

# christian educators journal

**MAY 1971**



**rehearsing children's choirs - page 12**





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FROM ME TO THEE:	
Team Teaching Trains Teachers—D. Oppewal	3
RELIGION IN SCHOOL:	
Filling a Void in Social Studies—D. Barr	4
PROFESSION WIDE:	
Editorial—W. Bonzelaar	5
Models of Man: Their Classroom Consequences—L. Sweetman	7
MATH-SCIENCE:	
Students Learn How to Learn in Math—J. Bult	10
THE ARTS:	
Preparing Rehearsals for Children's Choirs—H. Slenk	12
Review: Teaching General Music—B. Mackus	15
LANGUAGE ARTS:	
A Live Experiment in Literature Teaching—G. Rey	16
Review: "Dirty Books" in Christian Schools—G. Bos	18
HERITAGE HALL HIGHLIGHTS:	
Qualifications Essential in a Christian Teacher (III)—J. Broene	19
PRINCIPALS PERSPECTIVE:	
School Tensions Can Be Relaxed—P. Elve	21
PROFESSIONAL POWER:	
What Teacher Evaluation Does Your School Have—T. Van Kalker	23
POEM: 1971 Valedictorian—M. Post	24

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS JOURNAL, Volume 10, Number 5, May, 1971** A medium of expression for the Calvinistic school movement in the United States and Canada.

### MANAGING EDITOR:

Dr. Donald Oppewal, Education Department, Calvin College, 1331 Franklin, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

### BUSINESS MANAGER:

Mr. Cornelius Van Beek, 4150 40th St., S.W., Grandville, Michigan 49418

### DEPARTMENT EDITORS:

Language Arts: Nelle Vander Ark, English Department, Covenant College, Lookout Mt., Tennessee 37350

Profession-Wide: Wesley Bonzelaar, Asst. Supt., Jenison Christian Schools, 7700 Greenfield Ave., Jenison, Mich. 49428

The Arts: Charles Canaan, 557 West 19th St., Holland, Mich. 49423

College Forum: Dr. Peter DeBoer, Education Department, Calvin College, 1331 Franklin, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Social Studies: James Vander Meulen, Denver Intermediate, 735 E. Florida Ave., Denver, Colo. 80210

Science-Math: Richard Vander Laan, Pella Christian High, 604 Jefferson St., Pella, Iowa 50219

### EDITORIAL BOARD:

For the Midwest Christian Teachers Association: Ruth Bielema Raad, (secretary of board), Raymond Haan (vicar), Marvin Poppema, Jud Mereness, Barry Koops (vice-chairman), Philip Persenaire

For the National Union of Christian Schools: John Vander Ark, Paul Mulder

For Calvin College: Dr. Fred Walker, Dr. John Timmerman (chairman)

For the Pacific Northwest Christian Educators Association: Colleen Terpsma

For the Rocky Mountain Christian Teachers Association: Wanda Van Klompenberg

For Dordt College: Merle Meeter, Dr. James Veltkamp

For Trinity Christian College: Dr. Harry Cook, Grace Huitsing

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Christian Educators Journal Association, composed of several member or sponsoring organizations, publishes the Journal as a channel of communication for all educators committed to the idea of parentally controlled Christian schools, whether at the elementary, secondary, or college level. The general purpose of the Journal is to foster the continuing improvement of educational theory and practice in Christian schools. Therefore, its pages are an open forum for significant articles and studies by Christian educators on Christian teaching. Editorial policy favors those contributions that are normative and evaluative rather than merely descriptive of existing trends and practices in American education. All articles and editorials appearing in it are to be regarded as the expression of the viewpoint of the writers and not as the official position of the Christian Educators Journal Association or its member organizations.

## BUSINESS MATTERS

Business correspondence concerning subscriptions to the Journal or membership in the Association should be sent to the Business Manager. Subscription price is \$3.00 per year for those who are members of supporting organizations and \$3.50 per year for individual subscriptions. Issues are published in the months of November, January, March and May. Correspondence concerning articles or book reviews should be addressed to the editor of the appropriate department or to the Managing Editor.

Permission to reproduce any part of this issue is hereby granted by the Board of Trustees of the Christian Educators Journal Association. Any publication wishing to reprint any material may do so by observing the following:

1. Provide credit line stating "Reprinted with permission from the (month, year) issue of the Christian Educators Journal, Grand Rapids, Michigan."
2. Send two copies of the issue containing the reprint to the Managing Editor.
3. Provide honorarium for the writer, if that is your policy.



# TEAM TEACHING TRAINS TEACHERS

Much effort has for a decade gone into improving the quality of teaching in American schools. Massive monies from state and federal sources have gone into this or that kind of curriculum innovation, or this or that administrative arrangement. Summer institutes with federal sponsorship, Fall institutes sponsored by professional educator organizations, and local inservice teacher education work days: these are the many devices used both to motivate the present teacher to improve and to provide the skills with which to do it. Some school systems are even adding student evaluation of teachers as yet another device to make teachers reflect on what they are or are not accomplishing.

All these efforts have been directed to one end: to encourage, even force, the certified teacher to improve his professional skills, to rethink his objectives, and to broaden his teaching repertoire. Without disparaging a single one of these approaches to inservice teacher education, I believe that the single most effective instrument has thus far been neglected. Maybe the reason it has been neglected is that it is inexpensive, requires no administrative reorganization, no top-level policy group to process it, no permission from state boards of education or accrediting agencies to pursue it.

I refer to the procedure known most popularly as team teaching, and from five years of personal experience with it and reflection on it, I am ready to declare it to be the single best method for producing both the motivation and the means to improving teaching.

Simply described, a staff has team teaching when two or more teachers who are assigned to teach the same course or the same grade level engage in mutual planning and in joint execution of their teaching responsibilities. In its strongest and most consistent form these teachers are mutually responsible to a large group of students and engage in common presentations, common testing, and common sequencing of materials. The distinction between "my" class and "your" class disappears. In its weaker and weakest forms each

individual retains responsibility for his own group of students, but there is mutual exchange of visual aids, teaching approaches, and evaluation instruments. Of course, the weaker the team relationship the weaker the benefits for inservice teacher training, because the less interaction between the teachers the less opportunity there is for them to significantly affect each other.

It is well known that every teacher has strengths and weaknesses in his total teacher repertoire. This teacher is an ingenious maker of test items, this one is a fantastic motivator, that one is unusually sensitive to student differences, yet another can construct visual aids for almost anything, and yet another is phenomenally successful at leading discussion. No teacher is equally inventive, ingenious, and insightful in all of these areas, and is positively blind in some of them. Yet effective teaching requires all of them.

Students are the ones who suffer from our personal, individual inadequacies, but it is the teacher himself that is the focus of attention here. Team teaching provides a setting in which every one of us can capitalize upon his strengths and minimize his weakness, while developing more competence in all of them by learning not from books, films, or professors but from peers.

This is surely not the place to go into a full description of the how and why of team teaching or to give a list of all the claimed advantages for both teachers and pupils. These are adequately outlined in the literature.\* This is only a personal testimony that there is a wonderful alchemy that occurs when the varied talents of a group of teachers are pooled, and when my thinking can be jarred out of my pedagogical rut by hearing proposals from my peers and being required to justify my proposals before them. There is great learning about teaching and all its more subtle nuances when one must collectively plan, implement, and critique what occurred.

I thus advocate it as the most inexpensive, yet the most radical, form of inservice teacher training yet devised. The benefits to students can be considerable, but to teachers immeasurable. It is also the best application to teaching that I can imagine of the Biblical injunction to "bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

—D.O.

\*One in my files is a paperback *Rx For Team Teaching*, by Robert Johnson and John Hunt, Burgess Publishing Co., 1968. I'm sure there are others.

# FILLING A VOID IN SOCIAL STUDIES

## A LOOK AT THE FLORIDA PROJECT

by David Barr

"The Puritans came to America for religious freedom and then denied it to others" — the implication being that we have corrected this unusual oversight. Unfortunately few ever bother to consult the Puritans to see how they could make such a mistake. Those who do, find that they came for quite different reasons—some economic, some personal, mostly religious, *viz.*, the Puritans came to establish the kingdom of God in this new land, quite a different goal than religious toleration.

Unfortunately it is characteristic of high school social studies programs to treat religion in this half-hearted way—or not at all, mostly not at all. (See the report: *Religion in Public School Social Studies Curricula* by Lawrence Little. 1 Ridgeview Drive, Westminster, Maryland 21157, 1968) Perhaps this neglect of religion in the social studies is more damaging than any distortion it might suffer. For students are learning about religion whether it is included formally in the curriculum or not. By its omission they are learning that religion must be an isolated and largely irrelevant phenomenon, one that is apparently dying out. From most social studies curricula the student learns that whatever might have been the case in the colonies—and even this is not clear—religion is certainly not a viable force in the 20th century. This conclusion is at least open to serious questions; at most it is patently dishonest. One social studies educator has remarked, "To study human behavior and societies without paying attention to religious motivations is like studying chemistry without recognizing the presence of oxygen in the atmosphere." (English. *Scholastic Teacher*. "Focus on Religious Ideas") Perhaps it is

more like studying biology without mentioning oxygen, but be that as it may, it is only too true that most study of history takes place in this nether-void. The reasons are many and complex: part economic, part historic, part accidental. The solutions are few and difficult: part cultural, part textual, part personal.

The cultural situation is ripe, it appears, for a serious study of religion. The personal response of teachers to this challenge is not possible to measure at this point. The textual materials are becoming available. One such set of materials is being produced under the direction of a committee of the state department of education in Florida: The Religion-Social Studies Project, housed at Florida State University, Tallahassee.

The Florida project is an attempt to examine the standard social studies texts, ask what is missing in terms of religion, and develop suitable units to supplement these texts. As a result three series of units have emerged: one in American culture, one in western civilization, and one in world cultures. (A fourth, the biographies of great men, is under consideration.)

Each of these series consists of 10 units which are designed to be studied for 3 to 15 days in the classroom. Presumably no teacher would use all of them but there is ample material for the most ambitious teacher. Each of these units centers on some "problem" such as "Religious Freedom in the USSR: Propaganda or Truth?" (World Cultures); "The Reformation: The Christian as Passive Sufferer or Active Rebel?" (Western Civilization); or "America: Protestant or Pluralist?" (American Culture). No attempt is made to tell the student which option is true—or, indeed, if either is—but the student is led by an examination of

*Mr. Barr, is a staff member of Religious Instruction Association, Inc., a private non-sectarian organization committed to the improvement of the teaching of religion in public and private schools.*

*Continued on Page 6*



## Editorial

During the past few years our Christian schools have been a tremendous success. There have been no more dropouts, cop-outs, no protest movements and no student has even been alienated. We have successfully faced children with reality, developed great intelligence, only sought significant learnings, and created great success in helping students to learn and solve the problems of our society. We have eliminated mental illness which was the number one health problem in the United States, put out the flames of civil-rights difficulties, solved all problems of sex, and eliminated the drug problem. We have ended the population explosion which would include the birth control problem, the abortion problem, the housing problem, the traffic problems, and the food and water-supply problem. Because of our great Christian educational systems we no longer have an air-pollution problem, the water pollution problem, the radio activity problem, the megalopolis problem, the who-am-I problem, and our schools have even eliminated the what-does-it-mean problem. On the international scene we have accomplished great objectives by ending the bomb problem, the Vietnam problem, the Red China problem, the Middle East problem, the foreign-aid problem, and all the other problems stemming from the communist-conspiracy problem.

It would be a bit romantic to believe that education could solve all of the above, but it is realistic to believe that many of the above problems do have solutions through Christian education if our educational system becomes more relevant.

Most of the above were not problems a few years ago. Mr. Norbert Wiener once said, "We have modified our environment so radically that we must now modify ourselves in order to exist in this new environment."

One of the more evident changes in our environment is the greater emphasis being placed almost in a state of despair whenever they run out of food or beer; avidly hoarding potato chips,

stealing each others cigarettes, and enjoying companionship based on deodorant and toothpaste. Many Americans are extremely mobile which creates nobodies because many do not have a stable place or enduring connection. Our society is becoming more of a society of specialists which, to some degree, offers security because no one knows what you are doing, but at the same time sets one apart from his fellowman and creates loneliness.

Are Christian schools seeking new answers, or are they relying on old beliefs and old educational learnings to solve the new problems? Have Christian schools helped to contribute to these problems or have they honestly helped students to live in a new environment?

on materialism. For example, our homes have many more useless and joyless products. Our students are no longer satisfied with a cool drink of water but instead they demand pop! The world of advertisement shows people in great distress and

In order to begin solving some of the problems, Christians must first answer questions such as; why do we have these problems and how did these problems become so great? A few possible answers could be that our society has placed a top priority on material possession and not on Christian sharing; on self first instead of Christian concern. Our culture has become a giant vacuum cleaner sucking up all wealth for itself. Because of this philosophy many Christians are purchasing things they don't need, creating hate instead of peace and many are creating injustice because of their priorities. In our Christian circles many Christians have employed ministers and teachers who act as their substitutes, many Christians have created schools for their sake and not for the sake of healing the world. Many Christians have become "nit-pickers" with theological language and they have not translated the Christian theology, doctrines, and creeds into sociological language

which is necessary before action programs can be formulated.

Mr. Lynn White (*Frontiers of Knowledge*, New York: Harper and Bros., 1956) suggested a number of concepts that would have to be unlearned which included:

- "1. The concept of absolute, fixed, unchanging 'truth', particularly from a polarizing good-bad perspective.
2. The concept of certainty. There is always one and only one 'right' answer, and it's absolutely 'right'.
2. The concept of isolated identity, that 'A is A' period, simply, once and for all.
4. The concept of fixed states and 'things', with the implicit concept that if you know the name you understand the 'thing'.
5. The concept of simple, single, mechanical causality; the ideas that every effect is the result of a single, easily identifiable cause.
6. The concept that differences exist only in parallel and opposing forms: good-bad, right-wrong, yes-no, short-long, up-down, etc.
7. The concept that knowledge is 'given', that it emanates from a higher authority, and that it is to be accepted without question."

Instead we should develop new concepts such as: relativity, probability, contingency, uncertainty, function, structure as process, multiple causality, systems analysis as method, degrees of difference, tolerance, respect and trust, concern and incongruity.

A child in our Christian schools must be a new individual, a child that is not passive, indifferent, acquiescent, dogmatic, intolerant, authoritarian, inflexible, etc., but instead Christian educators must help children to become themselves (children of Christ). A child also must be an actively inquiring, flexible, creative, innovative, tolerant, progressive person, and a child who has learned how to think and learned how to learn.

Can educators accomplish these objectives? What would Christian educators have to change in our curriculum, what structures would have to give way, what kinds of teacher educational programs would have to be developed? The final solutions to the problems of life rest with the reader's imagination.

In conclusion let us remember that during the last twenty years society has turned to education to solve its major ills. Christian teachers now must begin to think through society's demands and the role of Christians as they appear now.

—WJB

## FILLING A VOID IN SOCIAL STUDIES . . .

*Continued from Page 4*

primary source material to consider the problem for himself, to learn about religion.

The series on American culture is the most nearly completed; it will be published next year by Addison-Wesley Publishing Company. This series includes units on motivations for coming to the new world, the problem of religious establishment in the Colonies, the religious aspects of the Revolutionary War, the question of tax money for religious purposes in the new nation, the churches on the American frontier, the Negro in the church, religion and psychology, religion and science, the problems of conscience and conscientious dissent from governmental policies, and the problems of pluralism.

Each unit is organized around diverse primary source materials which present the conflicts in the full dimensions of their subjectivity and yet maintains an objective stance on the part of the teacher. Further, each unit seeks to be relevant to today by showing how the same or similar problem exists in contemporary American culture.

The unit on "Conscience or Constitution" is a six day unit with three distinct but related parts. First there is a general discussion of the idea of conscience, what it is, where it comes from, what various people believe about it (day one). Second, there is an examination of an early conflict of conscience and state: the Mormon polygamy case, *Reynolds vs. U.S.*, 1879 (day two). Third, there is a detailed study of a modern conflict of conscience and the state: the Jehovah's Witness flag salute cases of 1940 and 1943 (days three and four). These are then followed by two days of discussion of such questions as: What does it mean to "pass a moral judgment?" What should the believer do if his religion conflicts with his government? How can society decide to limit some peoples conscientious beliefs? The students are also asked to study the history of some traditionally pacifist church in this country, noting the strengths and criticisms of their position.

Here is the cultural "oxygen" so often unmentioned. Here is America as a living organism, not a dead cadaver to be impassionately dissected. Here is a responsible study of American history which takes into account the religious dimensions of that history in an honest, open way. It is not the only such attempt but it is a worthy example of a growing movement. (Data on other projects are available from RIA). Now the personal response of teachers is the only link left to be completed before students can begin serious study about religion within the social studies program.



# MODELS OF MAN

## THEIR CLASSROOM CONSEQUENCES

by Leonard Sweetman

\*Mr. Sweetman is Associate Professor of Religion and Theology, Calvin College. This is a condensation of a talk given at an In-service Teachers Institute of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association.

When we teach young people, all of us operate with a model of man. Some of us may have formulated that model consciously. Others operate, unconsciously, but no less significantly, with an amorphous, nebulous model of man. All of us, however, have a picture of man which colors our attitudes toward our self, toward the young people we serve, and toward the dynamic interrelations between us.

Let me illustrate two divergent models of man which came to my attention recently. A teacher in a Christian school published a letter in *The Banner's* column "Voices." He was militating against "the ideas of modern educators, with their emphases on various 'ear-tickling' ideas and devices. . . on permitting the individual to find his own bag or do his thing, and on positive motivating factors."<sup>1</sup>

The letter writer repudiated the "ideas of modern educators" because they conflicted with the writer's model of man — a model built with imagery which suggests rather strongly that his model of man is *the* Biblical or Christian model of man. He writes "The ivory-towered critics should get their heads out of the clouds, plant their feet on the ground, and see the young image-bearer of God as a totally depraved individual in need of the regenerating work of the Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

The model of man with which this teacher operates contains the ingredients with which all of us are familiar: 1. Man is the image-bearer of God, (whatever that term may have as its content); 2. man is totally depraved, (whatever that term may have as its content); and 3. man needs to be regenerated by the Spirit of God, (whatever that term may have as its content). In order to note the contours, the perimeter of this model of man, precisely, I must see the focus of the model. That focus is total depravity. The teacher's picture of man subordinates the two remaining ingredients in his model of man to total depravity. What is the core of man, around which all else revolves? Total depravity. Two other factors enter into this model of man. They must, however, be subordinated to

that which identifies man as man. The other two factors are: 1. man is the image of God, and 2. if anything *good* is to come of these who are entrusted to us, they must be made over again. We, moreover, can't do that. The Holy Spirit must do that.

This model of man, which sounds "*echt Gereformerd*," establishes the perimeters of the classroom. Do not underestimate the significance of the model in the classroom routine. The teacher, who is regenerated, is an authority figure relative to the subject matter and relative to the educational goals. The student is the learner. He must learn what the proper, Christian goals of education are, and must adopt these goals as his own. The subject matter, which the teacher presents to him, is authoritative. Any necessary re-evaluation of the subject matter is done by the teacher outside the classroom. In the classroom "the teacher endeavors to present the truth and the truth is of itself authoritative. Let's stop fooling ourselves. The real reason behind the lack of interest in learning is sin. . . . It isn't always a change in teacher methodology that is needed, but rather a change of attitude within the individual student."<sup>3</sup> Note where the fault is thought to lie.

### Classroom As Battleground

When one operates with this model of man, in which the fundamental characteristic of man is total depravity, the classroom serves as a battleground: teacher *vs.* student, student *vs.* teacher, "good" students *vs.* "bad" students. The degree to which a student achieves the capabilities, the skills, the disciplines demanded by the "norms" established for the first grade or the fifth, for U.S. History or for 2nd year French, indicates the degree of success in the educational process. Perhaps this indicates the degree to which the student, with the teacher serving as a catalyst, has sublimated the total depravity which is his fundamental characteristic.

### An Alternative Model

Permit me to sketch another model of man with which one can operate in the classroom. I recalled this model as I read the letter in *The Banner*.

## PROFESSION WIDE

Oddly enough, if the letter writer is a parent, this second model of man is one to which he subscribed when his children were baptized. This is the model of man to which all of us who are parents have subscribed when we presented our children for baptism. I refer to the first and the third questions of the baptismal formula: "First: Do you acknowledge that our children, *though* conceived and born in sin and therefore subject to all manner of misery, yea to condemnation itself, *are sanctified in Christ*, and therefore, as member of His Church ought to be baptized. . .? Third: Do you promise and intend to instruct these children, as soon as they are able to understand, in the aforesaid doctrine, and cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power?"

Notice how the emphasis of this model of man diverges from that of the first model of man. Total depravity is present. That must enter into the model of man with which we operate if that model is to reflect adequately the thrust of the Bible and the content of one's experience. The fundamental characteristic of this model of man, however, is not total depravity. That characteristic is a subordinate clause. The focus of this model of man is "our children are sanctified in Christ," holy, new man. The most radical characteristic of the students in our Christian schools is: they are holy in Christ. In Christ, they are new creatures. The perimeter established for the classroom by the use of this model of man, I suggest, differs radically from that established by the model of man found in the letter written for *The Banner*.

### Classroom as Community

This model of man transforms the classroom from a battle ground into a community. The most radical characteristic of the teacher – new man in Christ – the teacher shares with the student. In the community, furthermore, each individual is unique; each individual has a unique function; each individual in his function serves the community, and, *in so doing*, serves Christ the Lord. We, moreover, cannot and may not say that the function of one individual is more important than that of another individual. The function of one individual differs from that of another; no individual, however, functions in a more important or less important fashion than any other individual. This, I take it, is what St. Paul says in a down-to-earth-concrete-real-situation, that of Corinth, (I Corinthians 12): a situation in which he would have been tempted, easily, to make total depravity the radical characteristic of the members of the Corinthian community.

When one uses the model of man found in the baptismal formula, each one of the young people in our classes is a unique individual. There has never been one like him or her; there shall never be another. They, moreover, are tender vines which can be broken easily, which can be runted and stunted and distorted.

Last spring one of my wife's kindergarten students painted a picture of spring flowers. In the picture, a hand appeared out of nowhere which was in the act of picking a flower. My wife asked a paint-smeared, wide-eyed youngster, "Whose hand is that?" The youngster bubbled, "Why, that's God's hand! He made the flowers. So He wants to pick one of 'em." How fragile that imagination is! How brittle that poetry! By the time a youngster, like that one, walks into my classroom, too frequently the poetry is gone.

How easily we can runt and stunt these tender vines by pitting them against one another! We can stimulate them to compete against one another. Line them up, half on Mount Gerizim and half on Mt. Ebal. Then have a "spelling bee."! See which side wins! Who is the best speller in the class? We play games, competitive games, to make education fun. We write doctoral dissertations on the games we make children play as we instill a competitive spirit in them – a competitive spirit which destroys community and snaps off tender vines. The losers who are always picked last – so that we do not leave anybody out of the games – are tender vines planted by God. If the vines are not cultivated, they will wither. We, then, can say that they were poor stock, capable of no fruitfulness. What capacities we sterilize, what dreams we explode, what poems we buy only our loving Lord knows.

In this connection, may I raise a question about interscholastic sports? Do they thrive because, as coaches tell us, they promote character and good citizenship and many other characteristics? What does interscholastic competition do for the fellow who is not 6 ft. 3 inches, who is only 5 ft. 10 inches and who must sit on the bench until the last minute of the game? Then he may play, provided, of course, his team leads by 30 points. Is winning a game more important than the community of people, each of whom is unique, each of whom has a unique, irreplaceable, unrepeatable contribution to make to the community? Do competitive inter-scholastic sports contribute to the growth of the body, the interrelated, interdependent organism which is the community? How many young people, each of whom has a name and a face and hopes and aspirations, lie buried underneath the discarded banners and soda cups after the game is



over? What about those who sat the bench all during the game, those who sat in the stands with a broken heart because they were “cut” from the team, those who never tried out for the team because, as they admit with a heavy heart, they weren’t good enough;

### Competition in Community

If each self is God’s custom-made work, then the only competition which functions legitimately, in the educational process, when one uses this second model of man, is the competition of the individual with himself. I do not conceive of this competition taking place atomistically, in an environment in which one individual is hermetically sealed from all contact with other selves. I conceive of this competition, rather, in an organic context in which the interdependent and interrelated character of the community is operative. May I use a homely illustration from a by-gone age? When the 8th grader in the one-room country school used “spare time” during the course of the academic day to help the third grader with his arithmetic, he not merely helped the third grader. He, also, helped himself. He could have used the time in another way. He could have dragged out his reading of the 4th chapter of his history text so that he would have had no spare time. Then he would not have been “forced” to help that dumb third grader.

If each self is God’s custom-made work, then the inquisitive student whose questions and objections, whose fertile imagination and creative insights disrupt the routine of the classroom, demands the respect of the teacher and his fellow students. Do we stifle this mind, reining it in so that the well-defined path is the one into which we succeed, finally, in driving it?

If each self is God’s custom-made work in an interdependent, interrelated community, then we, as teachers, are simultaneously learners — those who can be and are taught by our students. He can teach us to ask questions in a new way so that the shop-worn question, when put in a new framework, takes on a glow which it once had, or which it never had before. The student is no threat to the teacher. He is an important organ in the body who aids one to grow, to remain pliable and flexible and useful — a living member of a vital organism.

Whatever model of man we devise as one appropriate to the situation in which we find ourselves, it must take seriously each self as God’s custom-made work. We must, that is to say, reckon seriously with the *level* on which each child is operating. A six year old is not a miniature version

of a twelve year old. And a twelve year old is not a miniature version of an adult. His perspective, however, is authentic, on the level on which he operates. His understanding of the Christian gospel, for example, must not be labeled as a simplified version of the adult model. He is Christian on his own level and in his own context. Our role is to understand the dynamics of the “level” on which he operates. How does he “see” the world? What seem to be the grotesquely long legs on Johnny’s kindergarten drawing of his dad are a clue to us as to what Johnny sees when he looks at his father. This is what a six year old sees as he walks around in a forest of adult knees and thighs. That picture is an authentic expression of the world in which Johnny lives. Johnny’s attitude toward Jesus may seem to us adults analogous to Linus’ attitude toward his security blanket. That is authentic faith, however, on Johnny’s level. It may be neither minimized nor contradicted. When Johnny portrays his mother as someone who is much larger than dad this may be Johnny’s clue concerning the relative importance of Mom and Dad in his life on this level. It need not necessarily be a clue to the relative stature or obesity of Mom and Dad. Jesus who embraces little children — all of them, without exception — who puts his hand on little children — all of them without exception — is authentically Christian on Johnny’s level. The penal-substitutionary theory of the atonement, propounded first by Anselm, is not authentic faith on Johnny’s level.

Often, I suspect, we can build community significantly by saying quietly and unobtrusively, before a class, “You know, Jim, you’re right. I never looked at it that way. I was wrong and you were right.” We can do the same, I suspect, by asking, “Jim, if I adopt your position, how does that affect this other point?” Jim’s point is a clue as to who Jim is and where he is and how he there functions as God’s custom-made work.

The school, after all, is the place where Johnny and Jim and Linus meet Mr. Chips, where they form an interrelated and interdependent community in which there is the leisure to think and to question and to act and react and interact and to be surprised and filled with awe and happiness for the purpose of Johnny and Jim and Linus — and Mr. Chips’ — living visibly as letters of God, known and read by men in such a way that they shall know that the Father sent the Son to create a new world — one in which righteousness dwells and in which there is *shalom*.

1. *The Banner* Vol. 106, No. 7. February 12, 1971. p. 22.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 22

3. *Ibid.*, p. 22

# STUDENTS LEARN HOW TO LEARN IN MATH

by Jeannette Bult

Miss Bult, a senior in secondary education at Calvin College, worked with the CPLS described here as a teacher aide with Gary Den Besten at Oakdale Christian Junior High, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

A rather common criticism of the classroom situation is that students are too often treated as memory banks. Teachers feed the students with knowledge and then look for the least adulterated feedback on tests. A process like this does not give the student any responsibility in the learning process except perhaps that responsibility of memorizing what the teacher dishes out.

A new approach to counter this problem is the Continuous Progress Laboratory System where students are taught the skill of "learning how to learn." The teacher helps the student become responsible for his own learning which allows the student to become self-directed and self-motivated.

### Continuous Progress Laboratory System

To understand how students "learn how to learn," one must understand what goes on in a Continuous Progress Laboratory. For my explanation, I will use as an example the Continuous Progress Laboratory for seventh grade math currently in operation at Oakdale Christian Junior High.

The purpose of the CPL System is to have students cover the material of seventh grade math by individually working through a series of CPL

Lesson cards at their own pace. Each card is correlated to several of the different leading basal textbooks and to a Progress Tape. This indicates to the students what multiple learning resources (i.e., their own textbook, other textbooks, the Progress Tape) are available to them besides their own teacher.

When a particular student starts a CPL Lesson card, he first reads the Learning Objectives which are behaviorally stated objectives. For example, on a CPL Lesson card in math a student would read that he will successfully complete the particular Lesson card when he is able to write base two numerals as base ten numerals. He then skims through the questions on the Challenge Test. After this "prereading" of the CPL card, the student must decide if he is ready to take the Challenge Test now or if he should consult his learning resources for more information. If the student decides that he cannot take the Challenge Test without further studying, he consults the Learning Resources section of his card. He can read the appropriate pages in his textbook and in other textbooks; he can listen to the Progress Tape; or he can have a conference with his teacher to get further direction. When the student feels he has sufficiently used his learning resources, he returns to the CPL card and takes the Challenge Test.

When the student completes the Challenge Test, he uses the Challenge Test Answer Key on the back of his card to check his answers. If he has met the Success Standard of 75% (the percentage determined by the individual teacher), he is ready to go on to the Performance Test. If he has not met the Success Standard, he will return to his learning resources for more study.

The Performance Test, found also on the back of the card, is similar with respect to the types of questions on the Challenge Test, but the student brings this completed test to his teacher for immediate evaluation. A score of 75% or above allows the student to move on to another CPL Lesson card; a score below 75% sends the student back to the learning resources for more review. Each student keeps his own record of CPL Lesson cards completed and the Performance Test score he has achieved.

### Advantages of the CPL System

I believe that the most important advantage of this system is that it allows the teacher to build a person-to-person relationship with the student, rather than have a teacher-to-class relationship of which a particular student is only a part. As a teacher in this person-to-person relationship, one



can attempt to know and to understand the whole student and how this student relates to mathematics, rather than attempting to know and understand that isolated part of himself that a student might show in the class situation.

To me, this is in keeping with what the Word of God has revealed to us. God has created man as a unity with a living soul. Just as God deals with the whole person, so we must deal with each other as whole persons, accepting the Biblical concept of a human person's organic unity. A student brings his whole self to class and for a teacher to concentrate just on training a student's mind is to violate the unity that God has ordained.

With this system, the teacher is in the better position of being able to give of himself in different ways according to the diversified needs that the different students are free and able to reveal. This naturally is demanding for a teacher, but it is a far better means for him to really get to know his students. The teacher is better informed as far as diagnosing the learning needs of the students.

Besides creating a more meaningful role for the teacher, the student role becomes more meaningful also. The student begins to feel that he is a person in his own right, rather than a seemingly insignificant part of a class.

It is good for a student to begin to experience the importance of himself and to realize that this importance comes from the fact that he is a living being created in the image of God. Along with this privileged importance of being image of God, the student must understand that there is the responsibility of proper response to what God has put within his reach.

In this system, the responsibility for his own learning is within reach of the student. His response must be to make the right decisions on how he can best learn the designated material. He must become responsible for class time and spend time in math where he needs it the most, not where the class as a whole needs it the most. Scheduling tests is also the student's responsibility so that he no longer is pressured to keep up with (or to slow down to) the teacher's schedule. Motivation comes from the self of the student so that he no longer depends on constant outer direction.

In order to adjust to this freedom of responsibility, the student is equipped with always knowing what is expected of him. Because CPL is built around behaviorally stated objectives, the student always knows what his learning objective

is, he knows precisely what he has to do to meet this objective, and he knows when he has met it. Now at Oakdale, we found that it was hard for students to make the transition from a course where the teacher was responsible for the learning to a course where they were responsible for their own learning. Therefore, a few additions to this system were made to help the students adjust to this individual learning. These included a schedule of minimal written assignments from the student's textbook that were correlated to the CPL Lesson cards, additional tests on a group of cards that covered related material, and the opportunity to take a break from the routine by playing one of several math games after completing a group card test.

After having worked in this system for twelve weeks, I have concluded that there are two disadvantages that must be discussed.

The first one deals with the problem of minimum acceptable performance. There is no failing in this program. A student must keep trying until that minimum is achieved. For some students, this can become a very depressing process. Yet, further analysis of this reveals that it may not be such a bad situation after all. The teacher must decide if the problem is one of ability or one of effort. If it is ability, the teacher can place the student on a simpler level of the CPL system. If the problem is one of effort, the teacher can encourage the student to examine his study methods and perhaps try a different approach to the problem. In this system, students that were satisfied with failing will either be placed on a level where they can achieve success, or they will be guided in developing a study pattern that will insure success. The "disadvantage" then, if properly analyzed, really exposes a solution rather than a problem.

The second disadvantage, as far as I can determine, may prove to be the limiting factor. The system works best with a student-teacher ratio of approximately ten to one. So for most classroom situations, this means at least two teachers per classroom. One teacher cannot give the proper attention to the different needs of twenty or more students. For example, some students may need help in understanding a new concept while others may need their Performance Tests graded. Obviously, this would be asking too much of one teacher. A combination of a teacher and a teacher-aid works well, and would be a way of making this system more feasible.

In conclusion, it would have to be said that the advantages of this system outweigh the disadvantages and therefore merits the attention of the Math teachers.

# Preparing Rehearsals for THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR

by Howard Slenk

Mr. Slenk, Ph.D., Ohio State University, is Associate Professor of Music at Calvin College. This is the second of a projected three part series on Teaching Choral Music. The first, on selecting music, appeared in the January, 1971 issue.

**M**uch of the success of a choir rehearsal depends on the amount of time the director has spent preparing for that particular rehearsal. A general preparation for rehearsal comes from years of experience and study. This background will usually enable a director to conduct any rehearsal with a certain amount of assurance, for he will probably know more about the music than the choir members do. It is, therefore, fairly easy to "get by" in rehearsal without preparing. To use precious rehearsal time well, however, the director should spend at least as much time preparing as rehearsing. There are four phases to this preparation, and they are best taken in this order.

## STUDY THE SCORE

Sing the children's part often enough to know the vocal line well. This will enable you to teach it rapidly, especially if you are able to anticipate where mistakes are likely to occur. Play the work on the piano. Be well acquainted with the accompaniment. If the work has two or three sung parts, play these lines in combination using the vocal score, not the piano reduction. Another good learning discipline for choral directors is to play one line and sing another. Then at rehearsal, do not

twelve



have the score in front of you. Buy one copy of the music, memorize it, and give it to your accompanist. It is fairly difficult to memorize an SATB score. Memorizing a unison or SS anthem for children is much easier, and is a must for successful work with children.

## WRITE A REHEARSAL PLAN

As you study the score, plan the teaching procedure. Choose one important structural aspect of the piece, and begin rehearsing it by presenting that one aspect first. This should be an obvious stylistic feature of the work, such as a distinctive rhythmic pattern, a long legato line, the form of the work, or a recurring motif. Other aspects of the work are presented and drilled as the piece gains shape in subsequent rehearsals. A frequent rehearsal mistake of inexperienced conductors is drilling and correcting all aspects of a work at once: rhythm, tone, diction, legato, articulation, intonation, meaning of text. . . .

As you decide how to build the performance of a work in rehearsal, write down your plans — long range plans, and individual lesson plans for particular rehearsals. Proceed from the simple to the complex, from the technical to the inspirational. But make written plans. The director who decides ahead of time what his teaching strategy on



each composition will be, and outlines these strategies on paper, will have positive suggestions to guide the learning process. The director who does not plan is forced into the negative approach of correcting mistakes as they occur. Good rehearsing, like good piano practice, is structured to avoid making mistakes.

Here, for example, is a brief analysis followed by a series of rehearsal plans for Mary E. Caldwell's *Spring Prayer* (Summy-Birchard).

### Analysis

**Form:** The work is in four stanzas, each with four unison phrases, except the last, which has five. Only seven musical phrases are used, however; since four phrases are repeated throughout the work. Melodic form, then, is the best teaching key for this piece. The first stanza repeats line one as its third phrase, and could be diagrammed melodically as 1,2,1,3. Following this procedure stanza 2 has this structure: 1,2,4,3. The third stanza is 5,6,4 (modified) ,3. And the fourth is 1,2,7,3,3 (modified).

**Articulation:** The stepwise contour and even rhythm of the musical line resembles Gregorian chant. Therefore a legato line without strong accents is essential to a good performance of this piece. The triumphant third stanza is less legato, with several accented pulses. The conducting motions must convey these important stylistic changes.

**Rhythm and Tempo:** 6/4 meter, with two beats per measure (3 quarter-notes per beat). The end of each stanza is marked "molto rit." Here each quarter-note pulse should be lengthened to achieve the exaggerated ritard that is called for. Again, the conducting motions must convey this marked tempo change.

**Dynamics:** The third stanza is the first to bear dynamic markings in the vocal line. It is marked *forte*. The ascending second line of this stanza is marked crescendo to a double *forte*. The descending third and fourth lines decrease in volume. There is another crescendo on an ascending line in the fourth stanza, followed by a *subito pianississimo* (suddenly very, very soft), and *smorzando* (dying away). The size of the conducting beats and certain left-hand motions should suggest these changes in dynamics.

**Text:** There are two pantheistic lines in the fourth stanza: "Show me Thou art April, Lord, And Thou the flow'rs and the grass." These lines can be changed to: "Show me Thy April, O Lord; Show me the flow'rs and the grass."





### Rehearsal Plans:

Day 1. Teach phrases 1, 2, and 3 without text on a syllable like na, nuh, or moo. (A syllable beginning with a humming consonant is vocally better than the often-used la.) Show how the first stanza is constructed as to form (use blackboard). Sing first stanza without text. Teach phrase 4; show how second stanza is constructed; sing second stanza without text. Oral quiz on the recognition of phrases 1 through 4 (make it a game). Sing stanzas 1 and 2 again.

Day 2. Quick review of phrases 1 through 4; everyone singing. Review the form of stanzas 1 and 2 (use blackboard). Sing stanzas 1 and 2 (still no text). Quiz (in competitive game form) on the ability to sing phrases 1 through 4. Trace contour of the phrases on the board. Or better, have the children describe the contour and draw the patterns on the board. From now on, describe the contour of each phrase as it is introduced, and draw its pattern on the board.

The third stanza is quite different from the first two. It is a good idea, therefore, to teach the fourth stanza next, and call its new phrase 5. Present this new phrase, and add the dimension of dynamics, since here the crescendo and *subito pianississimo* occur. Write the structure of stanza four on the blackboard (1,2,5,3,3 modified). Sing stanza four (no text). Sing stanzas 1, 2, and 4.

Day 3. Play a game on identifying or singing phrases 1 through 5. Put form of stanzas 1, 2, and 4 on the board; sing them. Introduce the text. Teach it and review it as a game. Write important words on the blackboard. By this time, a sketch of stanza 1 on the board would look like this:

1 Lord – spring	
2 And – tulip	
1 Filled – wine	
3 Lift	

Gradually erase the words to encourage rapid memorization. Insist on legato singing.

Day 4. Game-review of text. Game-review of musical phrases. Game-review of form. Ask about the contour and dynamics of certain phrases. Sing stanzas 1, 2, and 4, with text. Present phrase 6 (stanza 3). Use the blackboard to draw pictures of contour and dynamic level. (Dynamic changes are important in this stanza.) Sing. Add the dimension of non-legato articulation – certain notes must be accented. Draw the accents on the board above the

## THE ARTS

contour line. Sing. Add the text. Sing. Present phrase 7 in the same way. Put form of stanza 3 on the board (6, 7, modified 4, 3). Teach remainder of stanza. (Use minus signs on the board to show deleted notes in modified 4.) Sing entire stanza. Sing entire song.

### PLAN AND PRACTICE THE CONDUCTING MOTIONS

What you do with your hands when standing in front of the choir can help them to produce bouyant tones and expressive phrases. No one should attempt to direct any choir without knowing the conventional conducting patterns. After you know them well, alter them frequently when conducting children. Invent suggestive, expressive patterns that fit the music. There are many helpful things one can do with his hands during rehearsal: 1.) The hands can spiral upwards to suggest a floating tone. 2.) They can pretend to throw a ball into the air, thus suggesting a big, but bouyant, carrying sound. 3.) For a high tone a sweep of the hands out to the side can create the idea of breadth and openness. (This is much more effective than pointing upward to indicate the high note; such a motion only encourages straining and pinching.)

At other times the whole body comes into play. To suggest a long phrase without a breath, try moving from one side of the room to the other, the right hand creating a long, sloping arc. Many children have a habit of breathing every few words, and we must teach them the importance of long, flowing phrases. They respond quickly to visible images, and one graceful, rhythmic movement often accomplishes more than a hundred words.

A great boon to any conductor is an independent left hand, instead of one that tags lamely along imitating the right. Decide to do something significant with the left hand at least once per phrase. It is especially useful for indicating changes in dynamics and in articulation.

Once a conductor has decided what to do with his hands in a certain piece, he should write reminders to himself in the score. The next preparatory step is to practice the actual motions so that one will not be practicing in front of the choir. If we leave our conducting motions to impulse, we will conduct a composition differently each time. This confuses the choristers and wastes their time and ours. The best conducting practice of all is in front of a mirror, an excellent testing device for the communicative potential of unconventional conducting patterns.

Here, for example, are some suggested patterns for Caldwell's *Spring Prayer*. The traditional pattern for 6/4 meter is a down-up gesture, with the rebound of Beat One swinging slightly up and to the right of the ictus, then returning for Beat Two (ictus in the same place as for Beat One) and back up into position for the drop down to Beat One. This pattern is too metric, repetitive, and vertical for *Spring Prayer*. The rhythm of the phrases in this work is like that of chant, with stressed pulses usually grouping the notes metrically into clusters of three. Sometimes, however, the stressed note is the first of two, or there are (in phrase 3) three stressed notes in a row. The cheironomic hand motions of Gregorian chant are a great help here. Every choral conductor should take the small amount of time and energy necessary to learn these motions. They are all horizontal, without the metric implications of vertical up-and-down-beats. In overly simple words, the patterns for conducting chant might be called variations on a sideways figure-eight pattern. The basic right-hand beat pattern for *Spring Prayer* moves gently to the right and returns to the center of the body at the beginning of the phrase. This pattern works admirably for phrases 1 and 2 (which make up almost half of the work), and for Phrase 7. These phrases are composed of three beats, each beat having three pulses. This basic pattern also works for modified Phrase 4, which occurs in the third stanza. The pattern must be altered slightly for the original Phrase 4, which has a pick-up note and a single stressed pulse on the word "lilies." For the short third phrase, with its four stressed, slower notes, a completely different pattern can be used. I use an up-and-down pattern on a stationary ictus, which suggests the tenuto marks in the score. Phrases 5 and 6 are the most expressive and need very special motions. Taking your cue from the articulation, dynamics, and text, invent your own conducting patterns.

### PREPARE YOUR VOICE

The way a conductor sings influences the way his choir sings. We can talk about tone all we like, but our choristers will imitate us. Therefore it is essential that we use our own voices well. This means voice study, probably in private lessons. This also means daily practice to keep our instrument in shape, or at least vocal exercise prior to rehearsal. For the director of a children's choir, especially if the director is a man, it is important that he know and use his head voice. Heavy singing and throaty chest tones are especially ugly in a children's choir. The director must always



encourage a light, bouyant, carrying sound and be able to demonstrate it with his own voice. *Spring Prayer* requires this light, legato sound. On the third stanza, the climax is achieved with louder, less legato singing, which must not become heavy or harsh. The *subito pianississimo* and *smorzando* in the last stanza are difficult to achieve. An intense, carrying pianissimo is rare even in an adult choir, and with children, soft tones usually sound merely weak. Here, vocal demonstration is again important, aided by aural and visual imagery: "Whisper the tones to someone very far away."

A conductor who spends enough time preparing in these four ways will have successful rehearsals. Successful rehearsals are the best insurance for good performances. *Inspiring* performances depend on the talent, personal magnetism, and musical feeling of the conductor, but they are based on successful rehearsals. Remember, the performance is the performance for the choristers, the rehearsal is the performance for the conductor. He must practice for it.

## Books

**TEACHING GENERAL MUSIC: A Curriculum Guide for the Junior High Grades**, by Dale Topp, Ph.D., Professor of Music Education, Calvin College and Merle Mustert, M.M., Instructor of Vocal Music, East Christian High School, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Published and distributed by The National Union of Christian Schools. Reviewed by Boyd Mackus, Oakdale Christian, Grand Rapids, Mich. The contents of this book are as follows:

### Section One: Basic Beliefs

- I. The Role of the General Music Class
- II. Meeting Common Objectives for General Music
- III. A Rational for Students

### Section Two: Using This Book

- IV. Course Planning
- V. Class Planning

### Section Three: Basic Units

- VI. The Elements of Music
- VII. The Singing Voice
- VIII. The Science of Sound

### Section Four: Miscellaneous Units

- IX. Descriptive Music
- X. Solo Vocal Music
- XI. Dance Music

- XII. The Symphony
- XIII. Popular Music
- XIV. Contemporary Music
- XV. Jazz
- XVI. Chamber Music
- XVIII. Wind Instrument Music
- XIX. Folk Music
- XX. Concerto
- XXI. Sacred Choral Music
- XXII. Organ Music
- XXIII. Piano Music

### Appendices

- A. Overview of Current Music Textbooks
- B. Song Index
- C. Glossary
- D. Appropriate Listening Material
- E. Abbreviations and Symbols

*Teaching General Music* is a broadly-conceived collection of instructional materials and ideas. It is not restricted to one age group or to a specific kind of music class. The book is arranged so that its use should cover those junior or senior high music classes which are involved with fundamental concepts, especially those involved in listening activities. The authors also intend that it be suitable for a variety of time schedules, e.g. part time, one semester, one year courses, or more. It can be used exclusively or cooperatively with a number of textbook series. These textbooks are pointed out in *Teaching General Music*, and are rated on a comparative basis as to coverage of various topics. The chart which is used for this is intended as a general guide for purchasing texts and records. This section, and section two which is on basic beliefs, could prove to be very valuable for teachers and administrators who are trying to set up classroom courses in music for either junior or senior high school.

As well as being flexible in regard to student age, schedule, and type of class, the book is designed also for a variety of teaching abilities, including those who have a limited amount of formal training in music. Chapters four and five, which include suggestions for course organization and daily planning, would be especially helpful here.

*Teaching General Music* does very well in defining what a general music class is, and then stays with this concept in its presentation of materials. The materials are oriented to the general student who will be doing a lot of listening and probably little performing for the remainder of his life. The book is well-researched by two very competent men. It should prove to be useful for many music educators, and is a much-needed and valuable addition to present cirricular publications.

## A LIVE EXPERIMENT IN LITERATURE TEACHING



by Greta Rey

Miss Rey, A.B., Calvin College; M.A., Michigan State University, presently teaches fourth grade at North Kalamazoo Christian School, and has special interest and training in language arts. She has also served as editor for the NUCS *Library Book Guide*.

It all seemed so ideal, last summer, in that steamy hot room trying to impress the prestigious professor of a graduate seminar in children's literature, pondering it on the walk across campus, banging it out on the typewriter in the dorm room—that lofty idea of teaching children to read critically. It all seemed so relevant, bolstered by a long-standing personal conviction that if a Christian couldn't read critically he had no sixteen

business reading at all. And it all seemed to fit into the individualized reading program awaiting me in the fall. So it was last summer.

But it soon became apparent that reality and idealism would not easily fuse. Precious little critical reading instruction went on in my fourth grade—only a few half-hearted attempts through the basal reader, disjointed attempts in the individual reading conferences, and none on the rectangle of carpet between the back of the upright piano and the cement blocks under the windows, known as our reading corner. By Christmas I hadn't even laid the groundwork for teaching critical reading. So, during vacation I pulled the old seminar notes out of storage.

“Levels of critical reading:

- A. Literal comprehension
- B. Interpretation—supplying meanings not stated
- C. Critical reading—‘Passes personal judgment on the quality, the value, the accuracy, and the truthfulness of what is read.’
- D. Creative reading—‘New things that happen to you that lead you to other things, gain insights into other things.’ ”

That is pretty ponderous stuff for fourth-graders. So when the calendar had turned, the good readers went back to expending their energy in merely devouring books, the poor readers back to expending their energy avoiding books, and the middle readers, as always, stayed in the middle. Finally, the winter doldrums set in, and, clearly, anything new would be welcome. So, I tucked my notes in the back of my mind and took about a week and a half of the reading time on “book discussion clubs.” I repeatedly reminded myself



that I would not come out with critical readers (I always have to remind myself to start at the beginning, not with the expected outcome), that it was only an experiment, that it was a new experience for the children to read and discuss a whole book as a part of their reading instruction, and that even a little thoughtful discussion would be a mark of success.

The class was divided into three groups, and each group was given individual copies of three different paperback books (purchased from Scholastic Book Services).

The members of the slow group, who on their own had never chosen such a "long" book, were given *Ramona the Pest*, by Beverly Cleary. It is easy enough reading, with content dear to the heart of any school-age child, funny situations which really tickle them, and just a challenging enough vocabulary to continue word-attack skills instruction without getting bogged down. As it turned out, they did almost no critical reading, barely getting beyond literal comprehension into interpretation. We read a great deal of it orally. What it did was to give them a chance to read something they loved because it was "fun" reading, and to have the immense satisfaction, which cannot be overly stressed, of having read a whole book, especially of that length (144 pages). By identifying with Ramona and her motives and actions, they took their first steps in critical reading.

The other two groups were similar to each other in goals, differing mainly in the difficulty of reading in the books. After some preliminary word study, these groups were conducted by alternating sessions of oral reading, silent reading, group discussion and written responses to guide or thought questions. Ideally there probably should

have been oral discussion exclusively as each book was read, but the mechanics of having three groups operating concurrently forced independent written work on us.

*The Big Wave*, by Pearl S. Buck, was an excellent choice for the middle group. It is not difficult reading but is a beautifully told story with excitement and suspense, touching some of life's fundamentals (the themes of life and death), introducing them through a different cultural setting (Japan), and providing philosophical viewpoints to which a Christian child can be led to respond. The discussions of this book were particularly rewarding, as they were individual, sincere, and thought-provoking. It was emphasized that a Christian reader responds as a Christian, agreeing with some points, disagreeing with others. But there are not always necessarily "right" answers to the questions the book raises.

The following quotations from the book illustrate the richness of possible discussion points it contains:

"Life is stronger than death, and we need not be afraid."

"We must say, 'Someday I shall die, and does it matter whether it is by ocean or volcano, or whether I grow old and weak?' "

"Enjoy life and do not fear death—that is the way of a good Japanese."

"There are times when the gods leave man to take care of himself; his father replied. 'They test us, to see how able we are to save ourselves.' "

"Fear alone makes man weak."

Actually, *The Big Wave* is better suited to fourth grade than the final book. *Call It Courage*, by Armstrong Sperry, is for quite advanced readers and presented a real challenge to my top group, mainly because of difficult vocabulary. Yet, good

## LANGUAGE ARTS

readers have a way of sensing word meaning from context; so for the sake of experiment I plunged in, and they readily adapted to it. However, it would likely be better used in fifth or sixth grade for this purpose. Again, it was emphasized that a Christian reader does not accept the author's or the book character's philosophy, but rather reacts to it as a Christian.

Underlying the main theme of courage and this author's definition of it, there is a strong emphasis on fate. The children appreciated Mafatu's instinct for survival and his skills which helped him survive. Mafatu's relationship with the other people of his village was one with which they were familiar (peer pressure), and there were some nice opportunities to draw parallels between his problems in his society and our problems in ours. Courage is a theme which is found in many books for middle-graders, and two which make excellent follow-ups for the sake of comparison, which is also a good vehicle for developing critical reading, are *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, by Scott O'Dell, and *Shadow of a Bull*, by Maia Wojciechowska.

These could nicely be read to the class and discussed and compared.

It must be repeated that this was only a beginning in critical reading—but beginnings are most essential. We have no intention of making fourth-graders into miniature literary analysts or critics. We merely want their pleasure of reading to include some reflection on what they read. As soon as things become stuffy, asphyxiation sets in. The literature-reading program is only one area in which teaching of critical thinking takes place—paragraph writing, newspaper reading, investigating advertising, creative dramatics, social studies, Bible study, and many more are areas where it is slowly and systematically developed. But a sensitive and imaginative teacher working with a sensitive and imaginative class (and all classes are) can experiment and make beginnings as we did.

A final note: The children's evaluation of this method of reading instruction was 100% enthusiastic approval, and they are already asking for more. That should be good enough recommendation for anyone to try it.

---

## Books

*'Dirty Books' in Christian Schools: Principles of Selection*, National Union of Christian Schools Curriculum Resource Paper. Reviewed by Dr. Gerda Bos, Professor of English, Trinity College, Palos Heights, Illinois.

A serious application of Henry Baron's proposals in this study would result in better preparation of teachers, better education for students, and better relations between parents and teachers. These would all be significant consequences of a paper which sets out to suggest a program whereby parents, teachers, and boards may avoid the hassles resulting from the assignment of books which parents find objectionable.

Mr. Baron defines the problem as an aspect of censorship. (I am sorry that he characterizes critics of some books as "those given to censorship." Many parents have entered most reluctantly upon the role.) More positively, he suggests that we all need to understand what a writer does, and how the reader participates in that work of the writer. These activities he discusses clearly.

It is the literature teacher's responsibility and challenge, he maintains, to guide student readers through the experience of reading a book. This most teachers would agree they plan to do. But the

implications of this function are rather staggering, for Mr. Baron describes the person who is to do this. "He is socially and morally mature enough to discuss without embarrassment realistic books and to lead students to a proper moral and esthetic appraisal and perspective of such books."

What, I wonder, has been the special preparation of the English major that qualifies him so unreservedly for this great work? The English departments in our Christian colleges may want to use Mr. Baron's paper to guide them in setting up a program of studies that would prepare teachers to assume the weighty responsibility assigned to them.

The last section of Mr. Baron's paper details a solution, an established policy. It is a very practical guide to show how schools may arrive at a policy to guide teachers in the selection of books. Concretely, he applies these principles to *The Catcher in the Rye*, and he concludes with an enumeration of the benefits of having an established set of criteria, not the least of which could be improved relations between the school and the parents.

Perhaps it was unfortunate that Mr. Baron chose to apply his criteria to *The Catcher in the Rye* because mention of that title will probably open old sores. Nonetheless, I recommend that every English teacher, every administrator, and every board member read and study this paper. Parent-teacher groups, next fall, might profitably discuss Mr. Baron's suggestions.



## a goodly heritage bequeathed in print

*FAITH OF OUR FATHERS* is a favorite hymn of many. The conviction and faith of our forefathers impelled them to establish Christian Schools which in turn have been bequeathed to us. Through years of beginnings and years of depression, they maintained their schools in spite of hardship and sacrifice. Our generation has inherited these society organizations and school properties. But a far richer heritage is found in the vision and goals of Christian education we have received from them.

Heritage Hall at Calvin College contains the writings of many of the early leaders of the Christian School movement. It is our purpose to uncover some of these in order that the faith and vision of those who have gone before may undergird the efforts of those involved today.

—W.H.

## The Qualifications Essential in a Christian Teacher III.

by J. Broene

In my first article under this heading I insisted that a teacher needs a thorough knowledge of the subject-matter to be taught. In my second I was no less insistent that the teacher can no more afford to be ignorant of the object of instruction, i.e., the pupil, the educand as Adams calls him, then he can afford to be ignorant of the subject of instruction, i.e., the branches taught.

Thus far I am sure we are agreed. The teacher must have knowledge, knowledge of both the subject and the object of education. But that is not enough. Indeed, he may know both, know them well, and still fail ignominiously as teacher, simply because he does not know how to communicate the subject-matter he knows so well to the pupil whom he may know even better. In plain English, he cannot teach. That I am about to give an exhaustive analysis of just what is denoted by the significant phrase, "The ability to teach", I do not pretend. I do believe that I can point out what is essential. The first thing to be noted is that the ability to teach arises from two sources—birth and training. Training of some sort is indispensable. It need not necessarily be normal training, though desirable, but training in some school, be it in no other than that of experience, is essential. It is only by teaching that anybody, it matters not how gifted, can learn to teach efficiently. This is sufficient justification for the preference school

boards invariably evidence for experienced teachers. However, important though training is, no amount of training can take the place of native talent. Lacking this the best sort of normal training avails little or nothing. I am even prepared to defend the thesis that the more experience some teachers who lack talent get the worse teachers they become. All training and experience can do is to develop native aptitudes and to show how these may be applied. It is, consequently, important for us to know what these native gifts are. Just here I find myself confronted by an extremely difficult task. There are numerous talents with which God in his common grace endows the children of men. Which of these are indispensable to him who is to be able to teach? Is cheerfulness? Is patience? Is courtesy? All are virtues the teacher should possess, only I do not regard them as necessarily belonging to the class of native endowments. Doubtless many if not most of the cheerful, the patient, the courteous, are such by predisposition, but some at least are so in spite of their native bent. Fitch, in his *Lectures on Teaching*, (N. Y., 1886, p. 27), says he has "known those who, having chosen the vocation of a teacher and being at the same time aware of their infirmity in this respect, (bad temper), have so guarded and watched themselves, that their profession has become to them a means of moral discipline and

## HERITAGE HALL HIGHLIGHTS

has sweetened and ennobled tempers naturally very hasty or very sour." It will not do, therefore, to say that a man must be patient and cheerful if he is ever to become a real teacher. Patience and cheerfulness are indispensable in the teacher of children but they are qualities that may be acquired. And it is not necessary for us to give them separate consideration for the very good reason that the virtues in question may be regarded as invariably associated with the sympathy of which I shall speak in a moment.

There is only one quality of which I dare to assert without hesitation both that it is absolutely indispensable to the teacher and that he who has it not cannot hope to acquire. It is tact. A tactless person neither can teach nor can ever learn to teach. It is an absolute *sine qua non*. What is tact? That subtle quality which enables one to say the right word or to do the right thing at the right time. Nobody, not even the minister of the gospel, has more need of this quality than the teacher. Daily situations arise when he is required to speak or to act at once and whether he does so rightly or wrongly depends upon whether or no, or to what degree, he possesses tact.

Then the teacher must be sympathetic. Beyond a doubt sympathy is something one may develop. But that is all. For sympathy is, at least in part, a native gift. What is sympathy? It is to feel with others, being the most marked form of the altruistic emotions. When we sympathize, really sympathize, we make another's feelings our own. We project ourselves into another's situation and thus experience what he experiences.

Sympathy is conditioned by experience, memory, and imagination. I remember once hearing a lady condole with a father whose son had died. He rejected her expression of sympathy rather brusquely by saying: "You cannot sympathize with me; you never lost a child." In a certain sense he was wholly right. While it is true that anybody who has ever been afflicted by the hand of death can sympathize, to a certain extent, with any other in a similar situation, it must remain true that only he who has lost son or daughter can fully realize what a heartbreaking experience it is.

If experience is one condition of sympathy, memory is another. Who has not seen parents trample roughshod over the feelings of their children? Why should they do this? Is it because they lack affection? In no wise. Is it because they are by nature unsympathetic? Not necessarily. The child's lamentations are annoying, he seems to be making a pother about a bagatelle, therefore, "stop crying this instant or I'll spank you." The whole

trouble is that what seems to the parent to be a mere nothing is for the child a calamity. And father and mother fail to realize this because they have forgotten what such a mishap, trifling though it may appear now, meant for them when they were young.

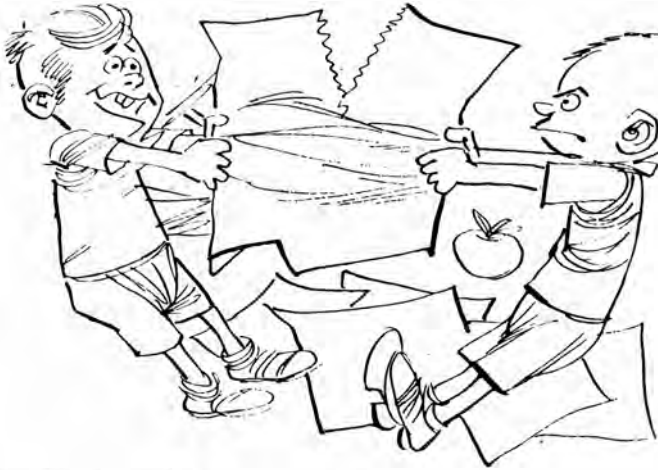
And, of course, sympathy involves imagination if it is, as I expressed it a moment ago, projecting one's self into another's situation. It is impossible to do this without imagination. Hence unimaginative people are generally also unsympathetic and highly imaginative people often sympathetic.

Still given all these, given experience, memory, imagination, we may not yet have sympathy. If there is to be sympathy we must have experience which is treasured in memory, and then must place ourselves by means of the imagination in the situation of another; but, over and above all this we must forget self, and remember that the feeling which we now share with another, although our own feeling, is, after all, the experience of him with whom we sympathize. In other words, if I am to sympathize with you when your father, or mother, or wife, or child dies; or your house burns down uninsured; or you are yourself injured in some accident; I must not only assume into myself your experience, but I must realize it as *yours*. I must objectify my feelings in you. That is why, as Dewey well expresses it, (*Psychology*, 3 d. ed., N.Y., 1891, p. 331), "many persons who are extremely sensitive to the feelings of others are quite unsympathetic. They register in their own mood each slight variation of feeling in those about them, as a barometer measures physical variations; but they have no true sympathy for they regard these new feelings only as experiences of *their own*."

I hope you will not regard my excursion into the psychology of sympathy out of place. You will not if you sympathize with my attitude toward sympathy as an essential element in the make-up of a teacher. No one can teach children who cannot sympathize with them. No one who has forgotten his own pubertal view of life, or who is so unimaginative that he cannot assume now the adolescent's attitude towards things, can teach boys or girls in high school or college. And though one be able to do these things, even so one cannot properly sympathize with children or adolescents, for that matter one cannot sympathize, really sympathize with anybody, if one is so self-centered

*Continued on Page 22*





## School Tensions Can Be Relaxed

by Philip Elve

This column is under the editorship of William Kool, South Christian High, Cutlerville, Michigan, and contains administrator's-eye views. Mr. Elve is Superintendent, Grand Rapids Christian School Association.

We hear much about the age in which we live and the difficulties that it imposes on adults and children. There seems little doubt that many things contribute to the uptight attitude that many of us feel. As I sit here in my office writing I can hear two dogs barking, a train on a not-too-distant track, a jet plane taking off, and the faint sound of music from a distant radio. Actually it's relatively quiet because at home I would no doubt be hearing the relatively substantial sounds of my son's radio or phonograph as part of a duet with the ever blaring television set. Perhaps the neighbor's car, a motor bike's straining roar, or the constant

thump-thump of the basketball on the driveway would add to the din. Is it any wonder that we are the up-tight generation?

Our youth, and for that matter, we, too, hardly ever enjoy a few moments of silent rest, of restful music, of just lying on the grass watching the drifting clouds. Everything is in double time, everything is speed, beat, noise, challenge, or confrontation. We seldom talk things over—rather we argue. We seldom really pray—we just mumble a few well-worn words. We seldom worship—we just go to church—and worst of all we seldom try to walk in another's shoes or live in another's skin—we are just too busy occupying our own shoes and our own skin.

Need we wonder what's happening to our people, to our children, to ourselves? We are up-tight and we infect all those we contact with the same disease. Today any crazy, illogical position seems to have followers because few take the time to think things through, to rationalize. If an action relieves the up-tightness within us it seems justified, logical, and hence we see students and adults participate in some irrational actions.

We witness mindless adults tipping over school buses, or rude and unkempt students drowning out the speeches of our nation's leaders, or follow-the-leader high school students refusing en masse to attend classes. We witness the escape through drugs and the forming of a new social clique, the drug society. We hear mindless criticism by youth of adults and equally mindless punitive response by adults. Is it any wonder that we hear the question more and more—what's happening to us?

I'm sure that Christian school teachers and administrators can contribute to the up-tightness of our students and of their colleagues. I'm sure many do. I'm also sure that teachers and administrators can do much to break the cumulative cycle of tension building. These few suggestions are no cure-all but even if they make school life slightly more tolerable for all who labor they would have some merit.

1. Explain when you act.

The teacher or student required to do

if he understands why it is necessary.

2. Say "no" only when you must.

Some people are negatively orientated. They prefer to say "no". They look for reasons to say "no" rather than for reasons to say "yes".

3. Don't yield to overstatement.

We live in the day of overstatement. The person who has a sensitive social conscience overstates his case supposedly to develop

## PRINCIPALS PERSPECTIVE

sensitivity in others. The person who is prejudiced toward other races or peoples also overstates his case. Neither approach is honest and both tend to develop skeptics.

### 4. Don't yield to overstimulation.

In our schools we begin to hear as background or for entertainment more and more of the fast beat, wild-sound music that is so prevalent in many of our homes. In a learning environment overstimulating music does not overstimulate a desire for knowledge nor does it contribute to the composite learning environment.

### 5. Be a good listener.

Teachers are conditioned to talking. It is their job. Consequently they are too often poor listeners. One pupil said of his teacher, "He knows I'm talking to him but he never listens to what I say." Ditto for principals—and superintendents.

### 6. Be accessible and approachable.

Often the escape valve of frustrations is conversation. If a teacher feels he can talk the situation over with the principal without fear, a healthy situation exists. The same is true for student with teacher.

### 7. Avoid the punitive.

One teacher abuses a smoking privilege—all are deprived. One student marks a desk—all wash desk tops. One student steals a coin—all are fined. Five talk—all stay.

### 8. Express your concern.

An injury, an illness, a death in the family should not illicit, "Did you make up all of your work?" but rather, "I'm sorry to hear -----"

### 9. Address each other properly.

One school recently had a six week period in which good manners were emphasized. Good manners remove irritations and hence tensions.

### 10. Have a suggestion box available.

It keeps teachers and students from keeping suggestions boxed inside themselves. themselves.

Tensions really fade from our life when we learn to rely on each other. For example, married life is tense if a husband and wife do not have full faith in each other. So it is with all of us; faith is the key to self-assurance and to confidence in others. Surely we must have faith in each other but all of us know that the key to real contentment and tension-free living is a vital faith in our God. Daily renewal of this faith and strengthening it in each other will reduce tensions in our life and in our schools.

*Continued from Page 20*

that instead of objectifying the feelings aroused in us by the situation of others in them, we congratulate or commiserate with ourselves.

Why is there instant *rapprochement* when one teacher enters a given class-room and lack of it in the case of another? It is because of sympathy. Only sympathy will enable you to see your pupils' difficulties and enable you to help them to overcome them. "The good schoolmaster," somebody once said, "minces his precepts for children to swallow, hanging clogs on the nimbleness of his own soul that his scholars may go along with him." Which means that he has enough sympathy to project his own mind as it were, into that of his pupil, to understand what is occurring there, and to think not only of how the lesson is being presented but also of how it is being apperceived. This is what Palmer means when he says, (Op. cit., p. 28), that the teacher must possess an aptitude for vicariousness. By our imagination we sympathetically create within ourselves states that belong to others.

It is precious little you or I know, to be sure, but as compared with our pupils we do have a wealth of knowledge. If we do not know all about our subjects at least we know much about them. We have travelled far upon the road on which our pupils are taking their first faltering steps. It is our function with all this wealth of knowledge to see the subjects we are teaching as they appear to the beginner. Possessing this sympathetic imagination we can reproduce within ourselves, in order that we may remove them, the perplexities of our pupils. We, from whom the bloom of innocence has since long been effaced, difficult though it may be, impossible as it may seem, we must reassure something at least of the innocence of childhood. If then our pupils fail to grasp our meaning let us not be hasty to brandmark them stupid, nay, rather let us ask ourselves whether we are adapting our teaching to the undeveloped minds of our pupils. Ten to one the fault lies with us and not with them.

Shall we resolve now that henceforth we shall never forget the role of sympathy in teaching? Good. Yet let me say frankly that mere resolution is not enough. It is not enough because the capacity for sympathy, though it may be developed, is a native gift, a talent which our God bestows upon some and denies to others. Let us determine each for himself whether we possess so much of this divine gift for we do not all possess it in equal degree—that we can function with some efficiency as teachers.



# What TEACHER EVALUATION Does YOUR SCHOOL HAVE ?

by Terry Van Kalker

The Professional Standards Committee of the MCTA asked Mr. Terry Van Kalker, Physics Teacher at Grand Rapids Central Christian High School, to submit this article and he graciously consented. Terry served as the chairman for the Teacher Evaluation Committee, a sub-committee of the Professional Status Committee of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association. He also led a sectional on this same topic at the NUCS 1970 Convention last summer.

The title of this article assumes that every school has a teacher evaluation program. Is this true of your school? If you give the topic some thought, you will have to agree that this assumption is correct. Thus, the question is not, "Does your school have an evaluation program?" but, "What kind of a program does your school have?"

The following describes the type of program used in many schools. After being in Mr. Vander Van's class for some time, the students have made certain definite observations about the manner in which he teaches his classes. The students, one can be sure, discuss this among themselves. Unfortunately, Mr. Vander Van will never hear about any of their observations. So he will never find out which of his ideas the students really appreciate or what suggestions they have for improvement. The principal's evaluation is based on what he hears about Mr. Vander Van rather than actual observation of him. It is also quite possible that the school principal has never discussed his evaluation of Mr. Vander Van with him. Unfortunately, this situation characterizes the evaluation program in many schools. We think there is a better way!

Recently I served as chairman of a committee that made several suggestions for improving our evaluation program. In making these suggestions we assumed the following as our goals: to improve instruction and to provide a uniform basis of evaluation.

The following are some of the ideas we are now using in our evaluation program.

1. Any teacher new to our system is assigned a teaching coach. This coach is to assist and counsel the new teacher. The degree of assistance depends on the request of the new teacher.

2. At all levels we make use of administrator evaluation based on actual observations. We have a form the administrator must use so that the evaluation is as objective as possible. The administrator must discuss this evaluation with the teacher.
3. In grades 7-12 we also make use of student evaluation. We have a questionnaire which the students fill out on which they are asked to rate a teacher in various categories. The results of this evaluation are made available to the teacher.
4. In addition to the principal's evaluation, a teacher may request that another teacher evaluate him. This evaluation would be discussed with the teacher involved.

We know that we still have a long way to go in improving our evaluation program. We think, however, our present plan is an improvement over the unofficial, subjective evaluation that has taken place in the past. Now, a teacher at least hears about the results of the evaluation! I think all will agree that before improvement can take place one must first know how he is doing, what is right about his methods and what needs improvement. Furthermore, a teacher is no longer left alone with his problems. If a teacher is weak in a certain area, he is able to freely discuss this with his administrator.

Now — how does all of this affect you? Certainly every teacher reading these words agrees with the goal that evaluation seeks to reach: improving the quality of the instruction in each school. Are you willing to become part of a program of teacher evaluation? Are you willing to be objectively evaluated by your students? By your administrator? Are you willing to sit down and discuss these objective results with your administrator? Do you ever discuss your approaches and ideas about teaching with your fellow teachers? Would you be willing to evaluate a colleague? Think about it! What kind of an evaluation program do you have at your school? Does it need an over-haul? If so, do it! Your students, your school, and you will be the richer for it!



Christian Educators Journal Assn.  
Mr. Cornelius Van Beek, Business Manager  
4150 — 40th St., S.W.  
Grandville, Michigan 49418  
Address correction requested

Non-Profit Org.  
Bulk Rate  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Grand Rapids, Mich.  
49507  
Permit No. 414

## 1971 Valedictorian

*Marie J. Post*

He stands, correct, a flush, unbidden,  
Crayons his earnest face. Uncertain,  
He clutches notes in fear-damp hand  
And stumbles to his place before the curtain.  
All anecdotes forgotten, now the past  
Of those few years together blur to one  
Brief paragraph of memory.  
The classes cut or finished, grades received, now done.

This year the adolescent promise to climb to heights  
Of sure success hold little water.  
No one need worry where those two will live  
(The callow youth and one's too young daughter!)  
A surer destiny comes (now unacknowledged)  
As true as tide or death  
And the inevitable 10-40 form,  
Something to trip the heart and breath.

For other graduates the ivied halls  
Or steady checks and union dues — a choice;  
But not this year, as pride dissolves to pain,  
Only the answer to a lotteried voice.