunity to teach in a multi-grade classroom and observed other advantages. Students there were better able to work on their own, since the teacher could not always be there to help them immediately. Reading skills also appeared to be more highly developed.

Perhaps parents who send their children to a multi-grade classroom school feel that they are settling for second best when they cannot provide a traditional school. These recent findings should put such feelings to rest.

MTV-A Favorite in Public School Cafeteria

The *Plains Baptist Challenger* reported on a newspaper article about how a public school solved its problem of keeping students under control in the lunchroom. The principal set up a large screen in the cafeteria on which the latest rock videos are displayed courtesy of MTV (Music Television).

The editor of the *Plains Baptist Challenger* writes concerning MTV: "MTV is to be found on the cable TV channels across America and it isn't fit for a dog, much less human beings. . . . No parent, under any circumstances should let their children ever watch this punk dirty rock. It is incredible that any school system would set up television screens in the cafeteria, so that the teens can watch this garbage."

Of course we are happy that such things do not happen in any of our schools. This reminds us of the reason we have our own schools: that our children are kept separate from the world. While it might have been safe for Christians in public schools years ago when nothing else was available, there is no doubt that the atmosphere of public schools has greatly changed.

Before we pat ourselves on the backs for this one though, how much of this "garbage" is being

discussed by our students who listen to it either on the sly or with permission? Rock is not being broadcasted through our school buildings, but in how many hearts is this music echoing while Christian lessons are being taught?

Brian Dykstra

from the TEACHERS' LOUNGE

Have you ever wondered about the rationale for including "Band" in the course offerings of a school? In our high school in Grand Rapids, band meets for 50 minutes every day of the week. It's a full-credit course. In many of our grade schools, band is offered as a two or three-session a week option to students in 5th through 9th grades. Sometimes those bands may meet during noon hours; but no doubt other sessions are held during "class" time. Whatever the particular circumstances, in the very nature of the case one must take band in stead of *doing something else. So, again, the question: should instrumental music have that kind of place in our schools? And, if it does, should students be* encouraged *to participate in it? A band director in the Teachers' Lounge suggests answers to these questions. Here's Mrs. Gail Wories, director of band in our South Holland (Illinois) Protestant Reformed School:*

School Band: An Enrichment of the Curriculum

Gail Wories

Their eyes are looking up at me. Their black cases are resting on their laps. At my suggestion the band students open their cases carefully, as many questions arise in their minds. This is the first day of band lessons. A thrill goes through me at the thought of teaching them something they know little about. I often think of taping these first few sessions to play back to them at the end

of a year. They would be struck with what they had learned in a year's time.

Another thought brings me to a nursing home near our school. Our band walked the short distance one afternoon to play a few familiar numbers for the old people there. We had gone once before. The students knew what to expect this time. Many in the audience were verbally excited. Each hymn we played brought out an excited comment from one to another. They shook their heads when a hymn jogged their memory. What a thrill to play for such an audience. The students were afterwards asked to approach the old people who wanted to thank them for coming. Some students actually had to pull away from an appreciative listener.

Why have a band program in our Christian schools? There are some who find it to be an expensive frill. These people see no reason for frills when we have trouble enough meeting the standards for a "basic" Christian education. I can sympathize with them to a point, but feel that a band program can enrich the lives of our children, bring praise to God's name, and be a blessing to others.

God has given us the ability to make music vocally and with instruments. Man's need for emotional expression has brought out the music in us. That human beings respond to music is a universal fact. That we can express our talents and emotions through music is what music education is all about.

Christian education must be concerned with the total development of our children. We must provide an opportunity for growth in all areas of life. The more a child learns about the music he hears around him, the more meaning it will take on and the more enjoyment he will have from it for the rest of his life.

Band instruction teaches a child how music is made and how the cultures have been reflected through music. He will also learn the theory of music, the written signs and symbols and how it is to be interpreted through his instrument. Of course, he will learn about his instrument and how to play it. He will become familiar with the other instruments in the band. The skills of playing an instrument further develop eye-hand coordination. Learning an instrument takes time and is a challenge that demands discipline and the taking on of new responsibilities. There must be a commitment to daily practice if one wants to grow in the skill of his instrument.

Not only does band provide an opportunity for a child to learn an instrument, but it also provides the opportunity for group parti-

cipation. Unlike sports, each student in band is assured of a position in band and contributes to the overall performance. This demands teamwork and cooperation among band members. The band need not be large, but it should have a balance of instruments. No matter what size (and especially if it is small), each person must put forth his best effort to make the whole band succeed. A student soon learns that if he does not play his part well, the entire band suffers. Band gives each member a sense of belonging that a shared experience brings. The director must guide, encourage, and motivate the students to make band an enjoyable experience for all.

The foremost goal for all students in using what they have learned is to praise God through their preparation and performance of the selected music. They must give to God what talents He has given them. The values of the Christian school are reflected in the music that is played. The director conveys his Christian values in the music he selects and in how he teaches it. There is an opportunity here to select a variety of good music. Obviously, not all music in a performance will be "Christian" in nature, but I believe we must always have some *Psalter* numbers or appropriate hymns in the performance. It's enjoyable to play a piece that one is otherwise used to singing or has listened to. This provides a way, also, to reflect our faith through the music even though words are not being sung. The audience will review the words in their mind, or sing with the band in an expression of faith.

The performance of the band will leave an impression on the listeners. The band students must be adequately prepared so that the intended emotions and impressions will be made. If the band has conveyed, through their music, the best use of their talents for God's glory, and brought enjoyment to their audience, the performance will have been a worthwhile experience for all.

Once the performances are over and school is finished, many students will close that instrument case for the last time; but the sense of accomplishment will still be with them. Their lives will be enriched with the knowledge of the music they have come to know and enjoy. Some will occasionally bring that instrument out and perform a piece for a church or school function. They will again share their knowledge of music to convey a message to others. The band instruments don't have to remain on the shelf once schooling is over. I think more opportunities should be made for players, at any age, to perform.

I've been meaning to visit my

husband's grandfather at that nursing home near our school. It's not always easy to communicate with him, although he understands what is being said. Maybe I should take my clarinet there and play some of his favorite *Psalter* numbers and hymns.

BULLETIN BOARD

For our "Bulletin Board" special this time we'd like to make use of an article which appeared in the Fall, 1985 issue of "The Ledger" — newsletter of Loveland (Colorado) Protestant Reformed School. For the Loveland constituency, Principal Tom DeVries wrote a short account of last fall's Teachers' Convention in Iowa. That convention, incidentally, was noteworthy in this respect that at none other of our 30 previous conventions were there so many teachers present, from so many schools, from so many parts of the country. Even all the way from Lynden, Washington! But. . . let's hear it from Mr. De Vries. The pictures are from the camera of Mr. Skip Hunter, principal of Northwest Iowa (Doon) Protestant Reformed School.

TEACHERS' CONVENTION

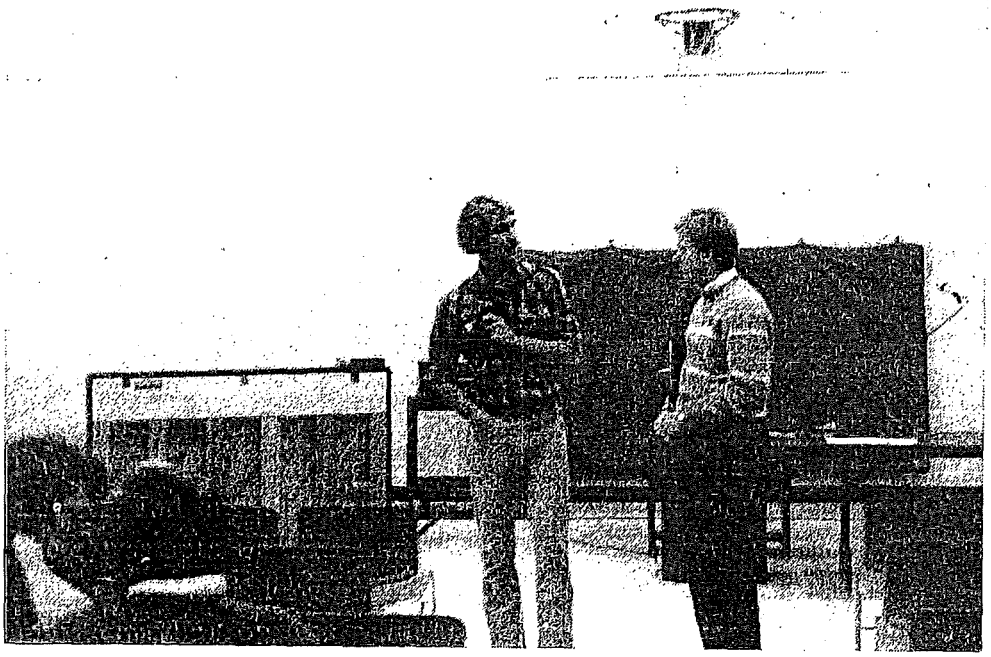
On October 17 and 18, all four teachers (from Loveland) attended the thirty-first Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute Convention at Hull and Doon, Iowa. These institutes are usually held in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area, but this year's meeting was held in the west as a concession to the western teachers. Although we in Loveland are not members of the Institute, the invitation was to us, also. Teachers attended from all of our schools except the one in California.

The thirteen hour trip from here to Iowa can be boring, but in this case it was not. The time held something for everyone. The fall colors were at their peak in the Platte and Missouri river valleys. We followed the old Oregon Trail for about 200 miles, and passed the site where Lewis

and Clark buried Sgt. Floyd in 1803. There was time for reading, knitting, and singing *Psalter* songs. There was lots of discussion, including a rather long one (two hours, maybe) on the value of science to the child of God, and as to its place in the school curriculum. The fertility of the heartland was evident; we passed hundreds of miles of fields full of corn, milo, and soybeans, still unharvested because of the wet conditions.

Most of the activities of the convention took place on Thursday. The day began at Hull school with a speech by Rev. Kamps on "The Spirituality of the Protestant Reformed School Teacher." That evening we attended a banquet at Doon Church and heard an address by Rev. Bekkering on the topic "Teaching Children Christian Virtues." The heart of the convention was the activities that took place during the day Thursday, and on Friday morning. We met in separate sectionals, and listened to teacher presentations on such subjects as: teaching music, working with learning disabled children, teaching Bible at various levels, how to inspire children to write, use of computers in the classroom, and how to get more variety in teaching methods.

We saw many new faces in Iowa – some of us also met former teachers, students, and colleagues, and old friends. The experience was worthwhile, both in what we learned and in what



Our Hull Hosts Conferring

we shared as children of God with a common interest. Our thanks go to the members of the Institute that made the convention possible.

Our trip home was uneventful. We left Hull just before noon and drove all day through a light rain, arriving home just before midnight. □■□

JUST FOR FUN!!

A "mixer" activity at the Convention banquet was this game called "Who Am I?" Each of the sixty teachers present had earlier been asked to write on a piece of paper an interesting fact of his own personal history. The papers were collected and the facts compiled on a single sheet,

Doug De Boer Expounding

Teachers Learning

with blanks before each fact, so that the conventioneers could try their hand at matching facts with faces. The idea was that they guess identities and then confront the person with "Did you ever pan for gold in Alaska?" (That was Rod Kreuzer, by the way.) Just for fun, we'll give you a few facts, with names to try to match (howbeit with a few extra thrown in for good measure). In our June issue, if you can wait that long, we'll give you the answers. Here are some:

Who Am I?

___ 1. All my possessions were washed out to sea in a storm.

___ 2. I taught only one year in South Holland, but in that year I had 3 future ministers in my class.

___ 3. I am in my 25th year of teaching, 25th year of marriage in a school 25 years old.

___ 4. For one year I was the world's only male Prot. Ref. teacher.

___ 5. I once got caught in a revolving door with a lady.

___ 6. My birthplace was the Netherlands.

___ 7. When I was born, my mother used scotch tape to hold my ears back. But it didn't work.

a. JoAnne Bult
b. Dave Harbach
c. John Hilton
d. Bill Joostens
e. Doug DeBoer
f. Beverly Hoekstra
g. John Kalsbeek
h. Antoinette Quenga
i. Jess Dykstra
j. Lamm Lubbers
k. Harry Langerak
l. Vern Huber
m. Gen Lubbers
n. Ron Koole
o. Fred Hanko, Sr.

Colleagues Socializing

Coming in our June issue:

- *a picture of each school's graduating class*
- *a "Feature" article on "Teaching Children to Stand Alone"*
- *an article in "Parents' Corner" dealing with the effects of TV on covenant education*
- *two "Viewpoints" on the legitimacy of inter-scholastic sports in the life of the school*
- *and much more*

[If any of your friends, dear reader, are non-subscribers, encourage them, please, to join the growing ranks of *former* non-subscribers.]

PERSPECTIVES
1150 Adams Street S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Jenison, MI
PERMIT 71

Published tri-annually in the fall, winter, and spring by the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute.