Editorials

by Agatha Lubbers

THE PROTESTANT REFORMED TEACHERS' INSTITUTE CELEBRATES THE THIRTIETH YEAR

The Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute is an organization of professional educators teaching in Protestant Reformed Christian Schools in Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa. There also are Protestant Reformed Christian Schools in the states of Colorado, California, and Washington, but the teachers in these schools are not formally members of the P.R.T.I. We are certain that they have the same concerns as those who have banded together as educators with a common cause.

The origin of the P.R.T.I. can be traced to meetings of a group of teachers and prospective teachers beginning to meet in 1948 with the late Rev. George M. Ophoff, assisted by Professor H.C. Hoeksema in the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Here Rev. Ophoff and Prof. H.C. Hoeksema of the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary met with teachers and prospective teachers so that they could more distinctively teach in the schools that already existed or were being planned.

The first convention of the faculties of the schools (Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School, Walker, Michigan, and Adams Street Protestant Reformed Christian School, Grand Rapids) met in Grand Rapids during the 1955-1956 school year.

October 24-26, 1984, the faculties of the member schools will meet in convention at the Adams Street Protestant Reformed Christian School, Grand Rapids, for the thirtieth time.

Special ceremonies have been planned for this 30th anniversary convention. A meeting held at the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, Hudsonville, Michigan on Wednesday, October 24, 8:00 P.M. was a special public meeting for all those interested in distinctive Protestant Reformed Christian education. Rev. Jason Kortering, pastor of Grandville Protestant Reformed Church, will give the inspirational

address. A future issue of the *Perspectives* will hopefully carry a copy of this message.

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We extol and celebrate the faithfulness of God, who preserves us in the truth, and we are thankful to God that today many men and women have been added to the ranks of those who are dedicated to the instruction of the Covenant seed in the Protestant Reformed Christian Schools.

We say with the psalmist in Psalm 90:16, 17:

> Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

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On June 14, 1956, the proposed constitution of the P.R.T.I. was formally approved. Eight teachers were present that evening to adopt the constitution. Of those eight teachers meeting nearly three decades ago, five are currently employed as Protestant Reformed teachers and are members of the Institute. Miss Ruth Dykstra teaches at Adams Street Protestant Reformed Christian School. Miss Jessie Dykstra is employed by the Protestant Reformed School for Special Education. Mr. Fred Hanko and Miss Winifred Koole now teach at the Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School. The writer is teaching-administrator at the Covenant Christian High School of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The basis of the P.R.T.I. is stated in the constitution adopted that June evening nearly thirty years ago. This basis has remained unchanged until the present, and we pray God that He will continue to preserve us in the truth of this basis, stated as follows:

> The basis of this organization is the Word of God as interpreted by the Three Forms of Unity (the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht), and as these are applied in the educational principles of the Protestant Reformed Christian Schools.

The purpose of the P.R.T.I. has also remained unchanged during the

three decades of the existence of this organization. The constitution, as originally adopted, states the purpose of the P.R.T.I. as follows:

> The purpose of this organization is:
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> 1. To study materials related to the field of education in conjunction with the Word of God in order that we teachers may be better qualified to teach from a Protestant Reformed viewpoint.
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> 2. To create a medium through which we may produce materials of a specific Protestant Reformed nature to be used in our own schools and thereby make our schools more distinctive.
>
> 3. To create a means through which we teachers may work towards unity and understanding among our Protestant Reformed Christian schools.

Requirements for membership in the P.R.T.I. are stated in Article IV of the Constitution and have likewise remained unchanged from the first. The article states the following:

> Membership shall be limited to Protestant Reformed persons who are either teachers or prospective teachers.

Since that day of small beginnings, which the Scriptures tell us not to despise, the P.R.T.I. has grown under the blessing of God. At this time there are 30-40 teachers who actively participate in the meetings of the Institute three or four times each academic year. In addition, the P.R.T.I. sponsors annually, in the fall, the Convention of Protestant Reformed educators.

During one of the business meetings of the 20th P.R.T.I. Convention (October, 1974), a motion passed to have the president of the Institute, Mr. Darrel Huisken, appoint a committee to study the matter of the publication of a Protestant Reformed educational journal. A committee consisting of Mr. James Huizinga (chairman), Charles Bult, Calvin Kalsbeek, Harry Langerak, and Ignatio Quenga did the initial work which resulted in the decision of January 24, 1975, to publish the periodical, *Perspectives in Covenant Education.*

This year, 1984-1985, we begin the 10th year of this publishing effort. For this, too, we give God the praise.

The proposals of the original study committee were approved and adopted with a few minor changes. The grounds for the production of an educational journal were stated as follows in the proposal of the study committee:

1. We have a considerable number of people in our ranks who are capable of making significant written contributions.

2. We have previously prepared manuscripts that could be profitably published.

3. We have no magazine at the present time in our Protestant Reformed community that is devoted exclusively to the development of Protestant Reformed education.

4. Professional responsibility demands that we undertake the production of such a journal.

Perspectives in Covenant Education is described in the decision of the P.R.T.I. by the following five statements:

Perspectives in Covenant Education shall be:

1. a magazine produced and controlled by the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute.

2. a magazine whose pages are open to all teachers, parents, and friends of Protestant Reformed Christian education.

3. a magazine that encourages a degree of parental participation in the areas of planning and actual writing.

4. a magazine intended to have a broad base of subscription.

5. a magazine devoted to development in the academic areas and to the discussion of more general subjects such as: teaching methods, discipline problems, and the relationship between the home and the school.

The purpose for *Perspectives in Covenant Education* is specifically stated on the inside of the front cover of each issue. The editorial policy of *Perspectives* is likewise stated on the inside of the front cover of each issue.

Considerable thought was given the naming of the journal. Faculties were contacted and asked to submit possible names for the journal. From an aggregate of approximately twelve different titles the name *Perspectives in Covenant Education* emerged as the choice. Because the magazine is designed to be a forum for both parents and teachers, the title is sufficiently inclusive for both of these. We believe that all instruction of Covenant children is controlled and regulated finally by the parents, even though individual parents give up some control when education is given through an association-controlled board and faculty.

Because Christian Covenant education should be parental education, we wish to have parents included in the studies and writings of the professional educators employed by Protestant Reformed Christian parents. The journal is designed, therefore, to be a medium whereby teachers can talk to other teachers and parents, and parents, as the prime educators, can talk to other parents and teachers.

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When we began to publish this periodical in October of 1975, we said that "this periodical cannot exist without the generous support of dedicated parents and without a faithful list of subscribers." This is still true. The number of subscribers has risen since that day from zero to approximately 400 subscribers. We are hoping that at this point in time many more will decide to become subscribers to the magazine.

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In October, 1975, we said that we would employ the Word of God and its orthodox interpretation found in the Reformed confessions to give leadership and inspiration in the important work of teaching the youth of the Covenant. We continue with this as our motive. We also pray, as we did then, that we may be faithful in this important endeavor, not being weary in well-doing.

> Except Jehovah God build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except Jehovah God keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. Psalm 127:1

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MEMORIAL BOOKLET BEING PUBLISHED

A memorial booklet will be available at a special public meeting being held at Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, Wednesday, October 24. You will want this booklet of pictures and information about the Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. You can get it by writing to the *Perspectives* editorial office (see inside of front cover).

TWENTY-FIRST EDITION OF PERSPECTIVES PUBLISHED FALL, 1984

The publication of Volume X, No. 1, marks the 21st mailing of *Perspectives in Covenant Education.*

Beginning with Volume VII, Fall, 1981, the goal of the Institute and the editorial staff was to increase the number of publications per year from two to three. You may have noticed that although we say that we will publish three times annually, we did not send you three issues of the magazine in the Volume IX publishing year. Had we done that this would have been our 22nd issue of the *Perspectives.*

Several things made it seem inadvisable to publish the third issue of the Volume IX. The main consideration was the lack of manuscripts. *The crying need of every publication is manuscripts.* We ask, therefore, that if you have a desire to publish something in the field of education that you contact one of the members of the editorial staff.

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FROM OUR READERS IN SCOTLAND

It is a delight to hear from our readers especially when the response is so positive and especially when the response comes from those who are struggling to establish Christian schools in the British Isles. We produce in full a letter from Charles and Kathleen Webster. (We only wish that you could read the beautiful letter of Charlie in his own hand – calligraphy, not Zaner-Bloser.)

From Dundee and District Christian Education Association
16 Bath Street
Broughty Ferry
Dundee, Scotland DD5 2BY
10th March, 1984

Dear Miss Lubbers,

Greetings to you in the precious Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Once again the eagerly awaited issue of *Perspectives* has popped through our letter-box and has been read by us almost before it had

time to drop to the floor! We read it and pass it on to our friends in our Association who, like us, greatly appreciate all that it has to say. Not that we find it comfortable reading – far from it, because of the very high standard which you consistently set and expect. This, however, is the main reason why we like it, it challenges us to improve on our present position, and supplies us with good Biblical reasons and resources enabling us so to do. Our only complaint is that you publish *Perspectives* only three times a year. Monthly would be far better, and a concession to our impatience! May and September seem so long away.

I have enclosed a copy of our Constitution for your interest and comments, and some other material produced by us.

Trinity School has, since it began, been a struggling cause and continues to be so right up to the present. From the very start we have had to contend with hostility and indifference from many of the Lord's people in and around our city. We have no financial backing from any church or denomination and some of our bitterest opponents are "Reformed" people. This we find hard to bear. Despite all this the school is now 2½ years old and our roll has increased from 2 to 4. Are any of your schools so small or can they boast of a 100% increase in two years!!?

The Lord is our source of strength, it is He who provides for all our needs and to Him alone belongs all the praise, glory, and thanks.

Any literature that you think would be of help to us would be greatly appreciated if you were to send it. Please write to us for our encouragement and pray for strengthening.

Yours in the service of Christ,
w.s. Charlie and Kathleen Webster

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To my shame this letter disappeared for several months and I was going to include it with the materials for the spring issue that never was published. Its belated appearance does not diminish the importance of this letter. Our readers are encouraged to do as I have done, correspond with Charlie and Kathleen in their important work of training the children of the Covenant. To God be the praise for such a witness of the work of his grace in Dundee, Scotland.

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