

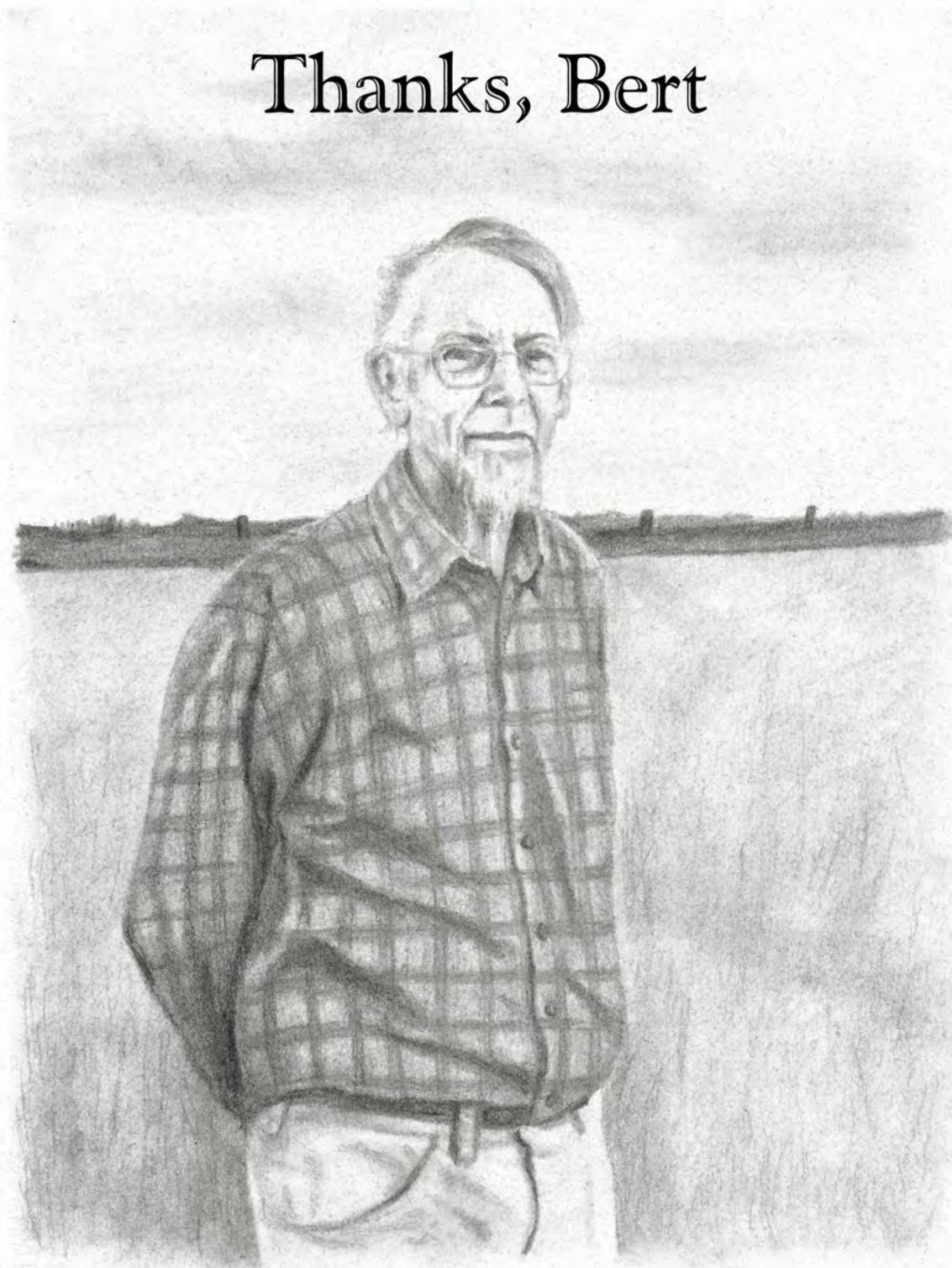
A forum for Christian school educators

Christian Educators Journal

Volume 49 No.2 December 2009



Thanks, Bert



A Word of Thanks

Taking Bert For Granted

by Bill Boerman-Cornell

Bill Boerman-Cornell is Assistant Professor of Education at Trinity Christian College and the Chair of the Christian Educators Journal Board.

I confess. I have taken Bert Witvoet for granted. Repeatedly. On a monthly basis. For years. I suspect you have, too.

It is easy to take Bert Witvoet for granted for several reasons.

First of all, though he has done amazing work as editor of the *Christian Educators Journal* for more than a decade, we see only a tiny portion of the work he does. We see the final product when CEJ appears in our mailboxes, but we don't see Bert brainstorming issue themes; discussing those themes with the board; beating the bushes for writers; gently reminding them when the deadline is coming up, when the deadline is here, and when the deadline has passed; copy-editing manuscripts, meeting with designers and constructing layouts; interacting with the printer; or any of the other ten thousand things that go into producing the CEJ.

Secondly, I think I take Bert for granted because he is so faithful. In the years that I have served on the CEJ Board, the issues come on time, they are written with care and thoughtfulness, they address important issues and they always contain something valuable. Bert's editorials always are graciously and humbly thought provoking. It is amazing to me how quickly that dependability has become something I count on and then don't even think about.

Third, I think it has been easy to take Bert for granted because he is so wonderfully easy to work with. His patience and sense of humor have permeated the journal and made it a place where we can address issues as varied as global warming, inequity in education across the globe, and facing the problem of how

Christian schools should respond to homosexuality. Bert has managed to tackle these issues in a setting without fear — where we can think about and discuss difficult topics as caring Christians who sometimes disagree with each other, but always with respect. Bert's smile and laugh have helped with that.

And, I suppose, in taking Bert for granted, I often take the CEJ for granted, too. In the midst of the busy-ness of a school year, in between teaching and grading and raising a family, the *Christian*

Educators Journal consistently provides all of us with a voice of wisdom, asking us questions, telling us stories, and sometimes giving us useful advice. For me, that voice is Bert Witvoet's voice — thoughtful, measured, wise, and quick to laugh. But it is a voice that I have heard, heeded, and sometimes forgotten to acknowledge.

And so, from all of us who are guilty of taking your fine work for granted, Bert — Thank you. Thank you for the years and effort you have given to CEJ. Thank you for the discussions you

have started. Thank you for the teachers you have guided and nurtured. Thank you for the way you have cared about articles, paragraphs, sentences, and words. Thank you for your consistent vision for the way Christian schools are capable of being at their best. Thank you for your focus on Christ in teaching. Thank you for your steady hand on the helm, for your words of encouragement, for your laughter, and for your voice.

Bert, yours is a voice that has meant a lot to me. It is a voice that I am thankful for. Though I know that you are moving on to more good work and good editing, and, though I, along with the board, wish you the best in your new editing endeavors, yours is a voice that I will miss more than I can say.

Thank you. ☺



Bert hands over the CEJ torch to CEJ's new editor, Gary VanArragon.

The CEJ and Its Future



Gary VanArragon
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I would like to begin by adding my voice to the many voices expressing appreciation for the wonderful way Bert Witvoet has guided the *Christian Educators Journal* for the past decade. His wisdom, wit and vision have been an inspiration to all of his readers. We wish Bert many blessings as he takes up other challenges of service in a different corner of the work of God's kingdom here. Those of us who know Bert know that he will continue to be a faithful and humble servant of God wherever his life's path leads him!

So what is next for CEJ? Let me briefly outline my hopes for the future.

I hope that the CEJ will continue to grow in its vital role in encouraging discussion and professional growth among Christian educators in North America and around the world. CEJ can do this by introducing educators to current research in education, to recent publications, and to networks of educators around the world. It can be a forum where Christian educators can share their challenges, questions and triumphs. It can be a way of encouragement for staff room conversation and a support to the professional growth of Christian educators in any number of school systems as it examines the connection between educational research and excellent classroom practice. In short, I hope that the CEJ, through essays which consider both theory and practice, becomes a major force in the growth of Christian education, one that serves educators as they can make their classrooms more effective places of learning for students.

I hope to develop a more effective website for Christian educators so that it becomes a place where they can ask questions,

answer questions, and engage in conversations about any issue related to education, including those dealt with in the print version of CEJ. The website will also include links to other publications, organizations, and conferences that would be of interest.

I hope to expand the circulation of the CEJ to Christian educators in all school systems so that they can benefit from the conversations which we are having, and so that we can benefit from their experiences and their insights. It is important that we do not isolate ourselves in our own school systems but that we acknowledge, share and support the important work of Christian educators wherever they serve.

I will officially assume my duties as editor of CEJ with the February 2010 issue. Tentatively, the plans for the issues in 2010 will be as follows:

February: "What Are the Essential Features of Christian Education? What Makes Christian Education Unique and Valuable?"

April: "Ten Books that All Christian Educators Should Read: A Series of Review Essays that Will Provide Christian Educators with Valuable Summer Reading".

October: "How Do Students Really Learn? An Examination of Some Recent Research"

December: "Restorative Practices: A Model for Discipline in Christian Schools"

I would appreciate any suggestions, manuscripts, and names of possible contributors. I can be contacted at editorCEJ@bell.net

Gary VanArragon

Christian Educators Journal

Published four times a year:
October, December, February, April

Reprint Policy:

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Quick Summary of My Life

by Bert Witvoet

I, Albertus Witvoet, was born on June 11, 1934, in Joure, the Netherlands. A few weeks later I was baptised along with four other boys in our local *Gereformeerde Kerk*. The covenant ritual took on a male definition that morning, in which the phrase “in the place of circumcision” really made sense. Two of the screaming uncircumcised lads became life-long friends and ended up in Canada, as did I.

Six years after my birth, the Second World War broke out. I vividly remember standing next to my mother and grandmother in front of our house as German soldiers marched, biked and rode into our town. For the next five years, a battalion of these “*übermenschen*” were stationed in the Catholic-school-and-convent complex across the street from where we lived and where my Dad operated a barbershop and a hair salon. I can still see these soldiers marching from time to time past our house on the way to a training area and can hear them singing, “*Und wir fahren gegen England, ahoy.*” (And we are going to march against England, ahoy). They never did. A German soldier chased me one time, just because I reflected the sun with a hand-held mirror into his face. Fortunately, I outran him. Ahoy!

My dad died of an infection six months after the war ended, leaving our mother behind with seven children. Four and a half years later, in May 1950, this brave and believing woman took her family across the ocean to Canada. Soon after our arrival I briefly worked on farms for \$35 a month, plus room and board, after which I worked four and a half years in a Good Year Rubber and Tire factory and started out with \$35 a week. That was a substantial increase in wages.

In 1954 my brother Lowell decided to go to Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I followed him a year later. We

both got our B.A. degree and became teachers. A sister followed us into that profession via Calvin some years later. I managed to get a Master's degree in English from the University of Toronto as well.

In 1960 I married my sweetheart, Alie Oldejans. After a five-year courtship, we together raised four boys and one girl. While working as an administrative assis-



Bert at age five, June 17, 1939, standing in front of the Catholic Church fence, a year before the German army invaded the Netherlands.

tant in the Physics department at Brock University here in St. Catharines, Alie studied as a part-time student and managed to graduate from Brock University with a B.A. in psychology in 1996. At age 66 she took part in the “From Sea to Sea with the CRC” cross-Canada bike tour.

Not to be outdone by this industrious and capable woman next to me, I taught high schools for 18 years, briefly owned and operated a mail delivery business, and, then, became the editor of *Calvinist Con-*

tact, later known as *Christian Courier*. I retired from that position after 17 years, at which time I became the managing editor of the *Christian Educators Journal*. My experience as an educator and writer found a happy conjunction in this task and calling.

It's now 10 years later, and I'm 75 — time to retire from the CEJ editorship. Alie and I still work with Christian teachers in the Limpopo province of South Africa. I also still write for the *Christian Courier*. Writing has been in my blood ever since I published a hand-written rag that contained poetry, a short story and fictitious news for my high school classmates in Holland.

Next year, the Lord willing, Alie and I will celebrate 50 years of marriage. Together we wish to continue to serve our Lord when and where he leads us. ☺

*Done in St. Catharines, Ontario,
November 2, 2009*

Assembly of champions

by Bert Witvoet

My wife, Alie, and I spent a month and a half in South Africa again this year. It was our third educational “mission” trip. Part of our assignment was developing a library in one school and giving workshops. The school day starts early in South Africa. Teachers gather for devotion at 7:15 a.m., and learners at 7:30.

One morning the principal of a school we visited decided to hold a special assembly for the whole school (K to 12) to honor the students who had received the three highest term marks in their grade (grades 5 to 12). I was asked to take pictures of the winners. I had also been asked to give a speech of encouragement. South Africans love to turn everything into a semi-formal occasion. Every meeting or assembly has a program director. Alie and I had talked about this speech of encouragement beforehand. We did not think the focus should be so much on the smartest people in the school (the principal really encourages competition and he really highlights and honors the winners.) We know that succeeding has to do with good effort, but this focus on marks was a bit much. It has a strong promotional and marketing component for the principal.

A parable

I noticed at the assembly that only three of the 24 “winners” were boys. The principal was surprised when I pointed this out. So I asked the learners whether, when God made men and women, he made

women smarter than men. Judging by the results at the school, most of the learners thought that women were made smarter. I said, “No. I don’t think so. I think that the girls here worked harder and applied themselves more.”

Then I told them a fable. “The animals in the forest decided to start a school to

that: “Yes, everyone should compete with themselves. But now it is time to take pictures of the champions!”

A true champion

I must say there is one girl in grade 8 who stole our heart. Her name is Gwambe Tinyiko. She has stumps for legs, one short arm, and the other a bit longer with a miniscule thumb. She scored the second highest in the school, one decimal point behind the first-place girl from grade four, Sandra, also an unbelievably sweet-and-bright-looking girl. Last year Alie practiced multiplication tables with Grade 3, and the girl, Sandra, had her hand up all the time, eager to give the right answer. She is obviously a very bright girl. But Gwambe evoked even more our admiration. Her teacher showed me her workbook one day. He wanted me to see her neat handwriting. She writes

holding a pen between her little thumb and her chin. Also, she draws beautifully. Everybody cheered when she was announced as number two. We did, too. She was a real champion in our book. She had overcome her own handicaps. She had competed with herself. ☺



L. to R: Sandra and Gwambe

improve their society. The school had four subjects: flying, running, swimming and climbing. So the eagle was the best at flying, but he could not climb. The monkey was the best at climbing, but he could not fly. The rabbit was the best at running, but he could not swim. The duck was the best at swimming, but he could not run. And so we learn that each animal has been given certain gifts or talents. So it is with you here at your school. With this school you can improve society. God has given each of you certain gifts. It’s not important to be first. Just do your best and be glad that you have the gifts that you have. Just compete with yourself.”

The principal kind of chimed in after

Some Memorable Editorials from the past

CEJ Board members picked three of Bert's editorials

Underneath the Futility of the Secular Novel

October 2000 Issue of CEJ

About 32 years ago I got into difficulties as a teacher for having selected a then contemporary novel called *The Catcher in the Rye*. J.D. Salinger had written the book 16 years earlier by the time I selected it, but the book had gone through no fewer than 40 printings. It accurately portrays teenage language and teenage alienation in a time we associate with hippies.

Last year I decided to reread it. I had not done that since 1967! Why not? Perhaps because I wanted to avoid the unpleasant memories I associate with that period. Also the book seemed somewhat alien to me. The more removed I became from it, the less convinced I was that I had made a wise choice back then. I don't know what made me reread it now. Maybe it's because I was coming to the end of my formal working life, and this book represented unfinished business. Maybe I had lost my fear of this episode.

I don't know how I thought years ago that such a book would not upset some people. I was a bit of a naive idealist, and I stumbled into the controversy with the best of intentions. As a Christian teacher who believed that all of life is religion, I was going to lead my students through a book that accurately captured the post-war, nihilistic culture around them. I needed to prepare them for real life — show them that some people are waiting for Godot. What could be wrong with that? I tended to see Grade 12 students as being mature enough to handle it. My opponents disagreed.

The problem with language

I must honestly say that upon rereading *The Catcher* last year, I was at first bothered by the swearing in the book. God's name is constantly taken in vain by the main character, Holden Caulfield. There is very little foul language in the book, by the way. The protagonist doesn't like the f-word, and he holds people who are preoccupied with sex or perversion in low esteem (actually, he holds most people in low esteem). But he and the author think nothing of throwing the name of God and Jesus

around. Had it not bothered me 30 years ago? I wondered.

It probably had then, too, although I had earlier in my life worked in a factory for nearly five years, and I was used to the language. Then, as now, by the time I was a few chapters into the book, the language no longer stood out and bothered me. It became part of the landscape, and my attention was drawn more to the plot, the characters and the main theme.

The more I read and reflected on it this time, the more I thought that my choice of book had not been such a bad choice after all. My notes and explanations of 1967 helped, too. The fact that I

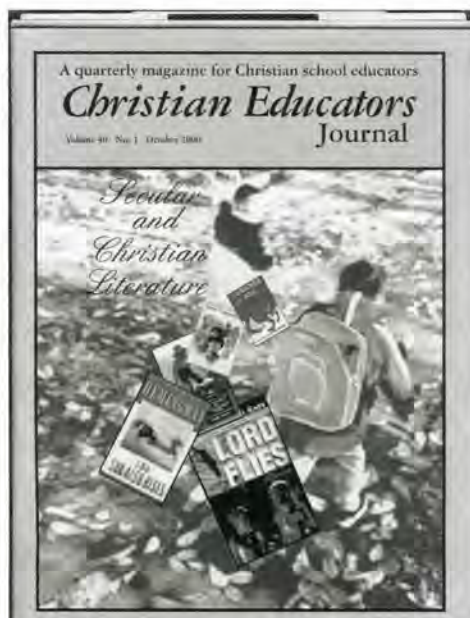
had taught *David Copperfield* that same term and had been able to draw strong comparisons between these two fictional biographies made me realize again the value of the exercise. Charles Dickens had written a book that seemed harmless and constructive but, in fact it was a world almost closed to the gospel. The Victorian mindset was so self-satisfied and optimistic that salvation other than social reform made no sense. But Salinger drew a world that was badly in need of answers. His book cries out for love and compassion. The problems of adolescence are well portrayed: boredom, rebellion, insecurity and searching.

Nevertheless, the language was the stumbling block. I remember talking about it with my students. They, too, had to swallow a few times before going on. Some felt tainted by it. But they realized that it

was integral to the vision of the author. The criticism I heard later was that I had willfully lead these students into evil — I had caused them to commit "mental sins." My defense was that I had taken them into the novel not to sin or to get used to swearing, but to make them understand how an important writer of that time saw his society. I compared it to my working in a factory, a place where swearing is commonplace. I did not enter that factory to be tainted by swearing but to do a necessary job. And I had to learn to survive. The Christian school, I argued, has to help students discern the spirits of their time and teach them to survive.

The call of humanity

But that was not the only reason I had for studying *The Catcher in the Rye*. The book offered some valuable insights that could teach us Christians a thing or two. What stands out in the book even now is the brutal honesty of the main character and the





sensitivity he shows toward those he considers “real” (rightly or wrongly, he considers most people he meets phonies). He himself is by almost all definitions a misfit. And he knows it. That in itself makes him vulnerable and could help readers relax about themselves.

Holden is a kind of flower child, frightfully alienated from his parents and his society. But he sets high standards for the arts and for personal relationships. In fact, the title explains that he wants to be protective of children when they play in a field of rye near a steep cliff. He wants to catch them before they fall over the edge. He wants to be the catcher in the rye. It’s a silly, non-productive occupation, but also a judgment on all those who get caught in the rat race of “respectable” occupations.

That’s the irony of studying worldly “great” literature. While we must reject the dead-end street of *humanistic* secularism so prevalent in modern novels, we must at the same time respect the opening-up quality of the *humanity* so often uncovered by these same authors.

I read somewhere the following summation of themes in *The Catcher*: “the need for love; the search for something other than self in which to believe; the problem of the sensitive man’s inability to communicate with his fellows; the contempt for purely materialistic goals and for phoniness wherever it is to be found; the need to accept, and even to love, one’s fellows despite their

imperfections; and finally, the knowledge that there is no escape in this world from the ugliness which is reality, which is life.”

Underneath the futility of an aimless and seemingly useless life lie these worthwhile themes. It appears that ungodly books can show up our own failures. Doesn’t our Christian community often need to be delivered from a bourgeois, pietistic mediocrity or phoniness?

A communal decision

Would I teach *The Catcher in the Rye* again today? I ask myself, especially after what happened to me (I was fired)! Not necessarily that particular book. In fact, after so much opposition arose back in 1967, I was willing to change to another contemporary novel. But I would still want to teach a contemporary novel or two in the senior grades of high school. This time I would make the selection with a group of serious, mature Christian readers in the community, something I did not do 32 years ago.

When I read the list of books studied in Christian schools these days, I can cry. What makes us think that there is safety in studying the humanism of earlier times, while neglecting the humanism of our times? Thinking of the students that have missed out on so much, one would almost want to become a catcher in the rye.

Humor — Next to Godliness

April 2005 issue of CEJ

To devote a whole issue of our beloved *Christian Educators Journal* to humor says something about the importance we attach to it. Some think that Christian humor is an oxymoron, and Calvinistic humor, an acute case of oxyuriasis (infection of pinworms). Sometimes that stereotype is well-deserved; other times, it’s grossly inaccurate. Perhaps this issue will move the needle over a little further to the right (if you’re a conservative) or to the left (if you’re a liberal).

It’s very difficult to pin down what is funny and what is not. We all know that when you explain a joke, it dies on the floor of conversation. That’s because it lives and dies by its absurdity. Listen to how Webster’s defines (or tries to define) humor: “Humor consists principally in the recognition and expression of incongruities or peculiarities present in a situation or character. It is frequently used to illustrate some fundamental absurdity in human nature or conduct.” I like that definition. It tells me that you have to be aware of incongruities, for life is full of them. We are seldom what we appear to be or like to be. Acknowledging

that can be a subject for either great lament or great hilarity, depending on your point of view. Honest writers will reveal to you that there often is a huge chasm between appearance and reality.

One man has a sign on his bathroom mirror that reads: “Objects in this mirror are not as righteous as they appear to be.” Every morning he reminds himself of that corrective to human behavior. Studying Shakespeare’s plays also helps you to understand the gap between appearance and reality. In fact, all great literature does that. The more we see the incongruities of life, the better we are able to cope with problems that come our way.

Divine humor

Tyrants don’t like to laugh at themselves. They’re too puffed up and easily take offence. In some countries, like North Korea, ridiculing a tyrant can lead to your death. But oppressed people need humor to laugh at the tyrants. According to Professor Gila Naveh from the University of Cincinnati, “Specifically in the



case of minorities, humor allows for a chance to attack an opponent without the opponent having the ability to retort. Those who have no power find an opportunity to stand up for themselves, challenge stereotypes and one-up those in power by disarming them."

But, says Charles Henderson in *Christianity — General*, "In the best of humor we learn to laugh at ourselves. For while it's perfectly human to deride one's enemies, it's divine to see the humor in oneself. One of the very first steps on the road to salvation is learning to laugh at one's own mistakes. Only when we are in touch with our own flaws can we truly open ourselves to the saving power of God."

Power corrupts

The ability to laugh at ourselves often depends on our character and our sense of security, but it can even be a cultural phenomenon. It is given to those with little power. Take the Canadian province of Newfoundland, considered by many a backwater place. This is what a certain Al Clouston wrote about that province and its people:

"Newfoundland is not like any other province of Canada. It has the oldest history, the richest music and folklore ... and the most relaxed life-style, born of a colorful and romantic cultural heritage. But above all, there is the famous sense of humour [weird Canadian spelling!]. Newfoundlanders have the divine gift of being able to laugh at their troubles, at their triumphs, and at themselves." (from *When I Grow too Old to Laugh, ... Shoot Me!*)

Conversely, when you're as powerful as the United States of America, it is more difficult to laugh at yourself, especially when you're at war. It has not gone unnoticed in other parts of the world that the political climate in the US has polarized people to the point at which humor is used more to put down opponents than to laugh at oneself. I long for the day that this will change and America will once again be not only the land of the free but also the land of the self-deprecatory.

Humor may also have something to do with gender. One of my daughters-in-law claims that most men find Laurel and Hardy movies funny, but most women don't. She may be onto something. Laurel and Hardy produced slapstick humor, which may appeal more to boys and men because they are action-oriented. The Red

Green show is a bit similar but may appeal to rural women because it pokes fun at rural men. Whatever you think of these cultural or gender differences, it cannot be denied that humor is an essential ingredient of who we are.

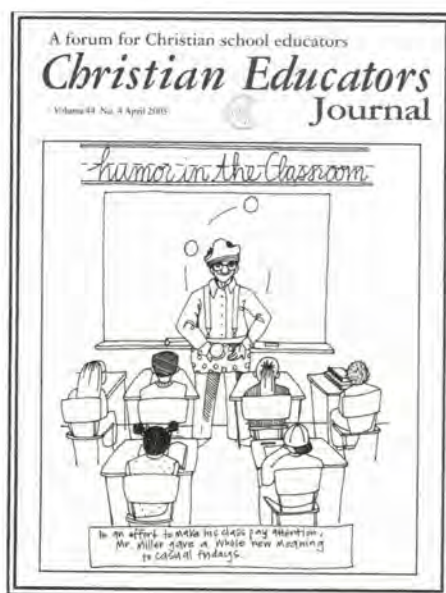
Importance of humor

Not only that, but (this may sound like an oxymoron) humor is a serious matter. "Humor touches upon the most important topics under the sun," says Charles Henderson. "It touches upon politics and science, sex and religion, life and death, good and evil. Comedians, like ministers, must wrestle with the most elementary questions. Commenting upon the importance of humor, one writer put it this way, 'Life is serious all the time but living cannot be. You may have all the solemnity you wish in your neckties, but in everything important you must have mirth or you will have madness.'" I heartily agree. The important things, especially, require mirth. Ten years ago, my siblings and I and our spouses stood at the bedside of our mother, who had just passed away. We prayed and we sang — and we joked. Tears and laughter flowed freely that morning. They are the perfect pair when facing loss.

I remember a retired pastor who once spent time in a concentration camp. He and his fellow detainees were called out of their beds in the middle of a cold night for roll call. As he stood in formation with all the others, he noticed that the light of the moon was reflecting off another prisoner's bald head. It made him chuckle. It was then that he realized he could survive this horrible experience and that God was real. I have always believed that, instead of cleanliness, humor is next to godliness. As Henderson points out, "a good a sense of humor is an essential ingredient of faith itself."

He continues to say, "That's why the Italian poet Dante titled his great poem of the Christian life *The Divine Comedy*, and why Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish theologian, said that the Christian faith is the most humorous point of view a person can take. Why? Because once you're confident of God's presence and power, once you've seen this world as the creation of God, once you know that life at its root is joy and not fear, then your sense of humor is guaranteed..."

I naturally gravitate towards people who embody the doctrine





of salvation by laughter. I am freely quoting Henderson in this editorial because I consider him a soul mate in his respect for humor. He writes, "Because humor is tied so closely with everything that is important in life, it has a religious dimension.... Humor reflects the tension between our professed ideals and our behavior, the disparity between our vision of ourselves and who we actually are. Great humor is based upon the natural contradictions, the real and everyday conflicts which are part of human nature itself. For while our minds explore the mysteries of the universe, our bodies are firmly attached to earth.... Life is full of embarrassing reminders that while we are only a little lower than the angels, we are also only a little higher than the worm." Amen, brother angel and brother worm.

Humor is a gift of grace that teachers should avail themselves of at regular intervals. Don't let the weight of your profession prevent you from brightening up your classroom with a few silly antics. "A little silliness can create a better 'feeling tone' in your class," writes Elizabeth Millard in *Humor Can Be a Serious Strategy*. "Andrew Malcolm, an art teacher in my school, feels that sometimes his pupils start taking things too seriously. Occasionally he will fake a heart attack when a student makes a small mistake, then have everyone come to help him up. They correct the mistake as a group. He loves to ask his students, 'You must be really smart students, or am I the greatest teacher? Which is it?' You know the answer he always gets!"

Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves. ☺

Risky? Yes! But, Oh, The Rewards!

October 2007 issue of CEJ

The history of humankind is replete with instances of cross-cultural experiences that turned out badly, especially for the less dominant culture. One has to consider only the plight of the North-American Indians to realize that cross-cultural contact can be harmful. We earthlings are not wise enough, it seems, to be able to reach across the borders of various civilizations and end up being helpful to each other. So, then, why should Christian schools in North America contemplate setting up partnerships with Christian schools in less developed countries as some have done? This issue of CEJ presents accounts of three such partnerships. And it does so with approval.

I myself have recently been to South Africa, along with seven other educators and school supporters. We spent between four to eight weeks with the Venda people in the northern part of South Africa, the province of Limpopo.... Our focus was not building facilities but training teachers. Worldwide Christian Schools eagerly embraced this new direction. We functioned a bit as pioneers for WWCS in this approach. Because of our interest in training, we would enter the more sensitive areas of cultural exchange. Buildings rarely evoke negative vibes when it comes to crossing borders. But when you talk about worldview in a society that still labors under the system of patriarchy, polygamy and tribal loyalties, and when you share ideas about pedagogy in a system that is teacher-centered and lecture-oriented, you have to tread carefully and humbly.

One of our team members supplied some of us novices with reading material on the Venda culture. He quoted Paul Hiebert

in his chapter on "Gospel and Culture" in *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (1985), in which Hiebert describes culture as "more or less integrated systems of ideas, feelings, and values and their associated patterns of behavior and products shared by a group of people...." Cultures usually have a coherent way of looking at the world, called a "worldview." The challenge facing missionaries — and I would include Christian educators who make the leap into a different society — is that they should try to understand the worldview that drives a culture and challenge it only after they have gained trust and only to the extent that the gospel demands it. This implies that the "intruders" spend a lot of time listening and observing, and that they keep in mind their own cultural baggage that may or may not line up with what God intends for his creatures. Above all, instead of telling people in other cultures what they must do, it's more helpful to invite them to think along other lines if there is a problem in the indigenous culture, and to facilitate their desire to make changes.

Giving and receiving

Another important consideration to pack in your mental suitcase is the awareness that a good visit is like a two-way street — the traffic of gifts should flow both ways. We in North America often have the gift of experience in Christian education. Through our collective associations we have developed policies and insights that can really benefit fledgling schools. We often have the gift of financial resources that can help improve the facilities and study



materials to which schools in economically less advantaged societies do not have access. But our host schools often have social and spiritual gifts they can pass on to us.

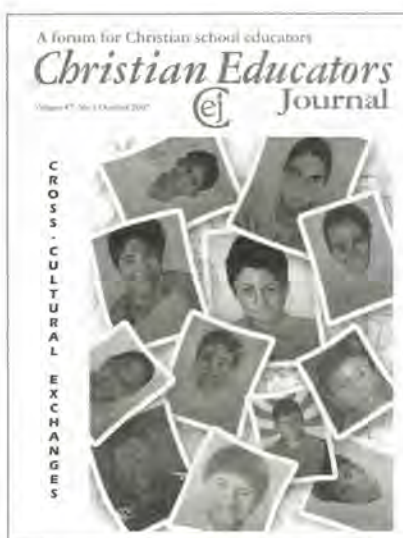
The information we received about the Venda people, for example, told us that they are a hospitable people, and we certainly experienced that. "Relationship building takes precedence over time," I read. Again, that was born out in the way people take time to greet each other and inquire about each other's health and wellbeing. What to Westerners may look like a lack of efficiency can in reality be a matter of healthy priorities. We also discovered (surprise, surprise) that the Venda people are generally not spoiled by extravagant living. Few have cars. Principal Wilson Mandende walks 10 kilometers (more than six miles) to school and 10 kilometers back to his home every day. School starts at 7:30 a.m. There is a certain discipline and simplicity in that picture that is good for both body and soul. It acts as a rebuke to Westerners who take too much for granted in their prosperity. I am sure that other educators have experienced similar benefits from cross-cultural exchanges....

Singing from the heart

Of course, the last thing we North Americans want to do is try to turn our partner schools into westernized institutions. We can thank God that secularism has not yet infiltrated some of our partner schools and the societies in which they operate to the extent that it has in our schools and our society. Many of these indigenous societies embody a healthy respect for authority and a strong sense of family cohesiveness. Young people in the Venda culture are able to sing out unselfconsciously in ways that our young people often dare not. It's as if they surrender themselves more easily to the ways of the tribe and traditions, submitting themselves to the task of expressing joy and praise in ritualistic dances and movements. It's a naivete that can make North American educators jealous when on their own turf they constantly bump up against the "coolness" factor of stunted social growth. No doubt the star phenomenon of professional entertainment in our society adds to subdued lyrical expression by putting a damper on the willingness of young and older people to raise their voices in song. Thank God, we still have churches that allow us to empty our lungs with cheerful voice in praise of Someone greater than any of us.

I'm going to let you in on a little secret: those who engage in cross-cultural encounters do it to benefit themselves. Don't tell anyone else, but it's true. Forget about the high-falutin' talk of sacrifice and generosity. It's a façade, a charade, an optical and aural illusion. Whenever you talk to one of these do-gooders, these burdened border hoppers, they will tell you that it is more blessed to give than to receive. So where's the sacrifice?

A month after we had returned from our visit to South Africa, I received the following letter from someone in South Africa:



I was astounded and very blessed to meet the great men and women of God who traveled that far to the deep rural area of Venda. We were of the opinion that we are so poor that no one in the world could even bother to take notice. Your commitment and dedication of empowering and uplifting the lives of these poor people of God will never go unnoticed by us and God.

We will never forget you in our daily prayers and may the good Lord bless all of you with health, wealth and prosperity. You sacrificed your retirement time where you were supposed to relax with your children and grandchildren to come to these isolated, dusty villages to pronounce the Good News of God.

Though far, you have established relationships that will be forever! The seeds that you are planting will grow and bear wonderful fruits to us and our next generation!

May the good Lord bless you abundantly!!

Yours in Christ

This is too much praise for the small efforts we eight educators from Canada made earlier this year. There is so much that needs to be done, and so little that we often do. If we must offer praise for anyone, let it be for those missionaries who spend a life-time serving their Master in far away lands. We were there for only a month or two. And our grandchildren fared very well without us!

But the preceding letter amply demonstrates that the thankfulness one encounters after stepping out into the uncertain space of cross-cultural engagement is more payment than anyone of us can imagine. God uses our weak, humble efforts and turns them into a harvest beyond expectation.... ☺

A Pinch of Witvoet

Snatched from some of his editorials



“Don’t give in to cynicism, which is an occupational hazard for teachers, who invariably experience a vast gap between their expectations and the students’ overall level of curiosity and commitment.” (Editorial “The Earth Deserves Our Creative Respect,” October 1999)

“Teachers and principals who are preoccupied with building their own self because of some deficiency in their earlier nurture are a threat to the healthy development of their charges.” (Editorial “Spare the Affirmation, Spoil the Child,” December 1999)

“Barring a quick return of Christ, the troops that rally under the banners of ‘Human Innocence and Learned Evil’ will stay the course and muddle on. No calls for a general repentance will issue from its commanders. Instead the cries for social tinkering will continue.” (Editorial “Does Original Sin Explain the Violence?” February 2000)

“And so it behooves the educator to divest himself of all pretense and present himself in a non-heavenly, that is, down-to-earth, manner so that those placed in his charge may be all the more inspired to reach for that lofty goal of truth and sincerity, yea, that they may quaff at the fountain of knowledge from which their learned tutor has so freely drunk himself. Amen? (Editorial “A Case for Faith Humor,” April 2000)

“If I had a bent for factual detail and repetitive research (which I don’t), I would love to be a teacher of science in the Christian school. But I think I would look at and touch a baby from time to time to keep me sane — to remind me that, in

spite of all the test tubes and experiments, I am not in control.” (Editorial “Can Science Move Mountains?” December 2000)

“With the current emphasis on piety and devotion has come a form of subjectivism that has robbed us of another important dimension of the Christian faith: God’s truth is bigger than us, and our feelings are not meant to be normative guidelines. And piety is not supposed to be the sum of our spirituality.” (Editorial “Can These Scholastic Bones Live?” February 2001)

“But something happens to most children on their way to adulthood. As they become more self-conscious of their place in their social environment, singing, especially in public, becomes less and less frequent.... When the enemy sowed tares among the wheat in the parable of the tares, some of those tares fell on vocal chords.” (Editorial “Why Do We Sing?” April 2001)

“Within me I find two approaches to the question of government funding of Christian schools, and they are somewhat in conflict. That is because the one approach comes from my view of Creation and Redemption, and the other comes from my view of the Fall.... If you think my approach is dualistic, you’re right. It’s part of my awareness that the Kingdom is here and is coming.... Scripture is full of dualities. One more doesn’t hurt. As long as we don’t speak out of two sides of our mouth or serve both God and Mammon.” (Editorial “To Seek Funding or Not to Seek Funding,” October 2001)

“Children are not born with a social conscience. The first step towards developing that occurs when they are

taught to share their toys — a hard lesson for most toddlers. Those who never learn that lesson go on to become successful materialists.” (Editorial “Anyone’s Death Diminishes Me,” December 2001)

“The thing to keep in mind about worldviews is that they do not save you, and they are never perfectly in line with God’s revelation.... But if we don’t trash churches and Christian schools because they are imperfect, neither should we trash a Reformed worldview. You’ve got to have a way of seeing the world, right? Why not make an *attempt*, at least, to see it right?” (Editorial “Put on the Full Worldview of God!” February 2002)

“Let’s face it, we as a civilization love death. Don’t be fooled by our society’s attempts to lengthen lives through stem cell research, or our obsession with youthful looks and our distaste for funerals. We love death in all its disguises — we easily surrender to addictions, we are so comfortable with over-use of energy, we unthinkingly consume junk food that has been cleverly designed to tempt our palate, we abort unwanted children for our convenience, we avoid physical exercise, prayer and sacrifice, we readily use pesticides and herbicides to keep up with the neighbors, we don’t respect the marriage vow, we don’t mind exploiting underdeveloped nations, we inject hormones and drugs into our cattle, we litter the land and pollute the water systems, we put the economy ahead of life-giving forests and swamps. We do all this because we believe Satan’s lie that we will not surely die when we eat the forbidden fruit.” (Editorial “Out of Respect for God’s Delight,” April 2002)

“I love reading Paul’s epistle to the



Romans because, of all his writings, it leads you beside many politically incorrect still waters. If you want to be guided in ways of righteousness for his name's sake instead of being led down the garden path of secular self-righteousness, read Paul's description of people either as objects of God's mercy or as objects of God's wrath. It is enough to make a decent humanist wail." (Editorial "How Universities Suppress the Truth," October 2002)

"If it is true of Adam and Eve that they were made 'posse peccare et non peccare' (able to sin and not to sin), then something similar can be said of the computer, namely, that it can be used both for the glory of God and for the vilification of God." (Editorial "Navigating Society's Electronic Wilderness," December 2002)

"Once students get used to reflecting on this amazing world we live in, and start bursting with wonder and amazement, and sit up straight in their desk, eyes riveted on every word you scratch on the blackboard and ears hanging from your lips as you parcel out more and more knowledge, well, don't you think that God gets a lot more credit than he does now? Curiosity about God's creation is like a huge compliment to him." (Editorial "Nurturing the 'Satiableness' of Your Students," December 2003) [Kipling coined "Curtiosity" on purpose.]

"The imagination is a very fine but fickle thing. It is both delightful and dangerous. No wonder moralists throughout the ages have been suspicious of it. The problem with moralists is that they take themselves too seriously. And we all know that taking yourself too seriously is the death of playfulness and imaginative living." (Editorial "Life Without Imagination? Not Worth the Living!" February 2004)

"It never ceases to amaze me how many younger workers are envious of those who retire. What's so exciting about going downhill unless you're a snowboarder?" (Editorial "Integrity and Love at Closing Ceremonies," April 2004)

"It is even reported that there is grammatical unfaithfulness among you, Christian school teachers, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans. Dangling participles cohabit with split infinitives. Pronouns are put up for adoption by antecedents. Don't you know that a little disagreement between subject and verb works through the whole dough of composition? Fellow educators, this ought not to be so!" (Editorial "Praising God Through Language: Our First Duty," October 2004)

"Don't let the weight of your profession prevent you from brightening up your classroom with a few silly antics." (Editorial "Humor — Next to Godliness," April 2005)

"The glorification of an admittedly beautiful young woman with a wonderful voice and a warm personality took place not in heaven above or in the waters below, but on the earth beneath (in the Kodak Theater in Hollywood)." (Editorial "Failure: A Perfect Antidote to Idolatry," October 2005)

"Let it be said of me in the annals of history that I was born a kicking and screaming modernist and that I departed this world a kicking and screaming postmodernist." (Editorial "Leaning into the Postmodern Winds of Change," December 2005)

"We need to do more in the area of screening, training, education and prevention of abuse in the schools. An ounce of prevention is better than a ton of millstones." (Editorial "The Minefield of Sexual Abuse," February 2006)

"Wisdom is something you catch, like a cold. It has no curriculum of its own. How in the world can you design lesson plans on wisdom? Wisdom is not a subject. It is a person." (Editorial "Lady Wisdom Wants In," April 2006)

"Mr. Lunstra was a forceful person, a disciplinarian who tolerated no tomfoolery in his classroom. I can still picture him: his hair was cropped shorter than was the style in those days, his eyes were penetrating, and he was impeccably dressed. Apart from his nicotine-stained fingers, he was Mr. Perfect. My classmates and I were going to be the beneficiaries of his "superior qualities" as a teacher.

He taught us handwriting, among other disciplines, and I remember vividly that when my cursive letters were leaning backward, as they had a habit of doing, instead of forward, he would strike the knuckles of my offending hand with a thin ruler. It's amazing how a little pain affected the direction in which my letters were leaning from thereon.... However, I never learned to love the craft of handwriting. Even today my cursive writing is nearly illegible. I did learn to dislike my teacher, as did most of my classmates.

By the way, I use a pseudonym in case he is still alive and hears about this account, although his nicotine-stained fingers make me think he did not reach the age of 90." (Editorial "Pedagogical Blunders and Redemptive Challenges," October 2006) ©

Slouching Toward Bedlam

A Bert in the Staff Room is Worth Two in the Journal Or *Put your Best Witvoet Forward*

Jan Kaarsulam would like to thank Bert Witvoet for getting him the job of writing this column. It is the only job that Jan has held for more than four months in the last six years. Jan is also looking forward to replacing Bert as the new editor of CEJ, but is somewhat perplexed as to why the CEJ Editorial Search Committee is no longer returning his calls.

Students were still exiting the building, and already nearly the entire staff had gathered in the faculty lounge for Bert Witvoet's surprise farewell party. English teacher Christina Lopez was helping Head Counselor Maxwell Prentiss-Hall string streamers from the light fixture in the center of the room to the four corners. Librarian Jon Kleinhut had given up on his attempts to use a straw to blow up a balloon without actually touching it because, as he pointed out, "it is impossible to guess where this balloon might have been before." Science teachers Sam Toomer and S. Brian O'Brainargh were using poster putty to attach covers from the *Christian Educator's Journal* to the south wall, while on the north wall art teacher Gregg "Rigor" Mortiss was arguing with shop teacher Gord Winkle, who was draping a garland of kielbasa in front of a display of illustrations Mortiss had sent to CEJ over the years. Math teacher Jane VanderAsch and Bible teacher Cal Vandermeer were hanging a large banner that said "Welcome Bert Witvoet."

Their jubilant spirit had seemed to bypass gym teacher Rex Kane, who was sitting in the corner frowning, an occasional harrumph emanating from his general direction. If deep sighs were hurricane winds, Bedlam would have been leveled by a Class-5 storm hours ago. Finally, he spoke.

"I don't see what the big deal is. I mean, c'mon, what's so great about Bert Witvoet? The guy puts on his pants one pantaloone at a time, just like any other left-leaning, liberal media type."

Gord turned from where he had tacked up the last twisted casing end of his kielbasa garland. Oddly, the garland was one sausage shorter, perhaps the half-eaten sausage that Gord now shook at Rex to punctuate his point: "Rex, that guy has worked hard for years for little pay and even less recognition. Certainly we can celebrate his dedication to Christian education on his retirement."

"His dedication to Christian education?" Rex snorted in derision. "Have you seen the tripe that journal publishes? Every month there's a column about some school that's populated largely by imbeciles, schizophrenics, conservative paranoiacs, touchy-feely liberals, and large men of unusual appetites. How is that garbage supposed to make me a better teacher?"

"You've got a point," Gord said, a pensive look washing across his face as he took a bite of kielbasa.

Cal and Christina, having finished their decorating, turned to Rex. Cal said, "Okay, so that column seems a bit odd; perhaps Bert has quirky tastes, Rex, but you can't deny that he's given us a lot to think about over the last decade or so. His editorials are always thoughtful and insightful."

Christina nodded vigorously and added, "And he's corralled some good teachers, thinkers, and writers to challenge us on a number of fronts. We've had features on natural revelation, evolution, and intelligent design. Other issues challenged us to examine how well we meet the needs of special students, both those with disabilities and those who are academically gifted."

Greg Mortiss piped up, "I really like that issue on learning for the love of it. It included some truly thoughtful reflections on the purpose of education."

"Hey," said O'Brainargh, "wasn't that the issue where you illustrated the cover?" Mortiss blushed.

Counselor Maxwell Prentiss-Hall shouted from across the room, "And don't forget the issue on helping students handle grief. I keep that one on file in my office. It's been invaluable in helping students."

"Whatever!" Rex slumped in a chair and pouted. "I still say he's a bed-wetting liberal. Besides, isn't it a little excessively postmodern for the guy to appear in a humor column that he doesn't even write?"

The staff exchanged looks of confusion.

Jon Kleinhut, who had been surreptitiously sipping his coffee off to the side, chose this moment to speak his mind. "You know, I've been hearing some things, and some of you younger teachers don't seem to know what it was like before we had CEJ," he said, shooting a dirty look at Rex. "But some of us old-timers do. I think maybe Cal should speak to that issue."

Cal stood. "I guess I can speak to that if you want to hear it." Rex shook his head, but Cal proceeded anyway. "Before we got a staff subscription to CEJ, we as a faculty had very few discussions about what it means to teach Christianly. We were often all over the map philosophically, but with no tools like CEJ to help foster communication, we didn't even recognize that."

As Cal sat down, Kleinhut popped to his feet, raised his index finger, and said with the voice of a prophet, "I'll go even further than that. In those dark days before CEJ, the staff here was subject to the will and whim of every new school board and administrator with their own ideas about Christian education. For one guy, it was all about chapels, for the next it was a question of devotions at the end of the day. We once had a principal who came to an education committee meeting bound and determined to dismiss a teacher because he was using the King James Version instead of the NIV."

An awkward silence enveloped the room. Jane VanderAsch cleared her throat, "But tenure committee put a stop to that, Jon."

"Yeah, but it was an article in CEJ that helped sway the school board to reconsider," Kleinhut said. "I just think you young teachers need to know how important this magazine is."

While Jon captivated their attention, Bert Witvoet, the guest of honor, had sidled into the room. No one noticed as he poured himself a cup of coffee, grabbed a handful of white cheddar popcorn, and sat down.

Rex continued to pout. "I don't care how important this journal is. We aren't here to celebrate the journal. We're here to celebrate Bert Witvoet, and in my opinion, he's exhibited horrible judgment in his selection of articles and topics."

At the other end of the table, Bert raised his hand. Having seen Bert only in a dated photo, no one in the room recognized him. Rex said, "I'm sorry, Sir. Grandparents' day is tomorrow."

Bert smiled. "No, I'm not here for that. I'm just wondering how exactly this Witvoet guy has displayed poor judgment?"

"Well," Rex said, pleased that someone finally seemed interested, "I am privy to certain information regarding this Witvoet's attempt to silence a voice of truth and reason from this very community."

Kleinhut leaned forward, clearly intrigued. Rex continued, "Said voice wrote an entire series of profound, incisive treatises on the post-colonial, postmodern, relativistic, dispensationalist movement now sweeping through Christian physical education. We're talking ground-breaking stuff here. And yet this . . . this . . . Witvoet," Rex spat the name as if it were an expletive, "he rejected the entire series, citing what he called their appeal to a 'unique niche audience that understands neither physical education nor post-colonial dispensationalism.'"

Now it was Bert's turn to be intrigued. "Wait! Do you mean to tell me you know Rex Kane? *The* Rex Kane? The guy who wrote 'At Play in the Fields of the Lard: Why Deep-sea Diving and Deep Frying Don't Mix'? The genius behind 'Bowling for Dullards: Why Bowling and Similar Non-Athletic Activities Encourage New Age Philosophies'? You have actually met the



brilliant mind behind "Caber-Tossing and Calvinism," "Lacrosse and Lapsarianism," "Tetherball and Triumphalism," and "Using Basketball to Teach the Minor Prophets"? Are you telling me you really know the guy who wrote "Physical Education Across the Curriculum: Why

Shuffleboard in Science, Dodgeball in Drafting Class, and Ferret-Legging in Physics may be our Only Hope in Fighting Inactivity"? You know that guy?"

"Darn tootin' right, I know him!" Rex slapped the table.

"There was a time I didn't even think he was a real person," Bert said incredulously. "Where can I meet him? While I never published any of his work, he is the most fascinating writer I've ever read."

Rex smiled. "You're talking to him, Buster. And who might you be?"

"I'm Bert Witvoet. And I can't tell you how excited I am to meet you."

While Rex's colleagues gathered around Bert to congratulate him on his retirement, Rex himself was, for the first time in a long time, rendered speechless. After a moment he crossed the room, extending a hand of reconciliation to the wily editor who had so long thwarted his dreams of professional legitimacy.

"I was wrong about you, Witvoet. You're all right." Rex threw a hand around the slender editor's shoulder. "Now, tell me more about why you find me so fascinating."

"First of all," Bert began, "that poem you submitted that rhymed the word *orange* with both the word *door-hinge* and the word..."

From the other side of the room, Cal Vandermeer could hear Bert's thoughtful voice earnestly talking to Rex. Cal smiled. Bert was actually engaging Rex in meaningful conversation. Cal knew he would miss Bert. But then he looked at the wall of CEJ covers. He smiled again.

Being a Christian schoolteacher is sometimes a very hard thing, Cal thought, but it is good to know that it is a big Christian community out there, and that there are people like Bert Witvoet backing you up. ☺

What is your GPS for life?

by Bert Witvoet

A seasoned educator I know, one who values the development of a biblical, Reformed worldview, told me some time ago that many of his colleagues who teach in Reformed Christian schools avoid discussing worldview. "Worldview causes division," they told him. "Why don't we just try to live a Christian life and teach Scriptural values like honesty and kindness to our students? Life becomes too complicated when you get into discussions on worldview."

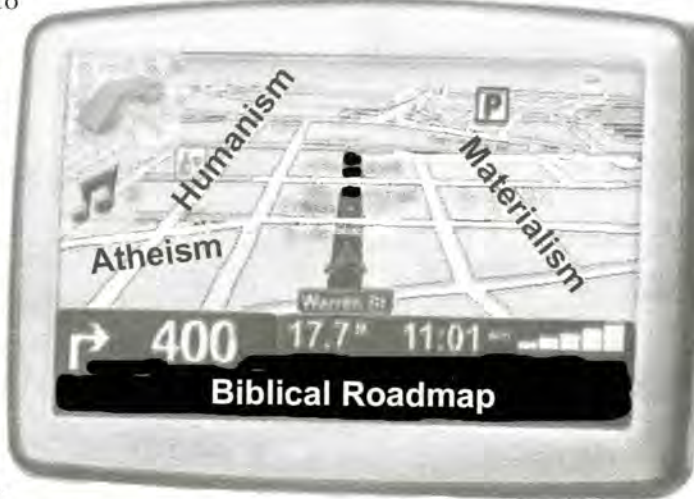
I needed to hear what my fellow educator told me. I had been so immersed in developing notes on a biblical worldview for my lectures in South Africa that I had almost assumed that having such a worldview is considered essential by all Christian educators in North America who call themselves Reformed. I shouldn't have been so naïve. A lot of Christians today, whether they are educators or accountants, dislike labels that set themselves apart from other Christians. They don't much like a denominational identity either. They prefer to be known as "Christians." Let me address these worldview-shy Christians in a personal way.

No blueprint?

Dear fellow believer in Christ, I think I understand your reluctance to adopt a specific worldview. But I want to challenge the sense of safety you find in preferring ambiguity. Consciously developing a worldview is not a matter of salvation, of course. You will make it to heaven on the basis of being forgiven through Jesus Christ and living an upright life. Secondly, developing a worldview is not a question of your ultimate identity. Your identity is hidden in Christ, and not in what you do

or call yourself.

But saying that you don't want to tie yourself down to a worldview is like a carpenter saying that he doesn't want to build a house according to a blueprint. The main thing in building a house, he may say, is hitting the nail on the head, making sure the structure is square, and selecting quality materials. But don't rob me of my freedom to decide which direction I want to take at any given time. Developing a




plan ahead of time causes division. Hmmm. You won't be asked to build my house should I be in the market for one.

What makes your attitude so unhelpful is that having a worldview is unavoidable. Yours may not be a coherent worldview. You may not even be able to spell it out. But somewhere in your mind you are employing guiding forces that act as a worldview. It's much better if you honestly admit to having a worldview. You would also benefit from working on your worldview with your fellow believers to make sure it has integrity and lines up with God's will for life.

Division not inevitable

And what about the charge that espousing

a worldview separates you from other Christians who follow a different blueprint? It happens, but it need not happen. Whether you cause division all depends on *how* you hold your worldview. My advice to you is this: relativize the importance of holding a worldview. A worldview will not save you. It does not make you a better Christian than others either. And we know from 1 Corinthians 13 that, if you don't have love, everything you hold dear, including your worldview, is as hollow as a sounding gong. Yet, at the same time, as a faithful worker in God's world, you do well to equip yourself with a biblically-directed Global Positioning System also known as a biblical worldview. After all, Jesus did not offer you salvation just to make sure you get to heaven. GPS in this case does not stand for Gateway Positioning System. Better to think of it as a way of orienting yourself to the "global" cultural context in which you find yourself.

As you are engaged in the joyful task of participating in the shaping of an obedient culture, celebrate your worldview and test it from time to time. Look upon it as an instrument of peace. At the same time, know that nothing in creation, not even worldviews, can separate you from the love of God and your neighbour, because it is the love of Christ Jesus that both justifies and glorifies you. 

What's your worldview?

by Bert Witvoet

What is a worldview?

A worldview is a system of beliefs. A worldview is a resource to help you understand the world around you. It provides you with a framework into which you will place all your thoughts and actions and by which you evaluate what other people say and do. A Christian wants to have a biblical worldview. Christian schools, especially, need to develop a biblical worldview.

It's important to be grounded in your worldview.

Your beliefs should be in harmony with what you think, do and say. Our speech is the top layer, underneath that are our actions, underneath our actions are our thoughts, and underneath our thoughts are our values and beliefs. Wholeness and integrity demand that all of this is authentically connected.

Of course, underlying this belief structure should be God's will for our life. God is the author of life. He created us. He knows what is best for us as we seek to live a life of shalom. So our first task is to have our worldview line up with God's Word.

The importance of worldview

A worldview answers at least three basic questions:

1. Who am I?
2. What is wrong with the world?
3. What can we do to fix it?

Different worldviews give different answers to these three questions.


Let's see how these questions can be answered.

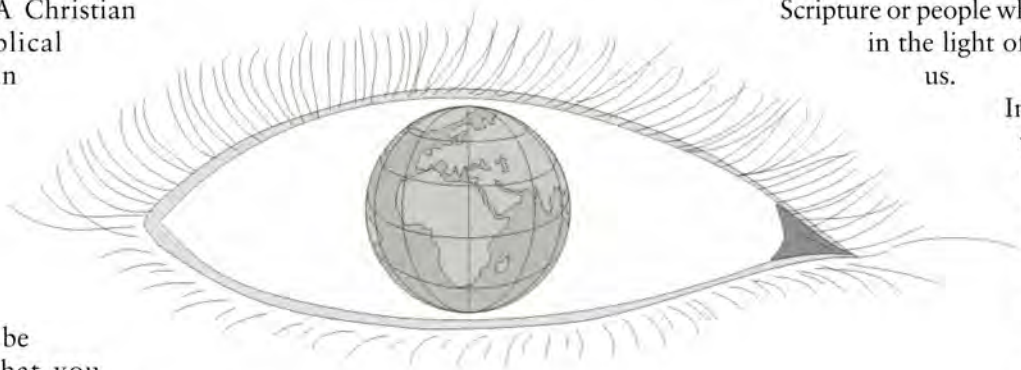
A materialist answers:

1. I am a collection of cells made up mostly of water and some minerals.
2. Too many people prevent me from having a good time.
3. Try to get rich and comfortable as quickly as possible.

worldview is always a work in progress.

Just as a ship often has to make course corrections, so we, too, need to correct our belief system from time to time. Change is inevitable. That's why being a traditionalist gets us stuck. But change for the sake of change is not good either. We need to be open to the corrections that Scripture or people who see new things in the light of Scripture bring us.

In Romans 12:2, the Apostle Paul urges us to renew our minds. We must test our worldview against Scripture and revise it when necessary. 



A communist answers:

1. I am a member of the collective.
2. The problem is capitalist people.
3. Bring about a revolution; the communist government knows best.

A humanist answers:

1. I'm a rational and caring human being.
2. People who lack education follow their lower instincts.
3. Try to improve the world with education and deeds of nobility.

A Christian answers:

1. I'm created by God and made in his image.
2. Humanity fell into sin.
3. Accept salvation and live out of the redemption of Christ.

A worldview should be dynamic

There is much more to a worldview, but the basic questions show the foundation on which we build. A full-fledged

Riddle:

What has seven letters,
Preceded God,
Is greater than God,
More evil than the Devil,
Poor people have it,
Wealthy people don't have it,
If you eat it, you die?

See answer below this box.

If you can't find the answer, you haven't solved the riddle.

A Charles Dickens Christmas Dessert

by Charles C. Adams

Charles Adams (cadams@dordt.edu) is Dean of Natural Sciences at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Christmas Eve to New Years Day: a time to celebrate with family and friends that historic event without which family and friends would have no meaning. In addition, for those educators among us, it is a time without classes to teach and without meetings to attend — a time when you can prepare for the coming semester at your own pace and still have time left over for “dessert.”

“Christmas dessert” means for me reading a novel or at least a couple of stories by Charles Dickens. Dickens has fascinated me ever since, as a sophomore in high school, I met Pip, Magwitch, and Joe Gargery in the early chapters of *Great Expectations*. Having now read most of his novels, many of his stories, and two Dickens biographies, I have discovered that my fascination has grown and, to a certain extent, has been joined by puzzlement. What puzzles me is how this author, who was known as a rather liberal Christian, could have conveyed in his writings what seems to me to be the very essence of biblical Christianity far better than any other writer of fiction that I have read. Let me probe that paradox a bit by telling you about Christmas 2006, which for me was very much a Charles Dickens Christmas.

Social conscience

That year I had re-read *A Christmas Carol*, and so thought it would be appropriate to start Christmas break by viewing one of the two film versions of that short novel that I have on videotape.

One version, made in 1951 and filmed in black & white, was shown on TV every Christmas eve when I was a child. But this year my wife and I decided to watch the 1984 version, starring George C. Scott as Ebenezer Scrooge. Among its greatest qualities is its faithfulness to the text when Scrooge is confronted by the ghost of Jacob

business!”

A Christmas Carol was first published in London around Christmas, 1843. Its success encouraged Dickens to make a practice of writing a short novel or a long story to be ready for publication each Christmas. In part, he — and certainly his publisher — was motivated by the lure of success in the form of fame and monetary profit. But those years in England were what have been called “the hungry forties” — a time of cruel injustice, when the Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest seemed to justify the enormous chasm between wealthy men of business and the poverty-stricken masses. Dickens was sensitive to that injustice and felt called upon to point it out. He used the Christmas novels and stories to do just that.

Christian virtues

In *Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings*, *Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy*, and *Dr. Marigold*, the three stories I read last year, the social justice theme remains. But these three stories were written twenty years after *A Christmas Carol*, for the 1863, 1864, and 1865 Christmas seasons respectively. In these stories the themes of kindness, gentleness, self-sacrifice, and familial love are more prominent. In *Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy*, perhaps the most memorable of the three, the themes of repentance and forgiveness join kindness and familial love to evidence Dickens' mature Christian sensibilities. In a “twist” of the plot from *Oliver Twist*, an orphan — whose father deserts the family and whose mother subsequently dies — is raised lovingly and self-sacrificially by a widow and her lodger. A pensioner, the lodger pretends comically but most sincerely to be a gentleman, much like that



Marley. Those of you familiar with the story may recall that when the ghost goes on lamenting about lost opportunities for doing good, Scrooge replies,

“But you were always a good man of business, Jacob.”

“Business!” cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. “Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my

lovable character from *David Copperfield*, Wilkins Micawber, or like Dickens' own father, John Dickens.

And here we have two of the three qualities that I believe are most central to the character and teachings of Jesus, and which are so prominent in Dickens' writings: compassion and self-sacrifice. The other quality is sensitivity to hypocrisy. These appear as themes in *A Christmas Carol* and, to a greater or lesser extent, in all the other Christmas stories and novels. But they are developed most fully in Dickens' full-length novels. Two of those novels — which I had read more than 20 years ago, but dramatizations of which, thanks to Public Television's *Masterpiece Theatre*, I have recorded on videotape — my wife and I viewed during a couple of evenings this past Christmas break.

The first was *Great Expectations*, written in 1861. In *Great Expectations*, Pip, the main character is not the most likeable or noble person in the story. That person is Joe Gargery, a blacksmith, and the adoptive father of Pip. Joe is humble, compassionate, and self-sacrificing — in every way a Christ figure. There are others who evidence compassion, humility, and self-sacrifice as well, but not as consistently as Joe.

Opposite poles

The major characters of the novel also embody selfishness and hypocrisy. Perhaps the best known are Miss Havisham and her protégée, Estella. In a way, Joe and Pip on the one hand, and Miss Havisham and Estella on the other, represent parallel but opposite paths. It is Joe's Christ-like influence that ultimately brings about the redemption of Pip. It is Miss Havisham's devilish influence that brings about the corruption of Estella. Pip and Estella both have "great expectations" at the start of the story. But in a first-shall-be-last-and-last-shall-be-first turn of the plot, we come to distinguish between two sets of qualities:




monetary, vengeance-seeking, and self-aggrandizing on the one hand, and love, faithfulness, and self-sacrifice on the other.

True redemption

The other video dramatization was also one I recorded from *Masterpiece Theatre* many years ago: *A Tale of Two Cities*. This is Dickens' ultimate tale of redemption and self-sacrifice, with one of the main characters, the originally dissolute Sydney Carton, going to the guillotine to save his look-alike, Charles Darnay. Both sets of characters — the "good" and the "bad" — embody great evil, hypocrisy, and self-delusion. But each set also exhibit the power of redemption: the redemption of the life of Charles Darnay by the sacrifice of Sydney Carton, and the redemption of Sydney Carton's eternal life — and thereby his brief, temporal life, by his losing the latter. Everyone knows that famous last line of *A Tale of Two Cities*, which the novel's narrator conjectures might have been the last thoughts of Sydney Carton: "It is a far, far better thing I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known." But few remember that the actual last words of Sydney Carton, just before he stepped up to be guillotined, were to quote the Lord's words from the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of John: "I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Strength out of weakness

At the start of this article I said I was puzzled at how a writer who was known as a rather liberal Christian could have embodied in his writings the very essence of biblical Christianity. But perhaps in writing this article I've answered my own puzzlement, at least to some extent. For, in a way, the transformation of the dissolute Sydney Carton into a Christ-figure is simply a shadow of the twist in the great cosmic plot whereby the first become last and the last first. It is somewhat surprising that a theologically weak Christian would be the greatest in expressing the essence of biblical Christianity.

In any case, if you want a glimpse of Jesus, I suggest you read the fictional writings of his servant Charles Dickens. In *A Christmas Carol*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations*, and many others of Dickens' novels and stories, you will find righteous indignation at pharisaical hypocrisy, compassion for the poor, and self-sacrificing love. There are other writings of other authors — like Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* — where the biblical imagery is more intense, more frequent, and aesthetically more refined. But Dickens, in his writings, projects the face of Jesus more than these other authors. 

We Must Keep the Core of Our Vision

Teaching Christianly in Christian Schools 1.

The following two articles, first published in the Ontario Christian School Teachers Association News, were written by educators who have not grown up with Christian education in their background. It provides stories of how some of them wound up teaching in Christian schools, why they are committed to Christian education, and how they continue to grapple with bringing their faith to bear on education.

Bob Moore

Bob Moore (principal@guelphccs.ca) is principal of Guelph Community Christian School, Guelph, Ontario.

What better way to enter the world of Christian education than through volunteer service?

I had gone through the public system during the 1950s and '60s in Ontario and then on to public college and universities. I had heard about Christian schools and had neighbors who attended John Knox Christian School in Fruitland, Ontario. While I played with the Koopman boys, and though we respected their faith, Knox Christian was "the Dutch school." Even though I wasn't getting a Christian education at my school, we still prayed the Lord's Prayer, read Scripture, and had weekly religion class with the pastor from the local Canadian Reformed congregation. My family attended church three times a week, but we were raised in the evangelical tradition, where our Lord's saving grace only worked on the individual heart and had no relevance to culture or creation at large. There was a legalistic superficiality to our Christian experience that was not very satisfying — so unsatisfying, in fact, that both my older and younger brothers left the faith in which we were raised.

When I was in my final year at a university in Ottawa, I mentioned to a public school teacher in my Bible study group that I was interested in teaching. He wisely advised me to volunteer in a school to get a taste of teaching and suggested that I try the Community for Christian Learning in town. I was accepted as an ESL volunteer there to work with three sisters from Hong Kong. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and was even more intrigued by my exposure to a form of Christianity that had

something to say to culture and to creation.

I need integrity

My personality and training have given me a hunger for consistency, both linear and spatial. If someone says that we will follow procedure A, then I want to follow procedure A through to the end. If someone says that the theme for an article or work of art is such and such, I get bent out of shape if they introduce a random theme. You can imagine my pleasure in encountering the integration of faith and culture at the Christian high school. Finally, I could read and write and hear and teach about a Christ who was Lord of all creation. I reveled in theories of language, mathematics and history that took Scriptural principles and applied them to practice in the past, present and future.

When that year of university was over, my wife and I moved to nearby Kingston so I could study in the B.Ed. program at Queen's University. I was subsequently hired at the Community for Christian Learning to teach a range of subjects.

New wine, old wineskins

The Community for Christian Learning was an experiment in radically different methods of teaching and learning. It was something of a learn-as-you-go experience that developed some fatal problems. You could say that it was trying to pour new wine into old wineskins, and the best solution at the time was to go back to the old wine and reconstruct the school as Redeemer Christian High School at the end of my third year there. I continued to serve there for another eight years.

I was somewhat disappointed that the radical approach to the integration of faith and learning had not worked and stayed

away from exploring that path for quite a few years.

Since then, I have earned my M.Ed. in administration at the University of Ottawa and gone into administration. I have been encouraged by the recent trends in curriculum in the Christian schools of Ontario and British Columbia and other districts. Our schools have matured to the point that they are no longer threatened by ideas that originate in non-Christian research centers. The whole educational world is changing, and we have been able to take advantage of good research no matter who does it, recognizing that all truth is God's truth.

The new thrust at Christian Schools International to nurture faith in our students is also exciting. Even CSI is no longer afraid to use some terminology that originates in non-Reformed circles and to talk about the heart.

Truly, we will need a different spaceship to travel into the 21st century. It has been my privilege to see renewal taking place, and I hope to see it catch on with Christian communities that have not traditionally supported Christian schools. If our schools can keep the core of their distinctive vision but change the ethnic wrappings, my Dutch immigrant neighbors of the 1950s will have blessed Canada with more than just greenhouses and tulips!

My Favorite Day Is Grandparents Day

Teaching Christianly in Christian Schools 2.

by Harvey Goossen

Harvey Goossen (h.goossen@woodland.on.ca) teaches history and Bible at Woodland Christian High School in Cambridge, Ont. The topic of his major essay for a course he took in church history at Tyndale Seminary was Abraham Kuyper.

I was educated outside of the community known as the Christian school movement. My small-town elementary education was provided mostly by teachers who were either Christian or not hostile to the influence of Judeo-Christian values. I think my generation (I just turned 40!) was one of the last to have religious education as part of the curriculum. The local pastors in my town took turns coming into our grade seven and eight classes about once a month and tried to teach us recalcitrant students. Their reward will truly be in heaven!

So while I did not receive a Christian elementary education, I was not placed into an environment that was in sharp contrast to the values and beliefs of my family and faith community. My parents sent all of us (I have seven siblings) to Eden Christian College in Niagara-on-the-Lake for high school. At that time, Eden was a fully independent school operated by the Ontario Mennonite Brethren Churches. My teachers were devoted followers of Jesus Christ, which was evident in the way they conducted themselves and in the way they related to us students. However, I think it would be fair for me to say that my education was "public curriculum taught by Christians." Bible class was where we talked about our faith; not in science-, history- or geography class. That's not to say it never happened, but it was not woven into the fabric of the courses.

Steep learning curve

Fast forward.... I began my teaching career at Quinte Christian High School and

was assigned to teach the grade 11 Ancient and Medieval History course as well as the grade 12 Modern Western Civilization course. No problem (or so I thought). Then I started to read through the curriculum. I went to my principal, Leo Van Arragon, and asked him, "So ... what's this Christian perspective thing I'm supposed to do? And who's Abraham Kuyper?" Over the course of that year, Leo took time to walk me through the major historical themes and meta-narratives (I know they're not fashionable today), God's providential guiding, and the consequences of abandoning these truths. On one hand, I was very excited and motivated to discover all of these new Christian worldview concepts and ideas (history wasn't just one thing after another); and on the other hand, I felt a twinge of guilt for taking a pay check from these communities when I felt I needed to learn as much, or more, than my students!

Twelve years later, I don't think I've "arrived" yet, - and that's a good thing. The day I "arrive" is probably the day I should leave the profession.

What it means

Teaching Christianly for me means the following:

- * Constantly re-evaluate course outlines and lessons, looking for creative and intentional ways to demonstrate God's sovereignty and purposes into those lessons.

- * Look for ways to integrate the creation-fall-redemption matrix into the major events and ideas of the past. I do that by showing my students the different ways political systems and, at times, singular leaders, rightly and wrongly diagnosed the creation, the fall, and their version of redemption. I am especially grateful to curriculum writers for the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools for their interpretation

of the French Revolution. My secular training in university gave me none of that perspective!).

- * Don't impose ideas and opinions on my students but rather have them wrestle with different points of view, so they can discern how *they* will live and act and believe when they leave our school. I want them to recognize that it's OK to have different views within the body of Christ, provided they hold onto core convictions.

- * Have my students fully realize that they are not powerless and that they have the opportunity to have a significant impact in their communities and in the world! They have the freedom and responsibility to make choices and to live with the consequences of those choices. There are so many great examples from scripture and from history we can provide here.

- * I "get" to take professional development courses and enhance my ability to do this task more effectively. I worry when I hear complaints about having to take courses or upgrade skills. We should see this as an opportunity for growth and professional enhancement to help us do a better job of teaching Christianly.

Felt obligation

My favorite day on the school calendar is Grandparents' Day. It's my favorite because it is on this day that I get to meet those people on whose shoulders I am standing. They were the pioneers in Christian education who sacrificed, who built our schools, who wrote our curriculum, and who initiated programs and courses to train us. They deserve to know that we are being faithful stewards of what has been entrusted to us. That's why we teach Christianly. It's our way to continue telling the story. We owe it to the pioneers of Christian education, we owe it to the students, and we owe it to ourselves to ensure that each lesson connects to the broader story of God's revelation to us.

Lost No More

by Dora Strooboscher

Dora Strooboscher (dora.stroo@cogeco.ca) is a retired elementary teacher and curriculum writer who lives in St. Catharines, Ontario.

My husband, Marc, and I spend two months every year working with Christian schools in Limpopo, South Africa. We began our work at Theocentric Christian College in 2004 and now have good friends there. We have also adapted to living in a black rural village and to eating mealies and chicken every day. The geography of Limpopo is now familiar, and we have no trouble finding our way from one town to another, as long as we can stick to the main (tar) roads. We are, however, hopeless at trying to find our way around on the myriad of small unpaved roads and tracks that crisscross from one village to another. The locals have no trouble with this. They know the landmarks: a crooked tree, a muddy hole, a small tin shack, a dry creek. They can find their way around just as easily at night as they can by day. Or so we thought!

Last February, we had come to the end of a rather long council meeting at Theocentric. The treasurer had forgotten to arrange for a ride home, and the public transport buses were not running anymore. Marc and I did have a rented car, but we hesitated to offer a ride. She lived far up into the mountains, and we had never been there before. Getting there would not be a problem, but would we be able to find our way back in the dark? One of our friends, Sammy, also the Chair of Council, came up with a splendid solution: he was a local and would know how to get back, but his car did not have enough gasoline. Marc did not know the area and for sure would not find his way back, but his car had lots of gasoline. They would go together to take Tsakani home, then they would come back to Theocentric. Marc could then pick up

Dora, and Sammy had enough gasoline to drive home from there. But should Dora stay all by herself in a deserted building while they were gone? No, that was not a good idea, so Mr. Kaira, the principal, offered to stay with her at the school until the two returned. They would be gone no more than an hour, probably less.

A long wait

The three headed out, and the two stayed behind. Kaira and I had lots to talk about. He was a new principal at Theocentric



A myriad of small roads criss-cross from one village to another.

and, since Marc and I had served as interim principals for three months, there was no shortage of things to talk about. It wasn't long before an hour had passed and the two men would be back any time. More conversation ensued: timetable changes, hiring another teacher, our personal lives. Another hour passed; still no men. We began to worry. Two and a half hours later, Marc and Sammy returned. They had gotten hopelessly lost on the return trip.

Have you ever been so lost that you know you are going around in circles and not getting anywhere? Well, that is how lost they had been. Not only had they kept going around in circles, they also found that they were going higher and higher into the mountains instead of going down,

back to the main road. They got stuck in a deep rut on what Marc called "a cow path," and far below, they could see the flicker of car lights on the main road. It was one thing to see it; it was another to get there. They managed to get out of the muddy rut, but had literally reached the end of the road! The prospect of spending the night on the dark mountain trail was not an appealing thought.

Two angels

Then, a miracle! Out of the dark came two young women. They were walking toward the tar road down below. "We will take you there," they offered. Marc and Sammy invited them into the car. It was an act of faith, since they were complete strangers, but the men were out of options. They simply had to trust that these were angels of mercy sent by God. Less than five minutes later, they were back on the tar road. The girls had been spared a long walk, and the men were safely on their way back to Theocentric.

I was reminded of this incident when I listened to Marva Dawn, a speaker at the OCSTA Teachers' Convention. She reminded us that what sets Christianity apart from other religions is GRACE, because it is the only religion in the world where one can get a free ride to heaven. It is the only religion in the world where someone says: *I'll take you there*, and that Someone is Jesus. He stepped into our darkness, not only to take us to heaven, but also to map a way through the myriad of situations that crisscross our lives on earth. He came to show us how to stop going around in circles of fear and hopelessness. It takes an act of faith and trust, but we can live lost- no- more lives.

That is what Christmas is really all about! ☺

Blue Jays and Capturing the Soul



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Jane Hoogendam teaches writing in the intermediate grades and is vice-principal at Knox Christian School in Bowmanville, Ontario.

I hear my calling song playing in my heart,
I see clouds moving and opening up the sky in the morning." (grade 7 student)

As the valiant blue jay fearlessly flies through the snowstorm to reach those last seeds clinging to the skeleton of a sunflower plant, so we work at sowing the seeds of good writing in the classroom!

"The power of the pen." This expression doesn't carry much weight any more. How often do we actually use a pen? How do we use it? The power of computer print? It doesn't have the same ring to it! The punch of the written word! The ring of the text message...the click of the email. How writing has changed! Here I am teaching in a junior high classroom, and I must ask myself: How do I make writing both relevant and teachable? How do I empower my students to realize that their words are meaningful? Yet despite my concerns as a teacher, the students always seem to surprise me with their writing. As one student wrote in his first assignment: *"I want to be able to talk to walls, asking what they've seen in their life with amazing stories of history, bellowing the words in raspy voices."* Wow! Words can sure paint pictures!

Nearly forty years ago educator Donald Graves established himself as a pioneer in the study of how children write. His work on the "writing process" remains influential in the way that I teach writing today. Graves's focus was to encourage students to choose their topics and write about things that are meaningful to them. His emphasis was on the process, rather than

just the end product. Children need to write and rewrite. They need an audience to write for beyond the teacher, and a goal for their writing besides just receiving a mark. Writing has to be purposeful. One criticism of the teaching of writing that gained popularity during the 1980s was that students were not given high demands and were being taught that the mechanics of writing were no longer important. Truly, teaching writing takes hard work on the part of both the teacher and the students. In a recent interview Graves suggested, "Show the gains in a child's work. Be specific...about what that child knows and can express." ("Answering Your Questions about Teaching Writing: A Talk with Donald H. Graves") Teachers must have high expectations, both for themselves and for the students. When asked if there was one thing a teacher should do when teaching writing, his answer was, "Write yourself. Invite children to do something you're already doing.... You can't ask someone to sing a duet with you until you know the tune yourself."

This summer I attended a workshop entitled "The Traits of Writing." The "Traits" developed out of the need to have common guidelines and a way of assessing writing, but comes from a perspective similar to that of Graves. Barry Lane says: "The key to assessment is the word itself. It comes from the Latin verb *assidere*: to sit beside. We're not ranking here. We are sitting beside a piece of writing and observing its qualities. We are finding a common language to talk about those qualities" (Culham 10). "The Traits of Writing" gives specific rubrics to help with assessment and to find the qualities in the writing we are looking for. Students must be familiar with the rubrics.

Now comes the difficult part. Our students may write meaningfully, but how do we assess that writing? We have to get

into the heart and soul of the writing. This means getting into the heart and soul of the student. We must create assignments that allow them to capture their dreams. My first assignment this year was called "I Am," where students were given directions to write a poem about who they are. The purpose was for me to get to know them, their dreams and hopes.

"I pretend I am a famous composer, I feel anything is possible when you try." (grade 7 student)

"I touch the bumpy paint and wish I could step into the painting,

I worry, if I could get into the painting, how could I get out?" (grade 7 student)

The danger in writing class is to overdo the editing. Pick and choose certain pieces that need to be revised and edited. Students need to be gently encouraged to express themselves!

I had an interesting interchange at the 25th anniversary of the Christian school where I began my teaching career. A young woman came up to me and wondered if I remembered her. In the recesses of my mind I could picture her. I could envision her long blond hair as it cascaded down her side while she wrote intently in her notebook. "Remember when you said I could write instead of doing grammar, and I started writing a book?" she asked me, adding, "I still have that book. That was the best thing I remember about grade 4!" Yes, writing must be purposeful. I'd love to read that book again.

The cardinals and goldfinches and robins are not nearly as brazen as the blue jays. All are part of the God's kingdom, and it is our job as teachers to inspire this next generation to spread their seeds in many different directions. Our print-saturated society is even more desperately in need of fearless, spirit-filled, blue jay writers with a passion for the written word! ☺

When in Our Clothing God Is Glorified

(A skit on modesty and clothing)

by Bert Witvoet

I wrote a skit once for a church meeting that focused on appropriate clothing in today's Western society. I suppose it applies to schools as well as churches. It could be used with discretion in a high school class on health and sexuality.

Rev. Simpleston: I want to thank the council of Bethel Community Church for inviting me to your pulpit this Sunday. I have an important message, one which I preach in various congregations, and I hope that you will also be blessed by it. The text can be found in 1 Timothy 2: 9-10, where we read: "I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God."

Now it goes without too much saying that when I climb a pulpit, I see too much flesh in front of my eyes. That should not be so. We are more and more conforming to the patterns of this world. I want you husbands and fathers to go home and tell your wives and daughters to wear clothing that reveal NOTHING! Do you think that our boys and men here in church are made of wood and stone? No, they are filled with raging hormones! Even my elders are not listening to my sermons anymore because of all the flesh that is staring them in the face. Brothers and sisters, this should not be so.

Rose Soundforth: Just a minute, pastor. What are you saying? Do you want us to go back to the Victorian era? Don't you realize that standards of what constitutes modesty change? Maybe a hundred years ago, showing your ankles was a sign of immodesty, but not so today. These things are culturally conditioned. Be careful that you don't accuse our women and girls of immodesty just because they don't wrap

themselves in heavy drapes and veils!

Jim Mundane: Why are you even talking about modesty? Modesty is just another word for body shame. Why be ashamed of your body? The only reason I wear clothing is because of the cold climate. Well, maybe another reason would be that I want to protect my skin from getting scraped or sunburned. But why be ashamed of our bodies? Modesty is just giving in to social

Jim: Didn't they know that before the fall? The only difference is that before the fall they were comfortable being naked. After the fall they lost that comfort. They became ashamed of their bodies.

Rev. Simpleston: True, but also true that they couldn't trust each other anymore. Sin broke the trust we need to be naked before each other.

Rose: I agree with you there, Reverend. Husband and wife can be naked in privacy because they learn to trust each other. But the minute that trust is gone in a marriage, that minute they become embarrassed to stand naked before each other. Modesty is a way of not exposing too much of the human body when trust becomes an issue.

Rev. Simpleston: Yes, and modesty needs to be practiced in public places because we can't expect trust from the public. Modesty applies to the display of bare skin, hair, undergarments, and especially the intimate parts of our body. It even means that we must obscure the shape of those intimate parts.

Jim: Far out, Man. "Obscure the shape of those intimate parts?" I guess you don't go to ballet performances, Reverend. You guys are both so uptight. I trust myself in public places more so than in private places. Besides, whose body is it anyway? I can do with my body whatever I want. If you have a problem with that, well, that is your problem, not mine.

Rose: I disagree with both of you. We have to be flexible in these things, Reverend. For example, I don't think a woman's hair is a real problem anymore in Western society. Standards for modesty are not absolute. But I also disagree with Jim. We need to focus on a community's

When In Our Clothing

When in our clothing God is glorified,
and shirts and blouses
keep us dignified,
and fashion models weep and
strippers cry: Alleluia.

When brand names fade and
quality survives,
And fads no longer keep us occupied,
And styles are personal and sanctified:
Alleluia.

When clothes are honest and
no longer lie,
but signal joy and
hope and peaceful pride,
then our Creator God is magnified:
Alleluia.

(To the tune of Psalter Hymnal # 512)

pressure to conform. What is it to other people how I present myself?

Rev. Simpleston: Tell me, why was making clothes for Adam and Eve one of the first things God did after the fall into sin?

Rose: Because Adam and Eve realized they were naked.

understanding of what is proper. We are responsible for how we affect others.

Jim: Give me an example.

Rose: Okay. In Canada it's legal for a woman to expose her breasts in public. I also think that exposing your breasts is not necessarily immoral. It all depends on your intent. But the community has certain expectations and certain unwritten rules about what is decent and what is not. We need to respect those rules. It may not be illegal and it may not be immoral to go topless in public, but is it ethical? Does it show respect for the community?

Rev. Simpleston: I think you are going against the words of the Apostle Paul, Rose. He says very clearly that women have to be modestly dressed and that includes not braiding their hair, and not wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes.

Rose: Because those were the community standards of that day. In those days, you could recognize that someone was a prostitute or an adulteress by that kind of apparel. That's not the case today anymore. Today we have to examine what the community standards are. And that's not so difficult. That's why Christian schools have certain rules for dress today. Kids are not allowed to show their midriff or too much cleavage. Why? Because that violates community standards.

Jim: Excessive modesty is called prudishness.

Rev. Simpleston: Yes, and excessive immodesty is called exhibitionism.

Rose: I think we are all agreed about the excesses. Maybe we can also agree that modesty means we don't want to draw

undue attention to ourselves. It goes hand in hand with humility.

Rev. Simpleston: I think Christians should not follow the fashions of our society slavishly. What's wrong with setting ourselves apart like the Amish? Let's tell our women not to wear dresses and blouses with low cut neck lines, skirts or shorts which expose the upper portions of the legs, clothing which is sheer and excessively tight-fitting dresses or slacks.

Jim: You seem to have this all worked out, Reverend. Does modesty apply only to women?

Rose: It applies to both men and women,

but women are more vulnerable than men.

Jim: Yeah, as the Reverend pointed out so eloquently, "Men are filled with raging hormones." (spoken sarcastically)

Rev. Simpleston: The message of our dominant culture today is that our bodies are not precious, that we're not created in the image of God. I'm saying that we are precious, and that we require modesty to protect ourselves.

Rose: I kind of like that idea, Reverend.

Jim: I prefer not to be ashamed of my precious body. ☺

My sincere thanks

Since this really is my last issue as editor of CEJ, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the magazine, especially our faithful columnists: Al Boerema, Jane Hoogendam, Tena Siebenga-Valstar, and, of course, the irrepressible, irreproachable and irredeemable Jan Kaarsvlam. He has not been very successful in holding down a job, but his Bedlam column has been his greatest triumph.

And I especially want to thank Dr. Steve Van Der Wee for writing many book reviews and also for being my final proofreader for each issue. Steve was my first English teacher at Calvin College when I enrolled as a freshman in 1955. I flunked my first grammar test with him, but that was because, although I knew the parts of speech he was testing, I did not know the English terms for them. From thereon in it was smoother sailing. He recently turned 89 and is still very active and alert.

This is what Steve wrote about his work for CEJ: "In the 40 issues of CEJ in which your humble proofreader has functioned, he estimates the following accomplishments:

1. He deleted 397 commas
 2. He inserted 78 commas
 3. He un-dangled 37 participles
 4. He provided antecedents for 136 orphaned pronouns
 5. He fine-tuned 278 miscellaneous punctuation marks
 6. He mended or re-wrote 411 sentences.
 7. He claims to have read every word of every issue.
- By doing so, he greatly increased his store of pedagogical wisdom."

B.W.



About first impressions, effective teaching and classroom management

Tena Siebenga-Valstar (tvalstar@telus.net) is currently living in Calgary, Alberta, in an "in-between space," waiting for the Lord's direction. She is also supporting her husband by commuting with him to part-time ministry positions in Central Alberta.

Making a good first impression

Question #1:

What would you suggest to a brand new teacher coming right out of college on how to make a great first impression on the administration and faculty at the school where she will teach? I ask this question because I know the first year of teaching is a very crucial year for teachers, and I want to start on the right foot.

Response:

I am sure that you realize that you have already made your first impression on the administration through your resume and your interview. The administration must have been favorably impressed if they chose to hire you for the position. The foregoing indicates that what happens before you enter the classroom has a big impact on how your colleagues will perceive you. What is important is that you are the person that God created you to be.

The following are characteristics observed over the years which have made an impression on colleagues and administration. These are not given in order of priority.

1. Being friendly, open to others and possessing an ability to laugh at oneself.
2. Possessing the ability to get along with others.
3. Understanding the school's vision, being willing to implement it and work collaboratively with others to achieve it.
4. Having a strong work ethic, being on time for meetings and in-service prior to the beginning of the school year, and realizing that teaching is not a 9 to 3:30 job.
5. Being willing to ask questions rather than stumbling through a situation in frustration.
6. Being creative in the classroom and in finding solutions to challenges.
7. Being flexible and possessing an understanding that class numbers and schedules are dependent on a number of factors and may have to change (maybe more than once), depending on enrollment and consequent grant monies.
8. Being resourceful and able to make the best of what you have been given. Possessing a willingness to understand the school's situation regarding availability of resources and long-term plans in purchasing materials. Even though these may not

be your resources of choice, the school usually has a big picture for purchasing curriculum materials consistent with the school's philosophy.

9. Having the ability to take charge of the classroom, demonstrating what has been learned previously. Introducing the new ideas you learned in college. Engaging students in their learning in meaningful ways. Being organized. Being aware of curriculum guideline and being able to implement them.

10. Demonstrating a love for the students and developing a relationship with the parent community.

11. Demonstrating a commitment to Christ and serving as Christ's disciple, in other words, having a servant attitude.

12. Being willing to listen and learn from others.

I suggest you read these and then pick one or two on which you wish to concentrate. May you be blessed in your first year.

Surmounting the language barrier

Question #2:

I'm a teacher with a special education major. How do I deal with a student who does not speak English? What is my role?

Response:

A school's policy for enrolling students who have English as a second language should delineate how the program will be delivered. If a policy or program is not in place, there should be an understanding with the parents that a program is not in place and that the instruction which occurs is dependent on what can be put in place by school personnel. Through discussion between the school administration and school personnel, a decision will have to be made regarding the delivery of the program.

A teacher with a special education degree may be considered capable of finding the resources to deal with students who do not have English as a first language. The school may presently have the resources. You would have to familiarize yourself with the resources in order to effectively use them with the student. Are there tapes, videos, books, on-line programs, or is there a volunteer in the school community who is willing to work one-on-one? The teacher would have to create an individualized program for the student. Community agencies may also have resources with which you may connect.

Along with the administration and parents, you will have to decide on the expectations for the child. Will the child be concentrating on English, or will the student be expected to keep up with his or her peers in some areas of study?

Many years ago I had a student in my class who did not have



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English as his first language. I remember communicating with signs or gestures and sometimes drawing pictures. When I could not be understood in that manner, I went to the one person in the school who could translate for us. What amazed me was how quickly he, and later another non-English speaking student, learned the communication system. Their fellow students were wonderful teachers and used many different means of communicating with them. It was delightful when their beaming faces indicated they could understand or their voices repeated a word or phrase showing that they understood and were brave enough to use this new language to communicate.

Apply guidelines

Question #3:

How do you handle a student who refuses to listen and is constantly causing uproar in the classroom? What is the best way to get the student to listen to you and improve their behavior?

Response:

The classroom guidelines that are put in place apply to all of the students, and they should be aware of the reasons for the guidelines. Most classrooms have guidelines regarding talking when others are working or speaking, and of showing respect for others. This student would have to be reminded of these guidelines both in a classroom setting and individually. If this student habitually talks when you are talking you may have to situate him close to you so that you can touch him to remind him that he is to be quiet. Another idea is to cease talking each time he interrupts you. Eventually peer pressure (the other students' reaction) may cause him to change his behavior.

A respectful private conversation with him may reveal why he chooses to behave in this manner. He may have to be confronted with the idea that this behavior is a display of selfishness, inconsideration and lack of respect rather than the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). A contrite heart may provide the opportunity to develop a behavioral contract in which he states what he will strive to do and how often he will do so. Writing the contract statements in positive language rather than negative may be helpful. Very often negative behavior is attention-seeking behavior. The connection made with the teacher to review the results of the contract gives the student attention. For this reason, as well as for a greater chance of success, the contract may have to be set up for short periods of time, for example, from the beginning of school until recess, and then from recess to noon. You may want to introduce a tangible reward system to get started.

You may also need to develop a system of an agreed-upon number of warnings by the teacher followed by an agreed-upon consequence. This allows the student to be involved in the action plan, and, therefore, she may take greater ownership of the situation. Other students may become involved to serve as a support system for the student. Caring, helpful students may be designated to help her monitor her behavior.

It is important to keep both administration and parents aware of the process. Provide evidence rather than generalities to inform parents, and make them aware of the severity of the problem. If you involve them in the action plan for remediation, the success rate will likely be greater than if you left them out of the picture. Inform them of the progress being made. If the situation involves a disproportionate amount of your instructional time, seek help from the administration. Ask that the student be temporarily moved elsewhere so that the learning atmosphere can be restored in your classroom.

My suggestions may benefit your situation, but colleagues who know the child and the situation may be able to offer more specific and pertinent advice. ☺

Correction:

In the last issue of CEJ (October 2009) we printed "A Booklist for Christian Teachers" (page 28). We erroneously listed the book *Wisdom and Curriculum* under the name of Donovan Graham. That should have been Doug Blomberg, who is the actual author.

Editor

Rewards and Punishment

Albert Boerema asks the panel to discuss the following:

“For the last couple of meetings of my educational psychology class, I have been studying behavioral theories of learning with my students. Particularly we have been grappling with the use of rewards and punishments relating to learning and classroom management. Since most of my students are either teaching, student teaching, or working as aides in classrooms, this is more than an academic exercise for them. They are quite convinced that rewards and punishments are appropriate, useful and even necessary. What do you think? Are these behavioral techniques an important component of a teacher’s repertoire? Or do they impede development by making students work for external rewards?”

October 7, 2009

Pamela Adams begins:

Hi everyone:

Rewards and punishments are not how we see things done in the Bible or our every day lives. We receive rewards and punishments in the “world” where we need encouragement to do things we don’t want to do or things that are highly valued in our society (like sports). Doing things in the spirit of the Lord and for future benefit of someone are good reasons to not receive rewards or punishments.

Pam Adams



work time. A small reward such as eating lunch near a friend instead of in an assigned seat can effectively serve as an incentive to achieve. I am against the use of rewards and punishments as the primary method of giving incentives to learn, but to take them away altogether in my view takes away from a tool that in some students really works to build motivation to learn.

Tim Leugs

October 13, 2009

Pamela Adams writes:

Hi Tim and everyone else:

I agree with Tim in using rewards as gifts to students, even those who don’t deserve them, and of course a punishment, if appropriate, might save a child from a life of misbehavior. Let us see what others have to say.

Pam Adams

October 12, 2009

Tim Leugs responds:

Hi everyone:

I look at this topic and find I am led to believe that although rewards and punishments shouldn’t be the primary source of classroom management in a class, they certainly can [and, I think, sometimes should] be one source of it. Our goal as educators should always be to establish an intrinsic desire for learning in our students, helping them to realize that learning for its own sake is a worthwhile lifetime activity. In the day-to-day lives of students, however, a carrot and a stick are necessary at times. The possibility of losing a recess, for example, can be a natural and effective consequence for a student who has a tendency to dawdle during



October 17, 2009

Christian Altena contributes

Hello all:

Ideally, one would want all students to be motivated to arrive in class three minutes before the bell, have their pens poised ready to write at the bell, and stay attentive throughout the class — all of this motivated by the simple burning desire to learn and develop their God-given talents.

Practically, our packed classrooms sometimes have to resemble a police state





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— one, of course, ruled by a winking and smiling benevolent dictator. Behavior must be regulated, attendance must be taken, dress codes enforced, assignments must be completed, seats must be assigned, students have to ask permission to obey their bodies' natural calls to the restroom, and on and on it goes. A variety of punishments and rewards (some logical: if you don't study, your grades will likely suffer; some arbitrary: I will not accept papers torn out of spiral notebooks with those annoying little fringes) are in operation every minute of the school day. Witness the morning faculty meeting, or teacher conventions, where there are no punishments and everyone's expected to arrive on time, listen intently, and attend all the workshops because it's the right thing to do....

Back to the packed classroom, further complicating matters is the incongruousness of our rewards and punishments: thirty individuals each with their own levels of interest and self-motivation. How does one tailor rewards and punishments for each individual without offending a general sense of equality?

The trick, as was mentioned by Tim and Pam, is to use the least amount of artificial rewards and punishment to achieve the desired effects. We are not raising lab rats, training them to avoid the shocks, run the maze, and get something sweet and chewy at the end of it all. The brief time we spend with our charges should be spent training them (and us!) towards the sometimes elusive ideal.

Christian Altena

October 18, 2009

Tony Kamphuis jumps in:

Greetings:

Rewards and punishments are a great tool to have in your toolkit! They are an acknowledgement that humans share something in common with other creatures in God's good world. But it is a toolkit, and if you always use the same tool, you don't get the whole construction project completed very effectively. Don't ignore the opportunities to use behavioral strategies, but don't play the whole song on one string of your guitar either . . . (it seemed as if it was time to mix the metaphor or transition to a new one!)



Tony Kamphuis

October 19, 2009

Pam Adams comes back:

Hi everyone,

I am still a bit squeamish about using the rewards and punishment strategies. I know it is so hard for certain students to behave while others are so good. We see this in our own children, and it is true of those in our classes. Do we need to acknowledge the difficulties some have with behavior and help them along the path?

Pam Adams

October 22, 2009

Jolene Velthuis joins in:

Good discussion so far.

I think Ronald Morrish and his book *With All Due Respect* will help solve some the dilemma here. His main purpose for the book is to explain that neither behavior modification with rewards and punishments nor classroom management with its emphasis on choice is the whole picture for school discipline.

We are not looking to train students in systems of rewards, punishments, and choices that promote selfish gain; for example, if you do well, then you receive the reward. Nor are we training students to learn how to manipulate the system.

Our goal, as defined by Morrish, is to train students to be respectful and responsible. Morrish emphasizes that children need structure and training, explicit teaching, and then times to try independent choices. Younger students in school need more training and teaching on how to conduct themselves behaviorally. Other students need more chances for independent choices that are safely managed by adults.

As Tim and Tony have said, rewards and punishments have a place in this structure of discipline, but the discipline as a whole is so much more. It's important to remember that discipline has more than one meaning. In this context I understand discipline as more than a set of rules and regulations; instead, it's an exercise that develops and improves an attitude. It is, in fact, the training needed to be a respectful, responsible student and, later, a considerate adult, as Christian mentioned.

So in the classroom, rewards and punishments help reinforce the training and keep the structure that is set by the teacher. As Tim points out, the rewards and punishments don't have to be



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grand. In first grade, our whole class reward for a week of good behavior was a five-minute stay-in-your-spot-on-the-rug-game of "act out the animal." And a typical punishment can be to sit on the restart chair away from the group to get your body ready for learning. But these are not the end, only a tool to help in the greater goal of training for respect and responsibility.

One other thing I learned from Morrish is the difference between praise and acknowledgement. When students are doing what I have instructed and what I am expecting from them, it doesn't always seem right to praise them. (Excellent job staying on task, Jane!) However, acknowledging the correct behavior is appropriate. It's also called positive narration. (Tommy is working hard sounding out words. Carol, I noticed that you corrected that mistake all by yourself. Jane, you are continuing your work even when there are distractions.) Acknowledging correct behavior draws positive attention to it, but specific praise can be saved for outstand-

ing and beyond-expectation work.

I highly recommend *With All Due Respect* by Ronald Morrish. Happy training!

Jolene Velthuisen

The panel consists of:

Pam Adams (padams@dordt.edu), professor of education at Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa.

Christian Altena (caltena@swchristian.org) teacher of history at Chicago Christian High School in Palos Heights, Illinois.

Tony Kamphuis (tkamphuis@nace.ca), executive director of the Niagara Association for Christian Education, Smithville, Ont.

Tim Leugs (tleugs@legacys.org) a fifth-grade teacher at Legacy Christian School, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Jolene Velthuisen (jvelthuisen@rcsnm.org) a first-grade teacher at a charter school in Brooklyn, New York.

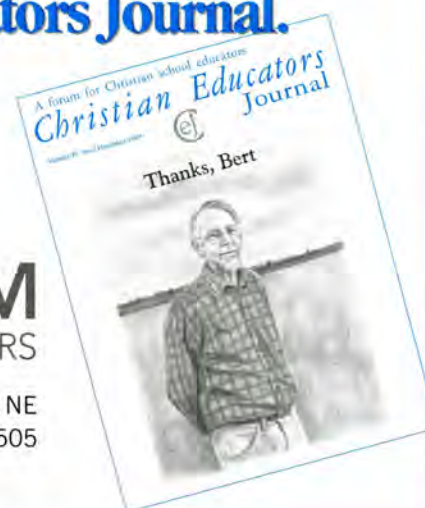
Bruce Wergeland (bcwerg@shaw.ca) teaches Grade 8 at Langley Christian Middle School in Langley, British Columbia.

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David I. Smith, *Learning from the Stranger: Christian Faith and Cultural Diversity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2009. 152 pages plus 34 pages of notes and index.

Reviewed by Steve J. Van Der Weele, Calvin College (Retired)



Steve J. Van Der Weele
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At the risk of destroying some suspense, let me take you to the final chapter of this book. It will help if you read carefully the chapters in the Book of Acts which describe the encounter between Cornelius, the Roman centurion, and the apostle Peter (Chapters 10 and 11). Remember that Peter still represents the chosen race, the embodiment of all the advantages which accrue to being a Hebrew. But a member of the oppressing nation — a representative of the Roman Empire, though a convert to Christianity, — now comes crashing into Peter's life from seemingly nowhere. By divine command, Cornelius is ordered not only to summon Peter for a conference, but to entertain the disciple in his own home — a serious breach of rules for a Jew. Prepared by his own vision, Peter follows his escorts and encounters Cornelius. Cornelius provides Peter with the chronology of these events and, wittingly or unwittingly, teaches Peter a lesson of enormous importance — that cultural and religious boundaries have been beaten down, and that all men are equal before God. Says Peter, "I now understand how true it is that God has no favorites, but that in every nation those who are god-fearing and do what is right are acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34).

Smith's book has prepared us well for this post-Pentecost episode. In his earlier chapters he distinguishes between proper and improper rationales for the student as he or she undertakes the admittedly daunting task of learning another country's language. But he goes beyond the classroom into an exploration of the complex relationship between Christian faith and the cultural diversities present on our globe. A Christian's calling is not limited to his vocation; it involves a way of *being* in this world, of living in it, of participating in its life.

Smith has had enough experience with language students to know that they come to their task of language study with erroneous and superficial attitudes. They explain, when asked, that, for example, they intend to be missionaries, or that they may find work overseas, or may do a lot of traveling. Thus, as a practical matter, it is well, they suppose, to know a language or two so that they can relate smoothly to folk in other countries. What Smith detects in these responses is the assumption that the student will be the host, entertaining people from other nations who, in the student's opinion, are not as sophisticated or knowledgeable as he is. He intends to impart his greater wisdom to others.

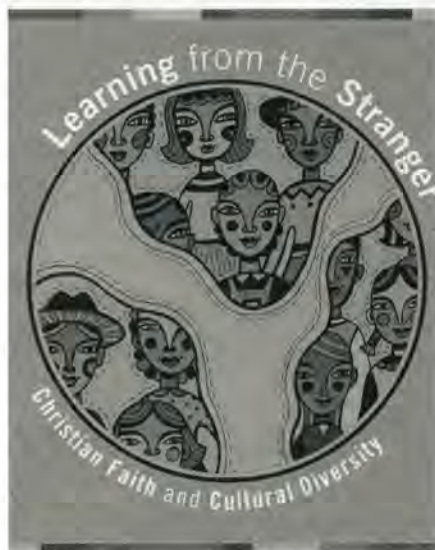
Linguistic and cultural imperialism are alive and well. But these attitudes will constitute, as Smith points out, serious impediments to a meaningful appropriation of the language and culture of another country.

The stranger deserves better. He deserves respect, not as a colonist to a colonial representative, but as an equal. He deserves reciprocity in the acquisition of languages. If he learns the English language, he deserves the courtesy of having us at least attempt to learn his. He has a right to expect from the student an attitude of humility, hospitality, and a listening ear. He has a right to expect that the student will have informed himself minimally about the culture which supports the language — not necessarily a thorough immersion in that culture, but with enough information that he can ask meaningful rather than trivial questions and engage significantly in the life and work of the stranger.

Smith sets out with exegetical deftness the rationale for cultural sensitivity from biblical passages other than the episode from Acts. The story of Abraham's strategy to defend his wife by lying to Abimelek about her identity gives evidence of how not to deal with cultural variations. What Abraham thought would be a blessing became a curse. Fear, a sense of powerlessness, partial knowledge, and a limited spiritual horizon underlay his decision to conceal from Abimelek that Sara was his wife. His act was a discourtesy to the stranger and brought shame to Abraham himself.

And Smith analyzes in great detail the parable of the Good Samaritan, setting forth the historical context of the Israel-Samaritan relationship to indicate what a remarkable response the Samaritan exercises in caring for the wayfarer beaten up on the Jericho road. When Jesus puts the question to the ruler, "Who was the true neighbor?" and the ruler provides the obvious though difficult answer to admit, Jesus cites the Great Commandment, loving God above all and the neighbor as oneself. Earlier, (Matthew 7:12), Jesus had put the teaching this way: "So in *everything*, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." For Smith, this "in everything" includes my learning their language, my being attentive to them, my working to understand them, and, in short, my foregoing any sense of superiority, any indication that my ways and attitudes are the norm and that the stranger's are eccentric.

David I. Smith



The book is replete with examples, anecdotes, details emerging from much experience and careful observation about encounters between folk of different countries and cultures. Whose smells are more offensive — the stranger's underarm odors or the perfumes and after-shave lotion of his tutor? How do we navigate our own lives, in our own land, with rhythms of approval and disapproval (e.g., the use of noisy, heavy machines to do light work)? He provides examples — some humorous — of communication faux pas, and explains how what we see and hear is shaped by cultural attitudes learned very young. (See the September 14 issue of *Newsweek*, and the article "Is your Baby Racist?" to learn how youngsters pick up certain notions at a very early age.) He uses the life story of Helen Keller to remind us of how the loss of our major senses shuts us off from the real world and confines us to a minimal presence in it — an appropriate story to induce in us a true sense of gratitude (and repentance for

ingratitude) for the rich world we inhabit and our capacity to relate to it.

Learning a language, then, or developing an appreciation for and sensitivity to other cultures is not really an option, says Smith. And it's not only for missionaries either. In fact, there are responsibilities involved in discipleship. What we forego by holding strangers at arm's length precludes us from an appreciation of the enormous variety in cultural and worship differences around the world, especially with the diminishing Christian presence in the West and the increasing Christianization of the Southern Hemisphere.

In this time of cutbacks in education programs, foreign languages become vulnerable. It is surely the better part of wisdom to provide this instruction and opportunity. May foreign languages flourish throughout the land. ☺

Mary Anne Phemister and Andrew Lazo, editors, *Mere Christians: Inspiring Stories of Encounters with C. S. Lewis*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books. 2009, 214 pages plus 9 pages of supplementary materials.

Reviewed by Steve J. Van Der Weele

It may be a stretch to imagine a room of 55 C. S. aficionados gathered in a room around a fire, each person taking his or her turn at explaining the religious and literary role that C. S. Lewis has played in their lives. But that is how to approach this book — except, it's as if someone then recorded these conversations, edited them, and gathered them into a single collection — an average of four pages each. The editors chose people from all walks of life — teachers, authors, medical doctors, scientists, C. S. Lewis scholars, homemakers — for the collection. As is evident from the titles, no two essays are alike. Thus, along with the narratives, we encounter facets of Lewis's art and thought that others have caught but that others may have overlooked. Many of the contributors are still living — Thomas Howard, Francis Collins, Charles Colson, Walter Hooper, Anne Rice. Other statements were obviously derived from the writings of deceased contributors — notably, from Lewis's wife, Joy Davidman, who writes "His books stirred an unused part of my brain." Another

touching tribute comes from Merrie Grisham, who records how she came to Lewis belatedly though married to Lewis's stepson, Douglas. Though outwardly happy, she harbored bitterness and

an antipathy to all things religious until the age of forty. When she finally deigned to listen to tapes by Lewis and read his books, she realized her folly and became a different person. She speaks for many of the contributors who owe their conversion, humanly speaking, directly to Lewis's writings. Other folk call him "a shadow mentor," "A Pastor for my Need," "A Writer we can read for the rest of our lives." A spirit of gratitude flows through all the essays.

They are paragraphs in the biographies of divine grace.

The book includes many editorial amenities: A Foreword by Walter Hooper, a Preface, acknowledgments, introductions, identifications of the contributors, lists of books by

and about C. Lewis. It is tempting for one to speculate that Lewis is enjoying this book, from his vantage point. ☺

