

Perspectives

IN COVENANT EDUCATION

Recess

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Statement of Purpose

Perspectives in Covenant Education is a journal regulated and published quarterly, in November, February, May, and August 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, not only within the profession, but within the Protestant Reformed community and within the Christian community in general.

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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.

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Broader Education for the Academically Gifted

Tom Bergman

Normal distribution assumes that the percentage of students who are gifted is roughly equal to the percentage of students who need special assistance. The difference is that our dear special education students have difficulty acquiring a regular education, while the gifted students can easily participate in a regular program. They can learn far more material much more rapidly, so their academic pursuits lead them faster and higher into the world of learning. However, the “special” education of highly gifted students could not only be *faster* and *higher*, but also *broader* in scope.

Public school systems such as the Grandville Public Schools in Grandville, Michigan use the term “gifted” to indicate students with a high degree of academic talent. Some say “exceptional,” but others retain the term “gifted.” This is incongruous for a school system that has publicly denied God because the participle “gifted” implies that talents were given by a Giver, yet they want nothing to do with the God who is “the maker of them all” (Prov. 22:2).

In our Reformed, Christian schools we maintain that all students are gifted. The body of Christ is composed of a wonderful variety of members called out of darkness, none of whom are identical—not in appearance, not in personality, not in gifts. The magnificent passage in 1 Corinthians 12 explicitly states that some are given one type of gift, while others are given another type of gift. In God’s infinite wisdom, this is good for the body. Some are musically talented. Others have sharp linguistic skills. Some are leaders. Some are logical. Jehovah, our covenant God, gave us all good, different gifts.

And we all have varying degrees of gifts. Some struggle with reading; some can read acceptably well; some read voraciously. Some seem to have few academic talents; some are average; some have almost unbelievable academic potential. But they are gifted. God’s gifts are for the good of the church. And these student-servants ought to apply their talents.

Although it is, in some respects, too narrow to refer to academically gifted students as “gifted” or “highly gifted,” nevertheless, we use the term to indicate those who are academically superior to most other students in their class or school.

If they truly are academically superior, the regular curriculum may be insufficient. Not as though they are poisoned or malnourished by it, but they are hungry for more.

One approach is to allow them to work through the curriculum faster so that they can learn more at a higher level. This can be beneficial. But snags can arise in schools as small as ours. Scheduling might be difficult when a student in one grade is learning alongside students who are in a higher grade. And if the student completes the curriculum, should he go even higher? Soon we might not have the means to keep up with such a brilliant mind.

Lest that become a hindrance instead of a joy, consider a menu of options that is broader as well as faster and higher. Maintain the same grade level. Maintain the same curriculum pace. Stay within the means and the expertise of the teacher. But, try branching out while rushing up.

In addition to having a student racing through the curriculum, have the student read some of the history of science or mathematics or music. Read about Copernicus, Archimedes, or Bach. Have him read a commentary that pertains to classroom devotions, or study music or nutrition or lawn mowers or maps. Try Scripture memorization or put him to use compiling a concordance for the Psalter or study the Greek alphabet or the Chinese language. Have him try farming or bird-watching or woodworking or small-engine repair. The available teacher’s range of skills and experience can be put to use as a supplement. But, do weigh the potential benefits of a wide range of easily accessible topics against the benefits of a headlong rush toward advanced topics.

Set up some sort of independent study that involves generous portions of reading. Recommend a wide range of topics, not simply an accelerated pace and harder material. Read about President Garfield, railroad barons, microbes in the Arctic, idioms, municipal water supplies, local history, music, properties of human hair, principles of radio transmission, Canada and Mexico, olive oil, how asphalt shingles are made, fishing in Iceland, apple varieties, *et cetera*.

Don’t try too hard to search for outside experts. Use the ones in the building. Does the principal like astronomy? Does one of the teachers excel in robotics? Is one of the janitors an enthusiast of the Hundred Years’ War? Maybe find someone to volunteer a few hours teaching chess or a photographer to outline the

basics of photo composition, but use the means that may be already available.

This extra attention will come only with extra time and cost. Are any of our readers able and willing to volunteer for the schools in this way? Such additional cost would otherwise not be easy to handle for schools that already have to be as prudent as possible with every penny. The cost of our schools is daunting enough, let alone additional cost for a “special education” program and a “gifted” program. And, since the “special education” students need special assistance just to acquire some of the regular instruction while the “gifted” students pick it up on their own, any available funds are properly spent there first. Nevertheless, can we see if perhaps we can afford to give the academically advanced some more of our attention?

These are students who are consumed by boundless mental energy and a thirst for intellectual challenge. We don't want them to have too much time with too little guidance, since they have sinful human natures, too. Let's also teach godly stewardship of time and abilities to the gifted students. This “broader” approach is not just another alternate method out of the playbook of secular education. Our goal is a well-rounded student. Young believers who are going to be adult believers ought to have an extensive awareness of our Father's world. When we are working with citizens of the kingdom of heaven, let us remember also the academically gifted and give them a special education.

How We Should View Recess

Chad Uittenbogaard

It's the end of English class on a Wednesday morning. The teacher is in the process of explaining the difference between a predicate adjective and a predicate noun. Numerous examples of the concept are being reviewed on the marker board. The teacher then spots a couple of his students turning around to catch a glimpse of the clock on the classroom wall. Those sly looks at the clock can only mean one thing...it must be close to recess time.

The bell *finally* rings, but the teacher has a few more points to make before letting the kids go. Students squirm uneasily in their seats. Books and notebooks are halfway closed, ready to be filed away in their desks. The kids finally hear the magic words from the teacher, "You are dismissed." They grab a snack from their lockers, change into their recess shoes, and troop outside to enjoy a time of freedom from the regularly structured school setting.

Recess is an important (and often overlooked) part of the school day. As teachers and parents we often spend time discussing many things pertaining to school: subjects being taught, tests that were taken, ongoing projects, sports and music activities, field trips, etc. How often is recess a topic of our conversation? Are we concerned about what is happening during recess? How are the children interacting with one another? Are our students/kids behaving in a proper way during this free time? These are just a few questions we can show an interest in when it comes to our children and recess.

Students, young and old, need a break from their daily schoolwork routine each day. There is more to a school day than math, spelling, science, social studies, English, etc. Recess is a time where kids get a time of respite from their everyday school labors. They have the freedom to choose what they want to do and with whom. It is a time of interaction with their friends developing social skills.

During the school day kids need to have an opportunity to play and rid themselves of "excess energy." This leads to students being more attentive as they

return to the classroom and their schoolwork. Any teacher who has not been able to send their kids outside to play for recess on a rainy day and does not have an available gymnasium will probably tell you they have kids with a lot of pent up energy being built up as the day wears on!

Recess should be a time of activity for children. Most elementary classrooms have a P.E. class only one time per week for a period of 35-45 minutes. Recess can be that extra time of physical activity each week.

How can the teacher prepare their students for recess time? What should we be expecting from them when they take these breaks three times a day?

Preparation for recess should start right from day one of the school year. The first day of school the teacher will take the necessary time to review the specific playground rules for the school and the classroom. This may include the boundaries the students must observe on the playground. Maybe the teacher has to take time to speak about proper care of playground accessories: balls, jump ropes, and the like. Warnings can be given about the proper and improper uses of the playground equipment. Some time must be spent with the “physical” aspects of recess time.

The teacher needs also to prepare for recess time by making sure the class has the proper “tools” necessary for recess. It is good for the students to have a wide assortment of activities to choose from, and the teacher ensures this is possible by having a basketball, football, volleyball, rubber balls, jump ropes, and any other pertinent equipment available for student use. The teacher may also have a list of different games the children might be interested in playing during recess time. The teacher may even search for new games that will interest the class and teach these games to the students as the year progresses.

The teacher must also speak to the students about how they will interact with one another during their recess time. Emphasis on the second table of God’s law must be given here. Each student has the responsibility on the playground to show love for the neighbor or classmate. All their activities should be performed in the light of these commands of God to his people. In whatever activity they are involved in they must “be kindly affectioned to one another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another” (Romans 12:10).

Love for the classmate is shown by students when they play fairly. They do not lie or cheat to gain an advantage during a game. They are not restrictive in who may be involved in their time of play. If a game has a set number of participants, they will take turns so everybody gets a chance. They will not deride or mock

someone who lacks certain skills to excel at a game or activity. They also will not allow less skilled classmates to play, yet never throw them the ball or truly let them be part of the game. Numerous other examples could be given, but the teacher needs to be vigilant in exhorting his students to love one another at all times.

Students should be expected to encourage one another in a godly walk as they play at recess time. Older students are encouraged to set a positive example of proper behavior out on the playground. By their godly conversation and walk they show themselves to be children of the light. They must understand the younger children are often watching them. If they see one of the “older kids” breaking a rule and misbehaving, it is easy for them to think it is OK for them to act in the same manner.

We live in a competitive society. This is especially true of sports and games. Many times we see students who have only one goal in their game participation: WIN! The act of winning is not wrong in and of itself, but care must be taken that this does not lead to a prideful and haughty attitude. Students must be willing to humble themselves as a servant, recognizing their athletic talents and abilities have been given to them by God. They have the responsibility to use these abilities to glorify his name and not their own.

Something must also be said about the use of the tongue out on the playground. Words can be used to harm fellow students just as much as actions can. Sinful uses of the tongue can take many forms on the playground: teasing or bullying others, arguing, spreading gossip or slander, or even the use of vulgar language. Improper use of the tongue is often hard to monitor. Actions taken by students are often seen by many. Words which are spoken can often be spoken secretly and quietly, but they can cause much damage and hurt to those toward which they are directed. We must encourage our students to keep their tongues from evil (Psalm 34:13) and use them instead to speak of God’s goodness and righteousness and praise him all the day long (Psalm 35:28).

Difficulties and conflicts will happen on the playground. Angry words will be spoken. Teachers must respond to each situation that arises. They must speak to the parties involved and weigh the facts of the dispute as best they can. Apologies need to be made and forgiveness asked for. Instruction must be given to the students from God’s Word. Students must see where they have sinned against God in their mistreatment of a classmate. As part of their instruction, students also need to be directed as to how they could better handle the situation the next time

it arises. As many teachers can attest to, each class is unique in how they interact. Some classes play very well together and have very few disagreements. Others seem to be fighting almost constantly. As teachers we must be consistent in our instruction no matter what the class is like.

Teachers must also see the importance of recess duty. These are the designated times each teacher must be outside to watch the students as they play. We must observe what is being done and said on the playground and intervene if necessary. We must not just stand by the school doors and anxiously wait for the bell to ring so we can go inside. Effort must be taken to mill around the school yard to carefully monitor all activities. Take the time to interact with the students! Encourage them in their play! Much more about this topic has been written by Mr. Kyle Bruinooge in an excellent article found in the Winter 2007 issue of *Perspectives in Covenant Education*. I would advise every teacher to take the time to read this article which encourages the teacher in daily recess duty.

I also believe it is important for the teacher to spend time with their class at recess. As teachers we all have busy school lives: papers to grade, lessons to plan, classes to prepare for, individual students to help, etc. We need not spend every recess outside with them. Maybe we set a goal of spending one or two recesses outside interacting with our students. We don't necessarily do this just to monitor their behavior. However, we can set an example for them of proper play and attitude during recess. We show we take an interest in their activities outside the classroom setting. Just some food for thought.

As you can see, recess is an important part of the school day. May God use recess time at our schools to the upbuilding of his church and the glory and honor of his name!

A Brief History of Christian Education (2)

Rev. Nathan Langerak

The first installment of this article laid the groundwork by setting forth distinctive, truly Christian education as a matter of great concern for children of the Reformation such as we are: “As the Christian tradition was deeply interested in the education of the children of the church, so the Reformed faith has a profound interest in the establishment and maintenance of Christian schools. This has been true throughout the history of Reformed churches, from the Netherlands to the United States and beyond: “With the blossoming of the doctrine of the covenant in Reformed churches the view of the schools developed.” Rev. Langerak now traces the heart of Christian education from its roots in the Old Testament up through the sixteenth-century Reformation that God worked for his church...and for the schools that were started by members of Reformed churches.—Ed.

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him (Gen. 18:19).

Whether you promise and intend to see these children, when come to years of discretion...instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power?¹

The consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the covenant.²

1 The third question to the parents in the *Form for the Administration of Baptism*, in *The Confessions and Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches* (Grandville, MI: Protestant Reformed Churches in America), 260.

2 Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches, Art. 21, in *Confessions and Church Order*, 387.

Education in Scripture

Any history of Christian education must begin with the Old Testament. It is not necessary in the Old Testament to find a fully developed system of education such as we find in Reformed churches today. It would be foolish to try. But there we must begin to find its origins and its foundations.

There are any number of scriptural passages that give to fathers the mandate to teach their children the truth of God's word and thoroughly ground the education of children in the truth of God's covenant. Those passages are the basis for the truth that the Reformed faith recognized and explicitly stated time and again: the home and the school rest on the same foundation, namely God's covenant.

The whole of Scripture assumes an educated, covenantal people. The fact that very early the law existed as a book out of which the people were taught; that God gave to his people a book, laws, and teachers assumes teaching, learning, and education. It was incumbent on every Israelite to know God's law. He had to teach his children that Law so that they could keep it and could teach their children. If we examine the Scriptures with this in mind, then we will find surprising references to education.

One of the outstanding references in all of Scripture to education and to its absolute importance to the covenant of God is Genesis 18:19 (quoted above). This passage points out that Abraham's instruction was not only in doctrine, but it also involved his children's "doing justice and judgment." His instruction would pertain particularly to their life and specifically that in that life they would do justice and judgment according to God's commandments. Abraham's instruction was to encompass the whole scope of their life in the world to keep the way of the Lord by doing justice and judgment as the people of the Lord. I could speak further of the book of Deuteronomy, of the Psalms, and the Proverbs in which a wise covenantal father instructs his covenantal son.

Also certain details gleaned from Scripture indicate how educated the Israelites were.

Moses was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt (Acts 7:22). As the son of Pharaoh's daughter he received the finest training that Egypt had to offer. Several passages of Scripture mention the so-called schools of the prophets, which were not only a community of prophets in training, but also a seminary of sorts for the education of the prophets.³

³ "Concerning the so-called 'schools of the prophets' which, in the days of Elijah, existed

It is obvious that some of the prophets knew how to write. Even the rustic and poor Amos—a herdman and a picker of sycamore fruit—could write down his prophecy. And he did not come from a line of prophets, for he says, “I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son” (Amos 7:14). Jeremiah could inscribe documents (Jer. 32:10). There are a number of books of the prophets that are mentioned very early in the history of Israel (1 Chron. 29:29; 2 Chron. 12:15).

There was also the educated class of the scribes, of the king’s seed, and of the princes, who were “skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science” (Dan. 1:4).

The king was supposed to copy out his own copy of the law of God (Deut. 17:18).

Solomon was a keen observer and teacher of God’s creation and diligent to teach wisdom to his son, as is evident from all of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

In King Jehoshaphat’s day there was universal teaching in the law of God from the book of the law: “And they [the priest and Levites] taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people” (2 Chron. 17:9). The law was already a book, and the priest and Levites were commanded to go from village to village and city to city and to teach it. This is typical of the preaching on the Lord’s day, but also of teaching in the schools. There was distinctive teaching in the law of God as that bore on every aspect of the daily life of the church.

The Psalms, especially Psalm 78, assumes that teaching was taking place in Israel, and not only of one’s own children, but also of the children of others.

The wise Asaph could say that he had more knowledge than all his teachers (Ps. 119:99).

Malachi mentions the master and the scholar, or the teacher and the student, although in this case those who were foolish (Mal. 2:12).

We get a picture of an educated people who could read and write and know God’s law. However, education to such an advanced level was not universal: not all could read and write. There was a difference between the learned and the

at Bethel, Jericho and Gilgal (2 Kings 2:3, 5; 2 Kings 4:38–44), and probably in other places, it should be noted that these were associations or brotherhoods established for the purpose of mutual edification rather than education. The Bible does not use the word ‘schools’ to designate these fraternities. Nevertheless we cannot conceive of the element of religious training as being entirely absent.” (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (1939), s.v. “Education.”)

unlearned (Isa. 29:11, 12). Yet, there existed in Israel a definite class of scholars and educated people who could read, write, and teach, and all the Israelites were expected to be educated in the law of God.

Education among the Late Old Testament Hebrews

It is not surprising, then, that the Old Testament church developed a system of education in schools from the time after the exile in Babylon and that was nearly fully developed by the time of the New Testament. This development is well documented in secular writings.

Alfred Edersheim says that the Jewish parents began consistent work with the memory of a child at age three and taught reading at age five. Writing was not so common as was reading, but not so scarce as would be supposed. The Jews as an educated people had a saying: “At five years of age, reading the Bible; at ten years, learning the Mishnah; at thirteen years bound to the commandments; at fifteen years the study of the Talmud.”⁴

The education of the late Hebrews consisted of reading, writing, learning the Scriptures and the law of God. The council (Sanhedrin) commanded that every child be taught swimming. They eschewed the gymnasiums of the heathen, but recognized that education must also include some sort of bodily exercise.

Religious instruction included the law, beginning with the book of Leviticus and working systematically through the whole law, basic doctrine, prayer, singing, and especially the creation story.

At ten the children learned the Mishnah, which was the oral traditions and commentary on the Law of Moses that included nearly every topic from marriage to farming. Jesus refers to the Mishnah, when he says, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time” (Matt. 5:21). Skillful, gifted students went on to a full rabbinical education after age fifteen, that was an advanced education in the law of God, perhaps comparable to high school and university education. If a child did not show an aptitude for learning, his education ceased at age fifteen, though he was responsible to attend study times at the synagogue where the word of God was explained by the teacher.⁵

4 Alfred Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishing, 1994), 100.

5 Kenneth O. Gangel and Warren S. Benson, *Christian Education: Its History and Philosophy* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 19–32. James E. Reed and Ronnie Prevost, *A History of Christian Education* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 45–52. Eder-

Jewish education was done at home when the child was very young. But to educate children beyond the age of six or seven, the Jews organized schools. Parents were legally required to look after the education of their children by sending them to the elementary schools attached to every synagogue or to the private school of some teacher.⁶ That Paul was “brought up...at the feet of Gamaliel,” indicates not only that he was taught by that renowned Jewish scholar, but also that Paul was taught by him from a very young age (Acts 22:3).

The education of Hebrew children at school was closely connected with the institution of the synagogue. The synagogue as such was not a place of worship, but a place of learning and study, especially the study of the word of God. It did not, nor was it intended to compete with the official worship of God in the temple. Jesus frequented the synagogues and never once condemns them as places of false worship. To the synagogues in every town there was attached a school for the training of the children.

When education at the synagogue became organized into schools is a matter of some debate. There is a reference to synagogues in the Old Testament: “They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land” (Ps. 74:8). If this is a reference to the synagogues as meeting places, then this puts the development of synagogues very early in the history of Israel. Then it is not a stretch to place the development of the Jewish schools near that time.

Edersheim puts the development of schools at those synagogues in the time period after the exile. In the secular records of the Jews after the exile there is a notice that Ezra (the same Ezra of the Scriptures) encouraged schoolmasters to go out into the towns and educate the children.⁷ Shortly before the destruction of the temple in AD 70, the high priest decreed that “in every province and in every town schoolmasters be appointed who should take charge of the all boys from six or seven years of age.”⁸ And Josephus writes that by AD 70 there were 480 schools in Jerusalem.⁹ Emil Shurer says that on the evidence of later Judaism concerning schools, “We may without hesitation transfer them to the age of Christ, even

sheim, *Sketches*, 99–128.

⁶ Reed and Prevost, *A History*, 39.

⁷ Edersheim, *Sketches*, 124–25.

⁸ Edersheim, *Sketches*, 125.

⁹ Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities*, 125.

though not as a general and established institution.”¹⁰

The Jews were interested in the quality of the education in their synagogue schools. The instruction in years after the ascension of Christ was governed by a series of laws. The schools were not to be located in densely populated areas. School hours were regulated for the students’ comfort and ability to learn. Class size was regulated; so was the student to faculty ratio. Good teachers were earnestly sought. Bad teachers were removed.

There is scriptural evidence of education in synagogues. Jesus was well acquainted with the teachings of those “of old time” (Matt. 5:21). He read from the scroll of the book of Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:17–21). Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel his teacher (Acts 22:3). He was acquainted as well with some of the secular poets of Greece and quotes them in the Scriptures (Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12). The members of the Berean synagogue where Paul preached were educated enough to “search the Scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11).

What can we take from this history?

First, while the Jews recognized that the instruction of the children was a parental duty, it was also the responsibility of the whole town or community. They never interpreted the many passages of Scripture referring to a father’s duty to teach his children as anything less than a duty that was carried out in cooperation with other parents. They hired a teacher in the synagogue and sent their children to that teacher. So much was the education of children the responsibility of the covenantal people that where there was an orphan or the child of some poor parent, a fund was established to educate those children out of the charitable purse of the people. The instruction of the children was the interest of the church so that although the church did not do the instructing it was interested that instruction took place, how it took place, and what the content of that instruction was. They all had an interest in the education of all the children.

Second, the Jews started schools. The history of Christian education teaches us that Christian education is intimately connected to the institution of the school. At this late date in history we should not suppose that all schools will look outwardly like a typical school. A school can be very modest, with a trained instructor instructing the children of the church. We ought to get used to the idea of starting small schools. But we should recognize the necessity of them as

10 Emil Shurer, *History of the Jewish People*, Second Division, vol. 2 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), 49–50.

well. While home education is possible, it is not and should never become the norm. Nor should the small size of churches be used as an excuse not to start schools. The argument of small size falters and fails on home education itself. If two parents can educate their children, then a church of a very few families, with commitment, conviction, zeal, and under God's blessing can educate their children together. The Jews in the Old Testament recognized this in principle. They started schools—hundreds of them.

Third, all the children must be instructed. The universality of education was particularly Israelitish inasmuch as every child, male or female, had to know the law of God that regulated every aspect of his or her life from birth to death. While higher education was and always would remain the property of the few, nevertheless, education—book-learning in distinction from mere vocational training—was universal in Israel.

Fourth, the instruction that the Jews gave their children was governed from beginning to end by the word of God. It is this established fact that explains why Emil Shurer in his treatment of the school and synagogue begins with the Jewish view of the law and its knowledge: “The people which knoweth not the law is accursed. Such was the fundamental conviction of the post-exilic Judaism. And this of itself implies that knowledge of the law was esteemed as the possession worthy above all others to be striven after.”¹¹

This was the foundation of their educational philosophy:

To the pious Jews, the knowledge of God was everything; and to prepare for or impart that knowledge was the sum total, the sole object of his education... this was the life of the soul—the better and only true life, to which all else as well as the life of the body were merely subservient, as means towards an end.¹²

The pious Jew took seriously what God said by Jeremiah the prophet:

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight saith the LORD (Jer. 9:23, 24).

11 Shurer, *History*, 44.

12 Herman Hoeksema, *Essentials of Reformed Doctrine*, 2006, 4.

The “pious Jew,” wanted that for his own children and for the other children of the church.

That has the ring of the first question of the *Essentials* catechism book used in the PRC, “What is above all things precious? Answer: “The knowledge of the true God through Jesus Christ whom He has sent.” That thought governs Christian, indeed, Protestant Reformed Christian education to this day.

Education in the Early New Testament Church

Education was not unique to the Jews. Schools were common and widespread in the Roman Empire. Will Durant writes:

Ordinarily the boy and girl of the free classes entered at the age of seven an elementary school, accompanied each way by a paedagogus (“child-leader”) to guard his safety and his morals. Such schools existed everywhere in the Empire, even in small country towns; the wall scribblings in Pompeii suggest a general literacy, and probably education was then as widespread in the Mediterranean world as at any time before or since.¹³

In the Scriptures we read of Paul’s renting a facility in Ephesus from the teacher Tyrranus—a foreboding name for a student to hear on the first day of class. Even the heathens recognized some of the practical benefits of schools versus private tutors. The Roman, Quintilian, warned the rich that using private tutors was “depriving the child of formative friendships and stimulating rivalries.”¹⁴

Many of the church fathers obtained their education in the schools of Greece and Rome. John Chrysostom was educated by an avowed pagan. Augustine was trained in some of the finest secular schools of the day. But when some of the church fathers converted to Christianity, they recognized the necessity of a distinctly Christian education. Tertullian makes a plea that Christians cannot be schoolmasters in the pagan schools and implies the existence of Christian schoolmasters in the early church, a certain controversy over the use of pagan schools, and even a movement to start Christian schools in distinction from these pagan schools.¹⁵

Although the church’s main interest in their schools at the beginning was the

13 Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, vol. 3. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1950), 367.

14 Ibid.

15 Tertullian, “On Idolatry,” in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3 (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishing, 1999), 66.

catechesis of new converts in Christian doctrine, over time these catechetical schools were broadened and developed into schools of both religious and liberal arts instruction. The most famous of these schools, the one about which we have the most information, and that could have easily formed the pattern for the rest of these schools was the school of the church in Alexandria.

The church in Alexandria always had a catechetical school, but in AD 179 Pantaenus, a converted Stoic, took over as headmaster and began a vigorous program of developing a broad liberal arts and religious curriculum. The school was later led successively by Clement of Alexandria and by Origen who, among his other achievements, greatly advanced the science of Christian education.¹⁶

There are several important points about how the early church viewed Christian education, even though their main interest was in the catechism of children.

First, the church recognized that there must be a ground for education more substantive than the Greek's purpose of utility and the good life and the Roman's purpose of patriotism. The church sought to lay out explicitly a theological underpinning, a foundation, for the education of the children. The church father Gregory of Nyssa connected the necessity of Christian education to the image of God, and although he was wrong in identifying the image as man's rationality, he was right in seeking a theological basis for Christian education in God himself and the command to educate from God himself.¹⁷ Gregory of Nyssa was not alone in looking for a theological basis for education. The great church father Augustine said that the basis of Christian education was faith.¹⁸

Both the ground of Gregory and Augustine are fascinating in the extreme. By connecting Christian education to the image of God, the image of God by virtue of which Adam was created in covenantal fellowship with God, Gregory came very close to the truth that was later laid out by Dutch theologians that Christian education rests on the foundation of the covenant. Augustine in so many words says that Christian education rests on the view of the children of the church as God's children. They have faith. With Christian education in view, Augustine saw that by God's work there must be something spiritual in those children that made Christian education both necessary and effectual. If faith is in the children, then faith must be instructed. If faith is in them, then a specifically Christian instruc-

16 Reed and Prevost, *A History*, 81–87.

17 *Ibid.*, 90, 91.

18 *Ibid.*, 99.

tion will be effectual. This parallels the parent's view of the children they promise at baptism to educate in the aforesaid doctrine as children "sanctified in Christ."¹⁹ They are not merely set apart in some formal or objective way, but they are God's children, washed in Christ's blood from all their sins, and the possessors of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, having been joined to him by a true faith. Parents, therefore, promise to see these children "instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine."²⁰

Second, for all their emphasis on the church's duty to instruct and the church's actually doing the instruction, the church fathers basically saw education as the responsibility of parents. Parents were to rear their children. The church fathers quoted the very same passages that later Reformed theologians quoted to lay upon parents the duty to raise their children with a Christian upbringing and education. John Chrysostom is exemplary when in a sermon to parents of their duty to educate their children he said, "To each of you fathers and mothers I say, just as we see artists fashioning their paintings and statues with great precision, so we must care for these wondrous statutes of ours."²¹

Third, the church saw the necessity of the universality of Christian education. Pagan Greece and Rome scoffed at the education of the women. There might have been a few exceptions in Greece and Rome, but by and large the girls were ignored. Although some of the comments of the church fathers with regard to women would make us wince, and are seized upon by historians as the objects of ridicule, in the matter of the education of women the church was different from Rome and Greece. The necessity of educating the girls was as important as educating the boys. The *Didache*, an ancient and very early Christian manual for the church, specifically exhorts parents to teach their daughters as well as their sons.²² Jerome exhorts mothers not only to teach their daughters domestic work and proper behavior, but also to teach them learning.²³ And Clement of Alexandria said, "They who possess life in common, grace in common, and salvation in common have also virtue in common, and therefore, education, too."²⁴

Fourth, men like Gregory of Nyssa and others specifically linked the necessity

19 *Form for the Administration of Baptism*, in *Confessions and Church Order*, 260.

20 *Ibid.*

21 Reed and Prevost, *A History*, 97.

22 *Ibid.*, 103.

23 *Ibid.*, 104.

24 *Ibid.*

of a distinctly Christian education to church orthodoxy and church unity.²⁵ Even though Christian education more or less consisted in catechism classes for the converts and children, it was necessary. It was necessary that Christian education be present and active in order for the church to guard orthodoxy and to be unified in that orthodoxy. Without it the church flounders. Having the children educated where the truth is not taught and the church flounders. They understood already that schools were the “nurseries of the church,” a sentiment that would be expressed hundreds of years later by the Reformed founders of Christian education in the United States.

Education in Christendom of the Medieval Period

This may come as a shock to some, but education continued into the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages may not have been equal to the early church in learning, but there was learning and some bright lights in all the darkness.

In the medieval period with few exceptions Christian education was dominated by the monastery and cathedral schools.

The monastery was an institution separate from but closely related to the institution of the church. They were governed by their own rules and appointed their own leaders, called abbots. There were different orders of monks. Especially the Benedictine Order of monks made education their business and some of the finest schools in Europe were started by the monks of the Brethren of the Common Life.²⁶ From the sixth to the eleventh centuries until the rise of the medieval university, the monks controlled virtually all education.

There were two kinds of students at the monastery schools. There were the *interni*, students about ten to eighteen years of age who were planning on joining the monastery. There were also the *exteri*, students who had no intention of joining the monastery. The students at the monastery schools were taught to varying degrees of success reading, writing, arithmetic, religion, and perhaps some others studies that interested the particular teacher, such as the sciences. The course of formal education was known as *The Seven* and was divided into two parts: the *trivium* (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy).

Education was also the business of the local church and cathedral. And later in the Middle Ages each cathedral would have attached a school to itself.

25 Ibid, 91.

26 Ibid., 235.

Charlemagne, king of the Franks, was responsible for a preservation and advancement of Christian education in the Middle Ages from 787 onward. Through his efforts and edicts learning was preserved in medieval Europe. Durant writes about Charlemagne's influence:

The splendid school system of the Roman Empire had decayed in the tumult of invasion and the depopulation of the towns. When the tidal wave of migration subsided in the sixth century, a few lay schools survived in Italy; the rest were mostly schools for the training of converts and prospective priests. For some time (500–800) the Church gave all her attention to moral training, and did not reckon the transmission of secular knowledge as one of her functions. But under the prodding of Charlemagne cathedrals, monasteries, parish churches, and convents opened schools for the general education of boys and girls.²⁷

By 1120, every town in France had a teacher, and in the eleventh century every convent and cathedral in Germany had a school.²⁸ Charlemagne issued edicts requiring the improvement of monastic schools. He declared that each monastery or bishopric [church district—NJL] must have its own school, and each town had to maintain a school. Still more, he not only made the laws, but he also enforced them with inspectors.²⁹ Charlemagne himself established and financed the Palace School and imported Alcuin of York from England to be the headmaster. Especially Alcuin popularized what today is called a liberal arts education and made sure that good teachers were imported from far and wide to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, music, and grammar.

The University

With the arrival of the university, a great stride was taken in Christian education despite the fact that at the time of the Reformation Luther could call the universities “dens of murderers, temples of Moloch, and synagogues of corruption.”³⁰ In the end the Reformation either reformed them or started their own.

The organization of the medieval university was modeled directly on the lines of the medieval guild, which was a *universitatis* (body) that was formed for the protection, security, and advancement of a craft or trade. The guilds especially

27 Durant, *Story*, 4:913

28 *Ibid.*

29 *Ibid.*, 466.

30 Durant, *Story*, 6:786.

were responsible for training the next generation of craftsmen. An apprentice learned a trade from a master craftsman. The apprentice after some training advanced to a journeyman who had some freedom to practice his trade. Finally the journeyman would present his masterpiece to his peers in the guild who would grant approval to him to practice the trade as a master.

This philosophy was applied to liberal arts education at the universities. Teachers organized themselves into guilds and taught the students who then prepared theses to present for peer review and upon approval degrees were granted to teach or practice a particular subject. The medieval universities focused especially on theology, law, medicine, and the arts. The university movement was in full swing by the 1200s, and by the 1500s there were eighty recognized universities in Europe.

It is difficult to distinguish Christian education from any other education in the medieval period. In name that was all there was. But at this time, too, we see that some principles developed.

First, even in the darkness of learning and false doctrine in the Middle Ages, there was Christian education. It continued.

Second, the church institute did not educate exclusively, but monks in the monasteries and qualified teachers in universities educated as well. That was a development in which an organization—orders of monks or university—other than the church was educating the children. It was the responsibility of the parents to avail themselves of these means.

Furthermore, there was a drive to teach the liberal arts, that is, to give an education in general knowledge of reading, writing, arithmetic, logic, and the classics, in distinction from and addition to catechism in doctrine by the church.

Especially in the universities education was controlled by free associations. Philip Schaff notes that the university was not “the immediate creation of the church.”³¹ The popes were wise enough to patronize the churchmen who taught in the universities, but the church authority did not bring them into being. They were free associations formed for the purpose of education. Although they received backing from the church and state, they were essentially free as much as was possible in the Middle Ages from the direct control of the church or the state. The universities sometimes guarded their independence jealously, which

31 Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 5 (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishing, 2002), 552.

itself makes for interesting history. About church involvement in the University of Paris, the unquestioned leader of European universities, Durant relates:

In 1253 a student was killed in a street brawl; the city authorities arrested several students, and ignored their right and demand to be tried by the University masters or the bishop; the masters, in protest, ordered the cessation of lectures. Two Dominican teachers and one Franciscan, all members of the masters' association, refused to obey the order to cease talk; the association suspended them from membership; they appealed to Alexander IV, who (1255) ordered the university of masters to readmit them. To avoid compliance, the masters disbanded; the Pope excommunicated them; students and populace attacked the friars in the streets. After six years of controversy a compromise was reached: reorganized masters admitted the monastic masters, who pledged full obedience to "university" statutes thereafter; but the faculty of arts permanently excluded all monks from membership.³²

The associations responsible for the rise of the university the Middle Ages were associations of teachers or students. That was a development in the history of education. Neither the church nor the state directly educated in the universities. They were governed by associations of teachers. The associations controlled the education of the children through some elected officers and boards. It would take several hundred years for the church to recognize that these associations must be associations of parents.

Education and the Reformation

It must be admitted, though, that education as a whole in the Middle Ages suffered either from the stagnation of scholasticism or from a general lack of interest or inability to give a thorough liberal arts, Christian education. Serfs and peasants received almost no education at all, but only training in a skill or trade. Durant states that intellectual knowledge was "scorned by most feudal knights." They reveled in their illiterate wealth and power. "Literacy was left to clerks or scribes who could be hired for a pittance."³³ "The princes and lords," Luther would write later, "were so busily engaged in the high and important affairs of the cellar, the kitchen, and the bedchamber, too, that they had no time to help education."³⁴

32 Durant, *Story*, 4:922–23.

33 Durant, *Story*, 4:563.

34 Durant, *Story*, 6:786.

Popular Christian education was virtually non-existent. Education was for the few who could tear themselves away from the pressures of work in the fields, or for those who were destined for a career in the church or government. Many monks were ignorant, as is evident from the state's inspections of education. In the late 1400s and early 1500s, Bishop Hooper of Gloucester, England, surveyed 311 "educated" English clergymen and found that "168 were unable to repeat the Ten Commandments, 31 did not know where to find them, 40 could not tell where the Lord's Prayer is to be found, and 31 did not know the Author."³⁵

With the Reformation there was a revival of education. Education was important to the Reformation. The priesthood of all believers demanded it. The reformers recognized what Philip Schaff states, "Education and the advance of true religion are inseparable"; and again, "Church and school go together"; and again, "The Reformation...gave a powerful impulse to common schools."³⁶ We see in the Reformation the idea resurfacing that education should be for all the people. The reformers saw education's intimate relationship both to an educated laity who could read and study the Scriptures and be taught doctrine and discern errors, and to an educated clergy who could study the original languages, think analytically, and teach doctrine effectively. Diarmaid MacCulloch states concerning the reformers and Calvin in particular:

Calvin and the preacher who followed him asked a lot of their audience and were thus taking them seriously as adults in the faith. Reformed congregations were expected to absorb and understand complex and abstract material and therefore were encouraged to see the value of education.³⁷

The historian D'Aubigne is correct, therefore, when he says, "It was not the public worship alone that the Reformation was ordained to change. The school was early placed beside the Church, and these two great institutions...were equally reanimated by it."³⁸ The Reformation was not only a reformation in doctrine, but by that also a reformation of education. From the very beginning,

35 Reed and Provost, *A History*, 168.

36 Schaff, *History*, 7:512–end page.

37 Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2004), 230.

38 J. H. Merle D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, vol. 3, (New York: Hurst & Company), 172.

the Reformation emphasized the necessity of an education of the children of the Church in all branches of learning and an education that is based upon and permeated by the word of God.

All the major reformers wrote on or influenced the development of a popular, Christian education. Luther wrote two large treatises on the subject and preached a sermon devoted to it. Melancthon, Luther's younger colleague, wrote so many textbooks on different subjects and grammars for the schools' use and was so assiduously involved in German educational reform that he is simply called "the Schoolmaster of Germany."³⁹ Zwingli wrote two treatises on Christian education. Calvin established the Academy in Geneva and was himself a covenantal theologian interested in the covenant's children.

At the very beginning of the Reformation, Martin Luther called for the establishment of Christian schools as an essential element of the Reformation. In 1524, he wrote "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools." This plea for the establishing of Christian schools was followed in 1530 by a powerful appeal to the parents to use the schools, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School."

He inveighed against the nobles for their lack of interest in education and instead spending money on wars and other wasteful pursuits. He sharply warned parents who reject Christian school teachers:

Because they are not now willing to support and keep the honest, upright, virtuous schoolmasters and teachers offered them by God to raise their children in the fear of God, and in virtue, knowledge, learning, and honor by dint of hard work, diligence, and industry, and at small cost and expense, they will get in their place incompetent substitutes, ignorant louts such as they have had before, who at great cost and expense will teach the children nothing but how to be utter asses, and beyond that will dishonor men's wives and daughters and maidservants, taking over their homes and property, as has happened before. This will be the reward of the great and shameful ingratitude into which the devil is so craftily leading them.⁴⁰

He caustically defended the notion that the children should receive a liberal arts education of the highest quality against those who wanted to emphasize a

39 Durant, *Story*, 6:787

40 Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," in *Luther's Works*, vol. 46 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 218.

strictly Bible school training. Against a supposed objection of the nobles that this was unnecessary, he replied:

We admit, you say, there should and must be schools, but what is the use of teaching Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and other liberal arts? Could we not teach, in German, the Bible and God's word, which are sufficient for salvation? Answer: Yes, I well know, alas! that we Germans must ever be and abide brutes and wild beasts, as the surrounding nations call us... The arts and languages, which do us no harm, nay, which are a greater ornament, benefit, honor, and advantage, both for understanding Holy Writ, and for managing civil affairs, we are disposed to despise; and foreign wares, which are neither necessary nor useful to us, and which, moreover, peel us to the very bone, these we are not willing to forego.⁴¹

Christian education of the medieval period not only suffered in its being confined to a relative few, while the masses continued in ignorance, but it suffered because it was in bondage to the false doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. Rome preferred it that way. That concentrated the power in their hands. That kept the people in ignorance and in their superstitions. The Reformation was also a Reformation of education, a freeing it from the false doctrine of Rome, an insistence upon its universality among all the people of the church, and its control by the truth of the word of God.

The schools that the Reformation insisted upon were enthusiastically taken up and developed in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, and that enthusiasm for Christian education was continued in the United States by the Dutch immigrants. Of that history we are the heirs.

Conclusion

We speak of the unfolding history of God's covenant. That is very precious to us. God's covenant which was revealed and established with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden so that God spoke to them of a seed, unfolded and developed throughout the Old Testament Scriptures in the covenant with Noah, which indicated clearly that God's covenant is destined to encompass the whole of creation; in the covenant with Abraham, which limited one particular family; in the covenant with David, which unfolded as a kingdom; and so on into the New Testament where in Jesus Christ God realizes his covenant and kingdom and establishes it in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

41 Martin Luther, quoted in Schaff, *History*, 6:514–15.

The covenant unfolds.

So does education based on that covenant.

Protestant Reformed schools as we know them today are not found in the history of Christian education, in the Scriptures, in the early and late history of the Hebrews, in the early church, or in the Reformation. But what we must see from this “brief” examination of the history of Christian education is that the principles upon which Protestant Reformed schools rest are, latent in the early developments of Christian education. The beautiful flower that we see and enjoy in our schools was present already as a little bud many, many years prior to the Reformation. The Reformed churches and Protestant Reformed schools stand in a long and distinguished tradition of Christian education in schools. And these schools we are called to receive thankfully as God’s gift, hold them fast, use them, and support them.

Book Review

Truman

Lois Kregel

Truman, by David McCullough. Simon and Schuster; paperback; 1992. 992 pages.

Do not hesitate to read this book because of its length; I enjoyed it even more than John Adams, perhaps because I lived through these times, as did some of you. I found it fascinating that the judgment of history could be so different from what ours was when we were living through it.

It was certainly not originally Harry Truman’s dream to be President, but when you read the circumstances of how the office was unexpectedly thrust upon him,

you can certainly see that it was God's plan. A less likely candidate for that office you could hardly find; many people felt that way even after he had inherited it, after the sudden death of Franklin Roosevelt. We were among them. Historians judged differently, however, and having read "the rest of the story," I am inclined to agree with them.

The first Trumans came to Missouri in the 1840s; many others came for the cheap, fertile land, and because it was a slave state. The Trumans had no slaves, which perhaps explains in part Truman's early championship of civil rights.

Harry was born on May 8, 1884, to John Andrew Truman and the former Mattie Young, in a little town called Lamar, Missouri. He was named Harry S., because his parents couldn't decide which grandparent to honor, Solomon or Shipp. He was born with terrible eyesight, which was partially corrected with glasses, but his poor eyesight was to plague him all his life.

His family was never very successful, and neither was he. His father had gone back to the Blue Ridge to run a farm for his mother; Harry had just landed his first good job at the bank when his father sent for him to help run the farm. Harry obediently went, and after a short time that they worked together, his father died. Harry continued on the farm; he became a Mason, he joined the National Guard, and continued his courtship of Bess Wallace by letter.

When World War I broke out, Harry was 33 years old; his vision was 20/50 in one eye, 20/400 in the other, but he was accepted as a volunteer. Bess wanted to get married before he went overseas, but Harry refused, fearing that he might return maimed.

He left the farm in the care of his sister and hired men, and was sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma to train. In March of 1918 he sailed for France. He served honorably and attained to the rank of captain. His men loved him, partly because he never asked them to do anything that he wouldn't do himself. In the midst of the fighting he always managed to look dapper and neat, a quality at which his men marveled. That ability was to remain with him all his life.

The armistice was signed on Nov. 11, 1918, but it wasn't until April, 1919, that he shipped home, and was seasick all the way. Harry and Bess Wallace were married on June 28, 1919, and moved to Bess's room upstairs in her mother's house, planning it as a temporary arrangement. Their only child, a daughter, Margaret, was born in February, 1924, and was the joy of their lives.

Jimmy Pendergast had been one of Truman's army friends. His father, Alderman Jim, was into politics, the politics of favors—you do me one and I'll do one

for you. Jimmy introduced Harry to his father, big Jim, and eventually he asked Harry if he'd like to run for eastern judge of Jackson County, a courthouse job in Independence, and a prime spot politically. He was elected to the position, through the Pendergasts, but he would be forever associated with the name of a political boss. The next office they secured for him was senator from Missouri, and his political career was launched. And so life in Washington, D. C. began, a life never embraced by Bess and Margaret. They rented a small apartment on Connecticut Avenue. Harry, who could play piano quite well, also rented a piano; he was partial to classical music. His salary was \$10,000, and he could barely make ends meet.

Truman worked hard at the Senate; by some he was looked down upon for his association with the Pendergasts; by others he was respected for his diligence.

There was war in Europe. Hitler had begun his conquest of Europe, and England was being bombed. Truman urged preparedness, but on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, we were woefully unprepared.

In 1944 Roosevelt announced that he was running for a fourth term. Who would be his running mate? The politics went on, and Roosevelt was pressured into choosing Truman, who reluctantly accepted.

Roosevelt won the election, and the little-known Truman was elected with him. Roosevelt had met with Truman only twice, and even now Roosevelt failed to brief Truman on what was going on in the administration. Shortly after the inauguration Roosevelt departed for a meeting with Stalin and Churchill at Yalta, where he failed to stand up to Stalin. Upon his return he took off for Warm Springs, Georgia, the Little White House. He left on March 29, 1945, and on April 12 Truman was at the Senate when he received an urgent call to come to the White House. There he was ushered into the sitting room of Eleanor Roosevelt, who gently put her hand on his shoulder and said, "Harry, the President is dead."

Suddenly a virtually unknown man was thrust into the highest office in the land—perhaps in the world. The leading generals in Europe, Eisenhower, Bradley, and Patton, were dismayed and pessimistic. In my husband's unit, stationed at that time in Germany, no one knew who the Vice President was. Things looked grim.

Truman, however, surprised many. He made it a point to acquaint himself with every angle of the war and of the nation. He surrounded himself with trusted advisors. He thought the world of Marshall.

Truman had to meet with Stalin and Churchill, as the three heads of the allies. The historic meeting took place at Potsdam. Before the meetings he toured the ruined city of Berlin, and was shocked and saddened by what he saw, the homeless families with their children and few belongings, wandering about aimlessly. He took a firm stand with Stalin, much more than Roosevelt had. He insisted that he keep his promise of a free Poland. He reminded him of his obligation to continue until the war with Japan was won.

At that time we had achieved the building of the ultimate weapon, the atomic bomb, and Truman was faced with the decision of whether or not to use it on Japan. It would mean a horrendous loss of life. If we didn't, a hundred thousand more American lives would be lost, as we would have to invade Japan. He made the decision to use it, and the first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 5, 1945. Japan still did not surrender unconditionally, and we bombed Nagasaki. Then Japan surrendered. The Emperor would be allowed to stay, but subject to the supreme Commander of the Allies. The announcement came at 7:00 PM on August 14, V-J Day, and jubilant Americans took to the streets; we did, too.

Thus in a few short months Truman was part of more history than many a President in four years. Stalin was the troublemaker, but Truman stood up to him as Roosevelt never had. When Stalin cut off West Berlin from supplies, Truman initiated the airlift, and kept the West supplied as long as was necessary.

In the aftermath of the war, many problems surfaced at home, and Truman's popularity declined. Yet he decided to run for a second term. The Republicans nominated Thomas Dewey. The polls showed Dewey far ahead, but Truman stumped the country by train, visiting every state; he was confident he would win. He won the hearts of the common people, while Dewey seemed like the distant intellectual.

Election Day found Truman calm and unflappable. As the returns came in he was gaining in the popular vote, but the pollsters still predicted that he would lose. He went to bed at 9:00, with instructions to call him if anything significant happened. Around midnight he awoke, switched on the radio, and listened to H. V. Kaltenborn still predicting that Dewey would win.

Around 6:00 AM the news came that the tide had turned. Truman told his agent to get the car ready; they were going to Kansas City, where some of his men were. He appeared rested and refreshed, totally composed. Dewey didn't concede until 11:14 AM. It was an amazing victory.

We were dismayed. We had stayed up with friends until the wee hours, waiting

for the “farm vote.” Truman to us was foul-mouthed, profane, a disgrace to his office, and we were hoping dignity would be restored to the White House. It was four more years of Truman.

There were two well-remembered events in Truman’s second, but first elected term. One was the spat over the poor review that Margaret Truman’s concert received by the music critic of the Washington Post, Paul Hume. Truman wrote Hume a scathing letter, using gutter language, which was published. It did Truman’s reputation no good.

The second, and more important, was his firing of MacArthur. We were at war with North Korea, part of the United Nations effort to defend South Korea from invasion by its neighbor to the north. MacArthur wanted to extend the war to Red China, which was helping North Korea; he wanted to use atomic weapons on them. When he continued to be insubordinate, Truman fired him. MacArthur was immensely popular in the United States, and came home to a sympathetic audience, which he played upon. Truman lost some more of his popularity.

Eisenhower decided to run for President for the Republican Party in 1952. Truman had decided not to run. Eisenhower won by virtue of his promise to go to Korea, but by the time he got there the war was virtually over. General Matthew Ridgeway had replaced MacArthur, and conducted the war honorably, until an agreement was reached by the United Nations forces.

In his retirement Truman returned to Independence. At first he was lost, but he was not financially independent, and as yet there was no presidential pension, or Secret Service guard for ex-Presidents, so he sold his memoirs to *Life* magazine, and commenced work on a presidential library.

He and Bess went on a second honeymoon to Europe, where he had the time of his life. Crowds cheered him everywhere. In Salzburg he played a Mozart sonata on Mozart’s piano. At Oxford the man who had never gone to college received an honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

Many came to visit him upon his return, although Eisenhower continued to snub him. Truman’s daughter Margaret had married Clifton Daniels, so Harry and Bess now had four grandsons to brighten their lives. Truman died at the age of 88, on Dec. 26, 1972, and was buried in the courtyard of his library. Bess lived another ten years.

I know this is long; so is the book, and I don’t know how many of you will read it. Sometimes I would take a break and read something lighter for a while, but I wanted you to have a taste of this one. I learned so much.

My opinion of Truman from a Christian point of view has not changed; he was profane, coarse, and rough in his talk. He was even worse than I thought. He could be pious, as when he quoted Solomon's prayer when he was thrust into the Presidency. He had no conception of a holy God, and that makes me shudder.

He was completely true to his wife, although he had opportunities not to be; when that happened he said, "Listen, I married my sweetheart; I don't want anything to do with that stuff." As a man he was plain, conscious of his office and even in awe of it, a person of integrity, completely honest and loyal to his country. He stood up to Stalin and held the respect of Churchill; history numbers him among our strongest presidents. I was wrong at the time he was President in my judgment of him in his office. God's plan was certainly different from my desire.

McCullough is the best biographer I have read. His research is thorough, and his attention to detail is remarkable.

If you can, read this book. You will profit from it.

Book Review

Children and Youth Literature

Brenda Dykstra

Prayer for a Child, Caldecott Award winner, 1945, by Rachel Field; illustrated by Elizabeth Orton Jones. Recommended ages: 3-7 years.

This poetic bedtime prayer of a little child shares her hopes and fears as well as her life tale. Her cares and fears belong to that of loving little one eager for her Lord to bless her and those around her.

Response: Really, this book is a precious bedtime poem so indicative of a tiny little child, that it can be difficult to evaluate such as literary prose! The petitions are

earthly, basic requests of a tiny youth, asking daily needs from her God. This prayer is not exactly modeled after the Lord's prayer. No personal address is made to God as her Father or Lord, much less to acknowledging His will; no request for forgiveness of sins or even an acknowledgement of Jesus as her Savior and his redemptive work. But the poetry and rhyme are present, making it not only joyful to read to little ones but also to share the personal faith possible in a tiny child.

The pictures identify its award-winning character and Caldecott medal. They are gorgeous full-page paintings of a beautiful, longhaired little girl, sharing her day and family with the reader. Questionably, there are images of angels, but they are child-like and not real-life, almost like figurines.

Despite these issues, this book is a piece of literature worth a look by father or mother eager to converse with his or her children about bedtime prayers. It opens the window of opportunity to share what personal prayer is all about as well as what beautiful paintings can display and share. And what better time to talk about how this child could have added more in her prayer such as forgiveness of sins or talking to the Lord as her Savior and King? Enjoy!

The Beautiful World that God Made, by Rhonda Gowler Greene; illustrated by Anne Wilson. Eerdmans Publishing; 2002. Recommended ages: 3 to 7 years.

How did the world begin, and just how did the trees, birds, sun and moon come to be? Simply, rhythmic lines share the vivid, sweeping story our God designed as he created his beautiful, splendid world.

Response: This tale is a great, simple, rhythmic read-aloud for younger children, whose minds can hardly fathom the glory of creation. The illustrations of Anne Wilson are glorious, inked and collaged papers that share the beautiful color of this faith-invoking story. "Through faith we understand the worlds were framed by the Word of God" (Hebrews 11:3). And this book is really a joyful way to teach the glory of God as he designed the world that we see and experience through the eyeglasses of that faith.

A questionable item surfaced with one tiny illustration sharing a collaged picture of Adam and Eve with Eve's face as Caucasian and Adam's face as African-American. Interesting to note how the author goes out of the way to say who was created in God's image. It almost seems as if the glory of the story is something that shouldn't even be colorfully shared, even if the portraits are inked collages

and not real-life drawings. But to a child whose mind devours the visual aids as well as the literary device of rhythms, I find this book certainly worth a look by parent or teacher.

The Cat Who Went to Heaven, Newbery Award winner, 1931, by Elizabeth Coatsworth; illustrated by Lynd Ward; 65 pages. Recommended ages: 10-13 years.

Set in the Buddhist country of Japan in the 1900s, this tale is of a poor artist eager to find his fortune. He is commissioned to paint an important painting for the village temple of a dying Buddha lord. The artist, excited to begin as he is “destined” to make a fortune, chooses to paint all of the animals on the canvas who patiently and lovingly receive the Buddha’s death blessing, but one animal continually remains absent—a cat! The artist’s housekeeper has brought a well-behaved, kind cat named Good Fortune who eagerly desires the artist to include her as well. Will the artist paint this white, yellow, and black-spotted feline? Will the Lord Buddha receive a cat, who is, in heathen tradition, symbolic of evil and associated with goblins? Find out in this award-winning tale.

Response: The tale includes colorful characters, including the patient and understanding cat. The author has a definite, well-defined route to tale completion, identifying its Newbery award-winning status. Even the illustrations of Lynd Ward assist the reader to understanding the tale. I, however, found the story to be quite heathen in nature as always the housekeeper and the artist seek the Buddha’s blessing. Certainly his is a god of man’s imagination, and children must thoroughly comprehend this religion in order to receive its literary value. It might offer good supplementary fictitious material to students or someone specifically studying this heathen religion, but overall, I would not recommend this to the average Christian child.

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