

Dear Protestant Reformed Parents:

For some time already the Consistory of Hudsonville Church has been concerned about the lack of spiritual training for the handicapped children in its congregation, but they did not know quite how to go about undertaking this instruction. Although the consistory has also recognized the need for godly academic training for these children, they decided to limit their initial efforts to the setting up of a program of Biblical instruction for these children.

This program which is under the direct supervision of the consistory was set up this past fall. The Consistory asked Mrs. Gertrude Hoeksema to conduct Bible Study classes once a week on a one-to-one basis for four of the special children of Hudsonville congregation. Mrs. Hoeksema has reported to the consistory that in the presentation of the stories of the public ministry of Jesus, with the use of many aids, such as pictures and flannel-graphs, she has succeeded not only in teaching the children the concrete elements in the Bible stories, but has also gained the pupils' responses to the underlying spiritual truths in the lessons. Both the children and Mrs. Hoeksema are happy with the instruction and the considerable progress made in these once-a-week sessions.

With this small beginning of instruction for handicapped children as an incentive, the Consistory of Hudsonville believes it is more than time to expand this teaching and try to provide for all the special children in our area Protestant Reformed churches the opportunity to be instructed not only in Bible Studies, but in all areas of learning in God-centered, covenantal education. This means, of course, that we would need qualified, dedicated, and compassionate teachers who are interested in the education of our special covenant youth.

With the realization that this is an ambitious goal, but that it is a highly necessary one in our denomination, the Hudsonville Consistory is inviting all parents of mentally handicapped children--the very slow learners, the deaf, the mutes, the brain-damaged--and all friends and relatives and supporters of the education of such children to a meeting to be held at Hudsonville Church.

The purpose of such a meeting would be:

1. To present background information about the work with special children.
2. To give those present at the meeting the opportunity to form a parental organization for a prospective school for Protestant Reformed special education.
 - a) That this organization elect a board and appoint a constitution committee.
 - b) That the organization set the goal of establishing a school, the Lord willing, as soon as feasible.

Though this effort is small (as all beginnings are), and though we may expect to have only a small school, yet the task of teaching our special children is very important.

We therefore ask as many of you as possible to meet with us and give us your support and your prayers for the education of these special children. We expect, of course, that there will be many questions to be answered with regard to this project. We wish to stress that this initial meeting is to be informative in nature. For that reason we also stress that the meeting is certainly open to mothers as well as fathers, though, of course, the vote will be limited to our men as heads of households.

We believe not only that it is time to make a beginning, but that under the blessing of our heavenly Father we shall succeed.

Yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Consistory, Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church

Place of meeting: Hudsonville Church Fellowship Hall.

Time of meeting: 3/16/83