

# Professional ETHICS in Education

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This is March 1960.

March is a most important month for the professional educator. It is customary for school boards during this month to tender contracts to teachers employed to the different schools of our nation. School boards and teachers must then make definite decisions. The school board must consider the problem of staffing its school and the teacher must consider the contract or contracts he may be offered.

It is at this time that the serious teacher most acutely experiences one of the difficult aspects of his teaching career. He must make a choice concerning a contract offered him from the school which he presently serves or he must decide to apply elsewhere and accept some other position which may possibly be offered him.

His entire consideration of the possibilities and all his uses of the avenues available for obtaining a position are basically an ethical problem. Because this is an ethical problem, it is also a spiritual problem. This is especially true for the Christian teacher or prospective teacher. He must make a decision which is in harmony with the Word and will of God.

If the prospective teacher desires a position there are certain avenues of approach that he may follow. One of these is the placement bureau of the college which he attends. This bureau locates vacancies and solicits the interest of employing officials in graduates who are best qualified for positions that are vacant. There are also commercial and state placement bureaus which can indicate positions that are vacant. The prospective teacher can also go out and look for a position. In the Christian community he can answer advertisements which appear in periodicals which indicate the vacancies and positions available in certain school systems and geographic areas. Christian school teachers can also obtain employment through the services of the National Union of Christian Schools. This organization actively assists school boards and administrators who are members of it to staff schools.

The national Union of Christian Schools has adopted certain rules which it expects member schools to follow with respect to the employment of "in service" and "in training" teaching personnel. It has taken the position that contracts for the next year may be extended to all teachers in the employment of the board during the month of March. Prior to the board's offering contracts, however, the National Union publishes a list of schools that have vacancies which need to be filled. This list appears in February for the board and the teacher's inspection and scrutiny. This list is published prior to March 1 so that the teacher who believes that change in position would be advantageous for him and for the school which he serves can consider the vacancies which will occur. School boards know what vacancies there will be for the next year because it has obtained a "statement of intention" from all its teachers. On the basis of the returns of the "statements of intention" the board can report its needs to the National Union and the National Union can publish a report for all member schools.

I believe that this is an excellent method because if the teacher is not in possession of a list of vacancies which will occur, he is "hamstrung" in his consideration of the position which the board employing him at the moment has to offer him. He feels that the only thing he can do is to accept. If he knows, however, that there are other vacancies he can more intelligently

consider the contract offered him by his board. It is likewise true that the board can more intelligently renew or decline renewal of contracts.

The teacher whose contract is not renewed by his board is also at a disadvantage if this list were not available because he would not know where to turn if he felt called to continue in the teaching profession.

The National Union has also adopted the policy that prospective teachers who shall graduate with degrees shall not be contracted to teach until April. This gives prospective teachers opportunity to consider vacant positions and also gives boards opportunity to weigh qualifications, merits, and demerits of the prospective teachers available.

The Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies has also been considering this whole problem of teacher employment. The members of this organization are the Adams Street Association for Christian Education, Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School, and South Holland and Oak Lawn Society for Protestant Reformed Education.

You, dear reader, are certainly aware of the fact that our schools are acutely in need of qualified teachers to fill the vacancies in our Protestant Reformed Christian grade schools. In order to prevent an pirate ring by both teachers and boards during a time when there is a shortage of teachers and to create amicable relations between the boards and staffs of our present Protestant Reformed Christian Schools, the Federation has formulated certain rules which are to determine the procedures for contracting of teaching personnel.

Here follows a list of rules that the Federation adopted.

1. Contracts shall be tendered on March 1 or thereafter to "in-service" teachers.
2. Teachers shall be given 20 days after presentation for consideration of signing contracts.
3. Boards shall approve or reject contracts with 30 days of presentation of contracts.
4. No solicitation is to be made prior to March 1 of any teacher employed by a board belonging to the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies.
5. It is not permissible to solicit in training or unemployed teachers before March 1.
6. Schools may secure a "statement of intention" of it teachers in February.
7. Schools are permitted to advertise as vacancies become known.

It is imperative that if such an agreement as the above purports to be, is reached, all the parties and boards must be thoroughly familiar with all the rules and clauses of the same. Such an agreement must be thoroughly understood and boards must adhere to the rules of such an agreement implicitly, otherwise such an agreement is of no value.

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