

Protestant Reformed Education A Continuing Calling

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Editorial

Anyone at all acquainted with earlier volumes of our *Standard Bearer* will know that frequently, both in the editorial columns and in the other departments, the necessity of Protestant Reformed education for Protestant Reformed children has been stressed.

One way of emphasizing that necessity is to place it in the context of our baptismal vow and its ". . .to the utmost of your power. . . ."

Not infrequently past editorials put it this way: *Wherever and whenever the Lord makes it possible, or opens the way, Protestant Reformed people should establish and maintain their own schools.*

That remains the editorial stand of the *Standard Bearer*.

Perhaps the reader wonders why this is brought up.

Let me explain.

First of all, let me explain my purpose. My purpose is not to apply some kind of editorial "pressure." I do not believe that I possess such influence. If I did possess it, I would not care to use it: Nor would I think much of a school that resulted from pressure tactics. My purpose is rather to encourage our people to consider the matter of Protestant Reformed education very seriously and honestly in the light of the question: *does the Lord open the way for us here and now?* I believe that is a god-fearing approach.

In the second place, let me explain my reasons.

You will notice that the title of this article makes mention of *a continuing calling*. This suggests, in the first place, that the ideal has not been reached, and that therefore we must continue to strive toward the ideal of Protestant Reformed education for Protestant Reformed youth.

I refer in this connection, in the first place, to those areas where we already have established our own grade schools. In these areas our calling continues not only to provide for our schools with unflagging zeal but also to strive that the education given in those schools is in every respect more and more thoroughly and distinctively Reformed.

Secondly, I refer to those areas where our parents have not yet succeeded in establishing their own schools. In some of these areas it may undoubtedly be said that the time is not yet ripe and the way is not yet open. In other areas it begins to appear increasingly that the way is indeed open and that the establishment of a school is a very real possibility. I have in mind, as an example, our people in Northwest Iowa, where, I understand, there are rather definite plans in the making. In all such areas, whether in Northwest Iowa or anywhere else, I would earnestly urge and encourage our people to consider their calling and to act in harmony with the criterion mentioned earlier in this article: *wherever and whenever the Lord opens the way, Protestant Reformed people should establish and maintain their own schools.*

But I have another and very important aspect of this continuing calling in mind. That is the possibility of Protestant Reformed Secondary Education (high school education) in the greater Grand Rapids area. This also is an aspect of our *continuing* calling. It is consistent that where we establish primary schools, we also establish secondary schools. I say this also with the qualification: wherever and whenever the Lord opens the way. But I hasten to affirm that it is my sincere conviction that the Lord is both opening the way and pointing the way in this regard.

On the principal side of the ledger, consider the fact that the high school education of our children is, in effect, Christian Reformed. There are no two ways about this. They expect this, and we expect it. For the high schools are largely controlled by a Christian Reformed constituency. But with a view to our Protestant Reformed children that can only be less than satisfactory; and it is becoming less and less satisfactory. It always grieves me to see the primary education of our Adams and Hope schools followed by an education in high school that is not consistent with that of their first nine years.

On the practical side of the ledger, moreover, there are several favorable considerations also. Certainly, in the greater Grand Rapids area our Protestant Reformed constituency is sufficiently numerous to establish and maintain a high school of our own. Undeniably, a high school is no little undertaking; and its establishment, due to the difficult level of education and due also to the fact that it can draw its student body from only three grade levels,—its establishment is a bit different than the establishment of a grade school. But we surely have enough potential supporting families, enough young people, and also enough potential secondary level teachers to go ahead. I believe, too, that the Board has done considerable investigation and planning (as reported in a recent news letter), and that, whether we begin with only the tenth grade and add a grade each year, or, if the support warrants it (as it surely could), we begin with all three grades immediately,—it is entirely within the realm of possibility to provide both a good quality of education and an education that is in harmony with our Reformed principles. I believe, too, that our Protestant Reformed young people, who undoubtedly will have to face increasingly severe difficulties and temptations in the world in the midst of which their education must prepare them to live covenant lives, are worthy of the best education we can provide them, even if it means sacrifice on our part. Indeed, anyone who views present day trends in education and in the world in general with both eyes open must conclude that such a Protestant Reformed high school education is a sore need.

Frankly, what this movement for secondary education needs at this stage is the added impetus of broader backing and dedicated support. I am informed that the plot of ground for the school is almost paid for and that the society will have a modest fund left over toward building costs. This is precisely the time for that added "boost" that will, so to speak, put the project "into orbit."

In general, therefore, let all our people, and in particular, let those in the greater Grand Rapids area continue to consider their duty in the light of the sound rule that *wherever and whenever the Lord opens the way, Protestant Reformed people should provide Protestant Reformed education for Protestant Reformed children.*

And: let us consider the fact that we have a *calling*,—from the Lord, Who had never yet put His faithful people to shame!

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