Please don't label me...

See Profession Wide Department

christian educators journal
NOVEMBER 1973

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CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS JOURNAL, Volume 12, Number 1, November, 1972. A medium of expression for the Calvinist school movement in the United States and Canada.
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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.

Announcements and advertisements are accepted according to the following policy:

1. Placement is restricted to those publishers, colleges, or private parties whose product or service is of direct benefit to the educational process and profession. All advertisements and notices must be of value to educators, and should provide assistance to them in finances, building and facilities, curriculum, and opportunity for professional advancement.
2. Announcements should reflect both the interest of and the same philosophy and standards as the Christian education movement. All entries must be designed by the advertiser prior to being submitted, but are subject to modification.
3. The Managing Editor reserves the right to reject submitted ads and announcements. A schedule of fees is available from the Business Manager.

Contents, November, 1972

Editorial. . .From Me To Thee

GOD'S GRADING SYSTEM

The murmurings of discontent with grading practices have, of late, swelled to a roar. Hardly a critic of schools arises who does not, sooner or later in his attack, bring his guns to bear on letter grades and their inadequacies for evaluating student performance in school work.* The charges are many but could be summarized as follows:

1. Grades are unscientific, subjective, and seldom related to educational objectives.
2. They are misleading and focus only on one aspect of the child.
3. They promote superficial, spurious and insincere scholarship.
4. They lead to uncreative teaching.
5. They form a barrier between students and teachers.
6. Pupils perform for the grade and, as a result, show less initiative and independence.
7. Grades tend to divide students into recognizable groups, reflecting inferior and superior qualities, thus often becoming the basis for social relationships.
8. They establish a competitive system, with grades as the basis for achievement. (*Wad-Ja-Get?*, p. 62)

*The list is long, but the best and most readable of them is the paperback *Wad-Ja-Get?*, by Kirschenbaum and others, Hart Publishing Co., New York, 1971.

In this issue the Profession-Wide Department articles are all devoted to raising that murmur of discontent at least a few decibels. They all give evidence of wishing for a change, and in some cases provide positive suggestions for alternative ways to report pupil progress. Our writers on this question are unanimous in pointing to a cause-effect relationship between letter grades and certain destructive student-teacher and teacher-parent relationships.

While they concentrate upon the psychological dimension of the problem, I should like to pursue the theological dimension on this page. Whenever there is a suspicion that human relationships have gone wrong, whether at home, in a factory, or in a school, one could look to Scripture for help in understanding why certain cause-effect relationships exist. In Scripture one finds models for God-man interactions, as well as directives for man-man relationships derived from the primary model

given by God Himself in His dealings with us.

It might seem presumptuous to ask a question like "Does God grade on a curve?", but it is one way of asking how the Bible describes God dealing with His creatures in assessing whether they are in or out of His Kingdom, and, if in the Kingdom, how they are progressing. Put in pedagogical talk God must have his own way of determining who "passes" or who "fails" to be in His Kingdom, as well as a model for determining who in His Kingdom is progressing in sanctification.

I believe that there are clues throughout the Bible that God basically has a Pass/Fail grading system, or if you prefer, a Credit/No Credit system. The doctrines of election and reprobation, built on these various clues in Scripture, suggest that God does not grade on a curve, but He deals with each of us individually, apart from comparing us to anyone else in our family, or in our age group, or in our class group. We "pass" or "fail" on our individual relationship to God, and not by comparison with others.

For those who choose to walk in obedience to God, and who thus "pass", there is a further system for testing progress, this progress being described in theological language as sanctification. Here again it would seem that we are dealt with in terms of our uniqueness rather than our similarity or dissimilarity with others around us.

Two parables come to mind as instances in which value judgments are made and criteria used by our Lord Himself. Both, I submit, suggest that God's grading system focuses on measurement of progress not by some objective standard of perfection, and not by peer performance, but by the individual's personal potential, i.e. what each individual has done or is capable of doing with the abilities he has.

The parable of the negligent steward (Luke 12:44ff.) locates the measurement of progress in the principle "And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." It was in terms of the opportunities and capabilities that the steward as an individual had that determined his degree of success or failure.

The second parable which seems to contain the same thrust is the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14ff.). Even more explicit in this story is the principle that it is not how much "achievement" one accumulates, but rather how faithfully one has worked, that determines acceptable performance. It would seem that the number and kinds of "talents" that an individual possesses is the standard against which the individual is to be judged, and how his success is to be measured.

For too long we have drawn our guidelines for grading from secular models, models based on views that man is basically a competitive animal, and that he can best be both motivated and measured by comparison with others. We have borrowed systems from secular education, which were in turn borrowed from a business model, with grades instead of dollars as the sign of degrees of accomplishment.

We claim that our schools are God-centered. How about trying to bring our grading system into greater congruence with the ways that God deals with us? If we teachers are to reflect the belief that we are God-imitators, i.e. that we in our lives reveal the ways of God to man, could we not do this in pupil-progress reporting?

HERITAGE HALL HIGHLIGHTS

Returning To Our Basic Outlook ON EDUCATION

By Rev. Mr. John A. Petersen*

THE INCREASING DIFFICULTY that some of our Christian school boards are facing in securing sufficient funds for the operation of our schools may be indicative not only of an economic recession but also of a recession of conviction that Christian education is the only proper education. Some of the reasons for our people's continued support of our schools are shaky ones and do not augur well for the continued moral and spiritual health thereof. An article in *Torch and Trumpet* (March, 1956) reveals that among the most compelling reasons why some parents are sending their children to the Christian school are the following: (1) Both parents and children do not want to lose social status; (2) our schools keep us closer together as a secure little island in this mixed sea of people among whom we live; (3) our schools teach the basic subjects more adequately.

It is evidently time for us to get back to the basic principles in our thinking. Our schools are not truly worth the money if they are not built on stronger foundations than these.

1. *We must do so because children of the king require a kingly education.* We believe that God gives us the right to assume that our children are God's children until such a time as they may manifest themselves to be otherwise. The Covenant of Grace is made with us and our children. The promises which Israel of old might lay hold upon, God's spiritual Israel in the New Testament surely has not lost.

Why then must we continue to maintain Christian schools for our children?

*Reprinted from THE BANNER Aug. 29, 1958

Though we make no sweeping generalizations concerning children born outside the covenant, we are not deterred by this caution from making a positive affirmation concerning our own. And so we see in our children members of God's royal family, adopted to be His children and heirs, through the cleansing of the blood of Christ. If we deny this, only custom and superstition can move us to have our children baptized.

If we have confessed that we believe our children to be children of God, we must treat them as such. We must treat them as sons and daughters of the King of Heaven and earth. And that means a kingly education, an education worthy of the princes and princesses in God's household. They need an education that will equip them to take their place of responsibility in their Father's realm, to further the interests of their Father, to fight manfully against the powers that would attack their Father's realm, to live so as to reflect the glory of the King in their appearance before the world.

2. *We must maintain Christian schools because education must be directed toward man's true purpose, to glorify God.* As Christians we must not be shortsighted in thinking about education. It is not simply a matter of the three "R's." No public education theorist is satisfied with such limitation either. Both we and they feel that a child's whole personality, his whole character, his whole outlook on himself and his place in the world are to be molded and shaped. And that is why it is so necessary to have a Christian school, for we believe that the child's personality, character, attitude toward self and the world are to be brought into conformity with this truth, that God has made us for Himself!

Public education subsumes the shaping and molding process under the concept of adjustment, adjustment to one's environment. One must learn to live happily and constructively in the world of men and things. There is much truth in this, but what a distortion it is when God and His claim over man is left out. For is not God our primary environment, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being"?

3. *We must maintain Christian schools because we must be concerned for our children's personal salvation.* We indeed hold them to be children of the King, but this assumption must be accompanied by prayerful and diligent educational effort. I know that a church comes before a school in this responsibility. The means of grace are first of all in the church. But we do not want a school environment in which for some thirty hours each week that which they learned for a couple of hours on Sunday and in one midweek catechism class is gradually eroded from their minds and hearts. It would not happen only by mockery or overt attack on Christian principles. It would happen simply because of a non-recognition of God, that is, the God of the Scriptures, and of His claim over all the universe.

We want schools that remind the child of God's claim over all and His claim on the child's repentance and faith. We want to surround the child with those Godly influences that will fill his mind as he comes to years of discretion so that he will choose for the Lord in response to what he has learned in home, church, *and school.*

While voices among us are being raised telling us that the public school has restored a wholesome religious emphasis, Christian leaders traditionally committed to public education are expressing their disappointment. Says Carl Henry (*Christianity Today*, May 12, 1958, p. 21): "In our decade the emphasis has shifted to God and religion as admissable elements of the instructional program. Any specific identification of Deity, however, in terms of a single religious tradition, is opposed as sectarian. Contemporary public education is constantly seeking a synthetic deity—a god-in-general assumed to be acceptable to all religious traditions because it is not any-god-in-particular."

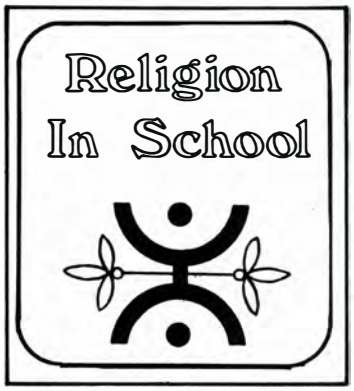
It is high time for us to think in terms of bedrock principle. Superficial thinking even among our school supporters will not guarantee the continued health of our schools. An economic recession may be God's appointed means of testing our loyalty to the support of our schools and of the basic principles on which they are founded. May we not be found unfaithful.

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.



Material On Religion For Student Use

By James Panoch*

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: MINORITY FAITHS AND MAJORITY RULE, (American Education Publication, Education Center, Columbus, Ohio 43216), is one in a series of supplemental social studies units for grades 7-12 produced by the Social Studies Project of Harvard University. A teachers guide is available. General contemporary and historical background material is given followed by a study of three specific Supreme Court cases involving compulsory attendance (Amish), the salute to the flag (Jehovah's Witnesses), and prayer and Bible reading (Atheists).

RELIGION-SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM PROJECT, (Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Reading, Mass. 01867), is a series of ten supplemental units for secondary social studies produced by the Committee on Study About Religion in the Public Schools of the Department of Education of the State of Florida. Teachers manuals are available. Each unit analyzes a religious controversy through directed readings of primary sources.

THE BIBLE READER, (The Bruce Publishing Co., 866 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022), is a special edition of the Bible designed for public school use by a team of ecumenical scholars. A teachers guide with suggested lesson plans is available. Key passages are presented in various translations with introductory articles, notes, and essays.

RELIGIOUS LITERATURE OF THE WEST, (Augsburg Publishing House, 426 S. Fifth St., Minneapolis, Minn. 55415), is a semester course for the high school produced under the direction of the Religious Studies Department of Pennsylvania State University pursuant to an Act of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania. Selections of the sacred literature of Christians, Jews, and Muslims are studied.

LITERATURE OF EASTERN RELIGIONS, (Department of Religious Thought, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa. 19104), is a semester course for high school in preparation at the University of Pennsylvania pursuant to an Act of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania. Plans are to publish an anthology or sourcebook of readings from the major Far Eastern religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, and the indigenous religious traditions of China and Japan.

SOCIAL SCIENCE PROGRAM, (Allyn and Bacon, 470 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, Mass. 02210), is a complete K-12 Social Studies curriculum being produced by the Educational Research Council of America. Religion is one of six integrating themes around which the curriculum is built.

GOD AND MAN NARRATIVES, (University of Nebraska Press, 215 Nebraska Hall, Lincoln, Neb. 68508), is one in a

*This column is contributed regularly by the staff of Religious Instruction Association, Box 533, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801

series of units from the complete English curriculum 1-12 produced by the Nebraska Curriculum Development Center. Primative, Biblical, and American Indian religions are included. This particular unit is for the 7th grade, other religious units are available for other grade levels. Teacher guides are available.

BIBLE READING AND PRAYER IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, (NCSS "Judgement" Study No. 1, Scholastic Magazines, 50 West 44th St., New York, NY 10036), is one of a series of supplemental units for the high school produced by the National Council for the Social Studies. A teachers guide is available. The background situation and court opinions in the Schempp case are studied.

GOD AND GOVERNMENT, (Addison-Wesley, Publishing Co., Sand Hill Rd., Menlo Park, Ca. 94025), is one in a series of supplemental units for the high school produced by the Amherst Project. A teachers guide is available. The historical development and contemporary issues of the relation between church and state are studied. Other religious units are available.

CONSTRUCTING A LIFE PHILOSOPHY, (Greenhaven Press, Box 831, Anoka, Minn. 55303), is one of a series of supplemental units for the high school from the "Opposing Viewpoints Series" developed by a team of independent scholars. Includes a selection of primary source material and study directions.

MAJOR CONCEPTS FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES, (Social Studies Curriculum Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York 13210), has identified major concepts from the social sciences and allied disciplines that appear to be appropriate for elementary and secondary programs in social studies. Many concepts have religious connotations including Culture, Morality and Choice, Secularization, and Dignity of Man.

MAN IN SOCIETY and THIS HONORABLE COURT, (Chicago Tribune Educational Services, 654 Tribune Tower, Chicago, Ill. 60611), are two new units. The former deals with eight major world religions stressing ethics and contemporary thought. There is a multi-media approach using filmstrips, long-playing records, and discussion guides to the history and operation of the Supreme Court. Part II includes a presentation of the School Prayer decision.

THE IMAGE OF THE JEW IN LITERATURE and JEWS AND THEIR RELIGION, (Anti-Defamation League, 315 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016), are two programs each of which is composed of a series of units on Jewish life and literature for inclusion in the Social Studies and Literature curricula. Included are films, annotated bibliographies, supplementary material, discussion topics, suggested projects, model instruction units, and teacher guides.

A SEQUENTIAL CURRICULUM IN ANTHROPOLOGY, (Anthropology Curriculum Project, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30601), includes religion as one of the eight topics in the primary unit "The Concept of Culture."

JEWISH STUDIES, (American Association for Jewish Education, 114 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011), is designed to tell the neglected story of Jewish history and culture through electives, mini-courses, and special units, the project is a joint program with the United Federation of Teachers of New York City.

TRAILMARKS OF LIBERTY, (Houghton Mifflin Company, 110 Tremont St., Boston, Mass. 02107), is a series of three programs, one each for the elementary, junior high, and senior high levels, designed to acquaint the student with the important issues in American History through a study of key court cases. (The school prayer and Bible reading decisions are included.) The programs were developed by the Law in American Society Foundation. Unit titles include "Freedom of Belief" and "Freedom of Religion." Teachers guides are available.

THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE, (Webster Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Manchester, Mo. 63011), is a textbook for a public high school unit or course on the Bible developed by a high school English teacher, Mr. Alton C. Capps of Glenbard East High School in Lombard, Ill. Capps considers the literary forms in the Bible through comment and selected Biblical passages. The book is an elaboration of the author's article "A Realistic Approach to Biblical Literature", (ENGLISH JOURNAL, February 1969).

HUMAN-VALUES SERIES, (Steck-Vaughn Company, Box 2028, Austin, Texas 78767), teaches eight selected values to the elementary student through short stories in which young readers can readily identify. Values are defined as the basic wants and needs common to every human being. The Series uses the inclusive eight-value framework developed at Yale University.

LIBERTY AND THE LAW, (Education Book Division, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632), is a series of supplemental units on the Bill of Rights which includes "The Flag Salute Cases" and "Church, State and Education." A teachers manual is available.

ASIAN THOUGHT, (Asian Studies Curriculum Project, 609 Mission Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94105), is a group of units for the secondary school the first of which are Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD, (Minnesota Social Studies Curriculum Project, 350A Peik Hall, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn. 55455), is the third grade unit of a K-12 curriculum where religion is considered as one of the "communities". Teacher materials are available.

PEACE IS POSSIBLE, (World Law Fund, 11 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036), is a senior high school unit that includes the contributions of "religious leaders."

MORE Questions THAN ??????????????? ??????????????? ??????????????? ??????????????? Answers

By Dan Vander Ark*

The Christian school system and public education are being tested. The public wants to know how we spend their money; they demand an account of teachers to the point of letting performance contractors take over certain educational functions that we teachers have often called our own. While the public demands an account of how their money is spent, the average school operating budgets have increased at a yearly rate of nearly 10%. This compares with the general national inflation of only 5-6%. The obvious question is "Why is there such a difference between educational costs and general costs?" Our answers have sounded feeble. We talk about the "experience" level of the entire staff increasing and thereby improving education and point to this as the cause of the 10% increase. But the constituency won't buy it and we teachers have simply assumed, not proved, that one teacher working with 25 students for one hour through a year or for the whole school day is the best way to educate students. The parents have bought it until now, but with the rising costs of education they are willing to explore alternatives for the education of their children.

With those concerns before me I have considered some possible alternatives to our current way of educating in the Christian schools. I have not wrestled with the advantages and disadvantages of any issue here to the extent that I would like to see it implemented. I only offer the following statements and questions as a step down the road of better education. I would like to focus just on Christian schools and their teachers in suggesting ways of changing.

The reasons for changing to some other way of educating are really not new nor are they especially sensational. The Christian schools, first of all, are in a serious money bind. At the same time, the problem of declining enrollment has caused larger school systems to centralize students by grade level and has made smaller village or neighborhood schools combine grades in order to meet the budget. One need only consider the specific problem an administrator or board faces when a certain third grade class has 22 students one year while the next class has 17 students. Does the class of 17 warrant a full time $10,000 professional? Can the school afford it? That dilemma has caused Christian school administrators to suggest centralizing students by grade level to better be able to keep class sizes near 25. In small schools, teachers have been asked to teach combined grades with the assistance of teacher aides. In both cases, the administrators have opened up possibilities for changing the class size arrangements. In the first instance, having all students of one grade together frees the teachers of those students to plan together, use the same materials or material centers, make savings on media rentals and purchases, and have a consistency in the kind of teaching done at that grade level. In the small school the administrator is implying that the old ratio of 1-25 is not the "end all and be all here" but that some duties that we normally assumed could only be handled by pedagogy specialists can be handled by aides or paraprofessionals at a salary rate much lower than we have been paying Christian school teachers. Therefore, teachers must explore the possibilities for using money more wisely in getting education done.

Not only does money play a part in appraising educational change, but also the waste in our use of educational facilities. To allow most Christian schools to lie as silent as tombs for at least one fourth of the calendar year is nothing short of poor stewardship, and to have three different teachers pushing the switch of a movie projector in three different locations, sometimes repeating the process five times a day, is a sad waste of valuable professional time. To have large auditoriums and libraries and band rooms and art rooms vacant the majority of the time even during a school day is something we would not like a time efficiency expert to really examine. The possibilities of modular scheduling, large class-small class teaching, media centers, long and short term semesters of study, remedial and supplemental courses, and teacher aides simply boggle the mind. But we Christian school teachers must lead the way in focusing the constituency's attention on school systems in which these kinds of opportunities seem to be offering good education to students.

We must not forget the possible advantage in the quality of education for students that might come about with a

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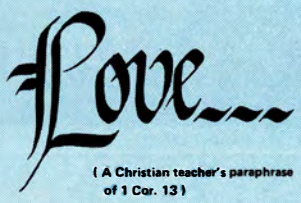

(A Christian teacher's paraphrase of 1 Cor. 13)

By Gracey Robbins*

If I teach with the skill of the finest teacher
And if I am dedicated to the education of the young,
But fail to love my students,
I become only a clever speaker and a charming entertainer.

If I use various teaching techniques and methods
And if I am well-trained so that I feel like I am a good teacher
But fail to love my students just as they are,
My efforts are not enough.

If I spend many long hours preparing lessons
And if I plan interesting activities for my classes,
And then fail to allow God's love to flow through me,
My personal efforts are still not enough.

The love of a teacher for her students is a very special kind of love
It is patient even when students are doing their best to create problems
It shows kindness in a way that makes a new student feel welcome in a new school.
It is not selfish, though it may seem that way when the Teacher requires certain things of the class.

It is not easily discouraged, even though some days seem to be full of problems.
It is not amazed when a pupil comes to discuss a confidential situation that is too personal to share with just anyone who might happen to be around.
This kind of love does not boast about its accomplishments
But it is a living example of what Jesus Christ would have each of us to be daily.

This special, God-given love never fails.
Books and study guides will become obsolete;
Teaching techniques and methods will be outmoded;
Classroom schedules and school policies will be abandoned;
Because all these things have been established by man, rather than by God.
However, when the teacher shares God's love with her pupils, the influence will live on forever and ever because God is Love.

When I was a student, I was immature and I behaved like a child.
I was a child
But now I am an adult, and God has spoken to me about helping children discover His wonderful love.
I have faith and I have hope and I have love.
These three are God's great gifts to me. . . .
And the greatest of these is love.

* *Gracey Robbins teaches at Valley Christian Junior High School San Jose, California*

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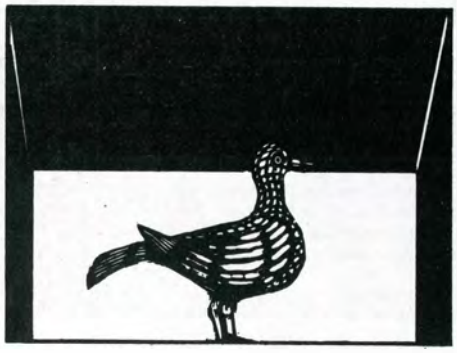
restructured school day, school calendar, and way of giving instruction. Would large group instruction, for instance, automatically mean poorer retention and more discipline problems than we now have with our classroom education if, following the large group instruction, students could talk with teachers in small groups of 8-10 about the presentation? Could we not in fact provide *more* time for students to do guided individual study in certain skill or interest centers if we had a modular scheduling and teacher aides to help us provide the time for individual guidance? The answers to these questions are not automatic. We will have to do plenty of reading and interviewing before we can determine whether reorganization might provide us with more educational opportunities.

We should also consider in a new educational organization the advantage of better use of a professional teacher's time. Right now we teachers spend an inordinate amount of time doing primarily secretarial work: kindergarten teachers to high school teachers fill out forms for milk money, enrollment, bus schedules, etc., and we type out tests and worksheets as if no one else would really know how to do that. Perhaps we should make a list of the duties for which we need professionally trained teachers, the duties that a paraprofessional could do, and the duties an aide could accomplish. Then we should decide whether we might not really improve our schools by concentrating on what professional things we do best and then assigning to others the things in education that they could do better. In every decision we will have to determine whether it is good for the child.

I have only begun to sort through the possibilities for changing the whole structure of our schools. There may come a day when we have three or four different levels of staff in our school, when the school year is made up of both short and long terms, when nearly every part of the school plant is in use most of the time, and when a student gets his education both in large group instruction, small discussion groups, and guided independent study. For the time being, this will serve as a beginning in the discussion.



for the time being

By C. Barendrecht

A first issue of *For the Time Being . . .* was published as a literary supplement to the Christmas issue of *Calvinist-Contact*, a 28 year-old family weekly, published in Hamilton, Ontario. The front cover, a pen drawing by Chris Stoffel, depicted the "flight into Egypt". Penned in by the artist were the words: "NO PLACE in HIS place. From the beginning we chased Him . . . did we ever stop?"

Dr. E. William Oldenburg of the English Department as Grand Valley State College in Michigan chose the magazine's title: *For the Time Being . . .*, after W. H. Auden's Christmas oratorio. "The individual artist creates Being", so Dr. Oldenburg editorialized, "captures and conveys Existence for our time. If the artist is also Christian, he creates with the consciousness that he himself is a created being . . . ."

"Poets, artists, dramatists, and fiction writers are beings of their time and create being for their time. And the Christian artist, paradoxical as it may sound, has greater security and freedom in being than any other artist, because the Christian artist is in direct contact with Being Incarnate, the Christ who came in the fullness of time, to be Being for the time, for our time, for all times."

The issue was distributed among some 10,000 readers, and under separate cover to members of the Workgroup of Christian Writers, who were responsible for the contents.

Three more issues of the literary supplement were published in 1971. Then one of the sponsors dropped its support, the publisher said he couldn't do it alone, but would continue if we could convince him that the Canadian subscribers would read it. We had little to show for any kind of reception: a few letters now and then, but nothing to speak of. The Workgroup remained small. Many of the writers who could have joined felt more secure writing for magazines which did not demand much creativity, and for Sunday School papers.

When in 1971 a first conference was held at the Calvin College campus, only a handful of people attended. Invited were editors from existing Christian magazines. Several came, and others displayed their magazines, as was requested.

The officers of the Workgroup met with representatives of different magazines, sought the support, among others, of the Christian Laymen's League, and had conferences with editors of the *Reformed Journal*, but without much result. In the spring of 1972 most of the editors of *For the Time Being* met with representatives of a new magazine, *Faith and Art*, published in the Chicago area. A first issue had already been published and editors sought our cooperation. We adopted a long list of proposals made by the *Faith & Art* people, and were about to go on an exchange basis, with a meeting planned for the Summer of '72 in Chicago. when we received notice from one of the editors that the magazine had collapsed and had moved to an unknown address in Oregon.

Other possibilities were to change the Workgroup into a service organization, which would encourage writers to submit their work to existing periodicals; and to publish a small magazine in an inexpensive way and distribute that only among the membership.

Meanwhile, a group of visual artists, headed by Chris Overvoorde and Carl Huisman, both on the teaching staff of Calvin's Fine Art Department, became interested in doing a magazine that would encourage also the visual artist, especially the one who had graduated from college and was now "in the outfield' without any kind of support from the Christian community that raised him. Many meetings were held, and the result was a fusion of the two groups into the Fine Arts Fellowship, now the publisher of a new

for the time being . . .

the dove came back. . . .
For the time being, the subsided waters of the arts again flow down to green up the valleys of everyday life.

For the Time Being, a new fine arts magazine, comes to you as the result of the efforts of Christian artists standing shoulder to shoulder in a common purpose: to encourage and promote the fine arts in the home, in the church, and in the community at large.

a new fine arts magazine

For the Time Being (without the dots), as fine arts magazine.

With as its purpose: "to encourage and promote the fine arts in the home, in the church, and in the community at large", a first issue came off the press toward the end of Summer '72.

Geared to many possible uses, the magazine, a loose-leaf portfolio, is intended to be flexible in format. Separate sections can, for, instance, be ordered by teachers who wish to study a particular poem, article, work of fiction, or even a piece of art work, with their classes. Sections are a standard format, 8½ x 11 inches, and can therefore easily be hung on bulletin boards or framed.

As far as the content goes, there are few limitations. Visual arts, (sculpture, ceramics, painting, printmaking, graphic forms, banners, photography, etc.), contemporary literary arts (poetry, fiction, drama, essays, non-fiction articles on visual arts, music, or drama), the review of movies, church architecture, literature, the performing arts, and original sheet music, are the range of a good fine arts magazine.

For the Time Being encourages and invites you to submit work. Please do not be intimidated by the beautiful looks of the magazine itself. If you cannot see your own name and your own work published in a quarterly as "classy" looking as *For the Time Being*, don't worry. All full-time and part-time artists associated with the magazine are *human*, beings of their time.

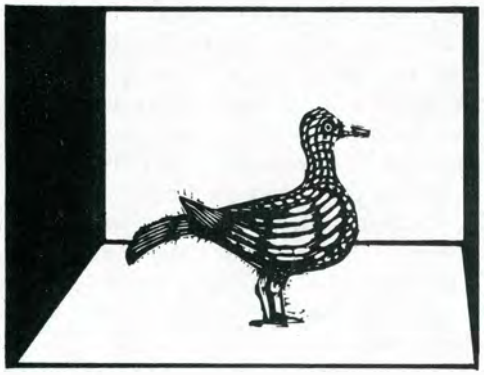
Who reads *For the Time Being*? Off-hand, I don't know. But I do know that many school librarians in the Christian as well as the public school systems have taken out a subscription. And I do know that many church libraries have done the same, even some Christian Reformed ones. And it is my guess that most of the several hundred people who became charter subscribers are not only interested in the arts in a casual way, but are themselves active in one of the fields covered by the magazine. So, when you send in your subscription for your personal and/or school library, you are in good company. Maybe some of the people writing and publishing art work are former classmates. Possibly you have heard of others whose work is represented in *For the Time Being*. And if, like this writer, you start out not knowing anyone, you'll soon find that you get to know a lot of people who have similar interests.

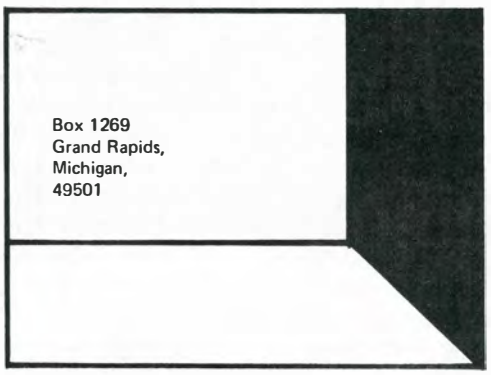
Once a year we have a Fine Arts Conference to which everyone is invited. That's a good time for meeting other artists, to exchange ideas, and to widen your horizon. The conference usually takes place in June, when school is out and everyone who teaches is free to travel.

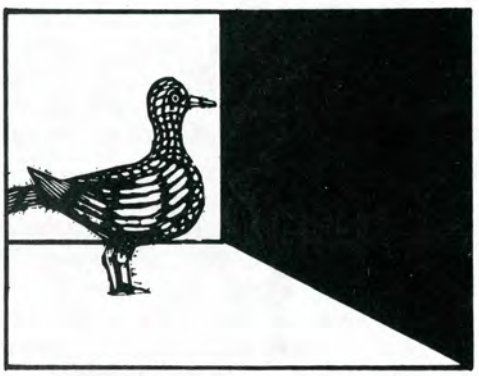
Obviously an ambitious project as the Fine Arts Fellowship has begun cannot continue without moral, artistic, and financial support of all who with us see the need of a place for the arts in our homes, in our schools, in our churches, and in the community which we serve.

Many of us are not participants in the ranks of the affluent. But great things have always been supported by people who believed in them. All other considerations became secondary to the one thing which men and women sought to accomplish. The Christian school's existence itself is evidence of that. We believe that the arts deserve a rightful place among Christians, and that *For the Time Being* is only a small beginning toward filling the great abyss created by Christians since the Reformation. We believe that the arts do not replace religion, but that in his art the Christian expresses his response to Christian themes and to the world of which he is a part.

Anyone who seriously considers subscribing to *For the Time Being*, is invited to write for a sample copy. The address is: Box 1269, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49501. We need you as, we hope, you need us.







EDITORIAL...

Don't let this fall into the hands of any students! Our self incrimination would be devastating! Their sneaking suspicions would be founded! The persistent rumors would be confirmed that we teachers aren't sure what grades mean either!

This above discomfitting conclusion comes from a look at the tabulated results (see below) of a faculty "grades opinion sheet" which was done after a faculty meeting discussion about grading and evaluation. Of the five headings on that questionnaire, only No. 2 is reproduced here, since it is the only one being discussed.

2. If you favor the retention of letter grades, what should these grades indicate?

The quality of work as compared to his fellows – 8
The quality of work as compared to his ability – 10
The quality of work as compared to your standards – 12
The effort he puts out – 10
The interest he shows – 7
The contributions he makes – 8

Six items fall under No. 2. The first three are work-centered or product-oriented ("quality of work"), while the final three are student- or attitude-centered ("effort, interest, contributions"). Both from the totals in each group and by the very nature of the two groups, I am assuming that most teachers put one response in each of the two groups.

Have a look at the first group. A quick glance shows that responses to the three items are roughly equal: 8, 10, 12. Yet the three are practically contradictory! For example, "compared to his fellows" is a relative thing. Compared with fellows in this class? This year? National norms? Or what? Even assuming that "compared to his fellows" could be pinned down, the 8 teachers who like this criterion stand directly opposed to the next 10 who prefer "compared with ability." "His ability" suggests compared with nobody, fellows or otherwise. It is a highly individual thing, quite the opposite of judging in relation to "his fellows"! Thus, 18 teachers (8 plus 10) support contradictory criteria for indicating "quality of work"!

The water becomes still more muddied when adding to those first 18 the next 12 who prefer to judge "quality of work" by the teacher's own standards. At first glance there seems to be at least some hope here, for this might not be as subjective and contradictory as the first two; that is, it might be somewhat possible to articulate or specify "your standards," especially if done in terms of behavioral objectives.

Yet on second thought, it is "your" standards—and we're back to the twilight zone of individual teacher subjectivity. Well, if the "quality of work" is to be compared with my own "standards," at what point does a standard lie. (It might be a moveable point, the whereabouts of which are known only to me.) If the "compared to your standards" is to have the slightest smack of validity, it would have to be tied to a very carefully spelled out explanation and listing of those "standards." Do all 12—even 1 of the 12—responding in favor of "your standards" have such a detailed document in the students' hands? (Last year the Student Council in that school requrested such an opus from each teacher. This was entirely in order, and still is, if such a variable as "your standards" is to have some validity.)

We should also look at the other group of three responses under questionnaire item no. 2: the STUDENT ATTITUDE group. Again, they are fairly equally divided: 10 say effort, 7 interest, and 8 contribution.

At first glance, the most objective of the three seems to be "contribution." Yet, *what* contribution? Contribution to the smooth functioning of the class? The sense of accomplishment a student gets when he feels he is a meaningful part of the group? Contribution to the discussions or activities to aid class dynamics? Contribution of evidence he is doing extra or going beyond basic commitments? Contribution to peers in helping the learning climate?

And then, who would even determine "contribution"? Would it be the peers evaluating his role in class, the student himself judging his role in class, or the teacher estimating what his contribution could/should be?

Next, what of INTEREST? How does he "show" interest? By not sleeping? By volunteering answers? By poising on tiptoes for volunteering comments? By quiet faithfulness in daily assignments? By coming up with goodies other than those suggested or assigned by the teacher? Or what? And by whom is interest to be judged? After all, only the student himself can really tell whether or not he IS interested.

And finally, EFFORT. Wouldn't it be nice to be able humanly to judge effort? (In the parable, after all, the men were judged largely on their effort in relation to their abilities.) Short of a God-like getting inside another person, how can effort be judged? As with interest, do we guess at effort on the basis of some external signals such as products attempted, classroom productions, and such? Or what?

In conclusion, what does a look at no. 2 of the faculty questionnaire show? At least two things, I think. First, that in indicating "what a letter grade should indicate," we not only don't approach unanimity, we don't even have anything that's a simple majority. (Shakespeare might call it "most admired disorder." At least Lady Macbeth did.)

And second, it shows that one observant teacher was right when he said, "How a letter grade hides its components!" For it is obvious that a baffling variety of contradictory elements seems to go into letter grades.

Where do we go from here—there's gotta be a better way!

Dissatisfactions WITH THE Grade Game

By Ronald Oosting*

For some time now I have been dissatisfied with grading, and for the past few years I have been gradually working my way out of traditional usage and dependence on it. Our faculty discussions arising from the reading of Glasser's SCHOOLS WITHOUT FAILURE have lately served as the impetus for me to deliver the *coup de grace* to the traditional system.

Grades Hinder Rapport

While I was a student, I worked for grades, and I think I got a decent education in spite of my covetous idolatry. At the same time I developed a dislike for grades as a motivating force. When I became a teacher I grew increasingly disenchanted with grades: with what I was doing with them, with what my students were doing with them, and with what they were doing to my students.

I found that grades often had a negative effect on the relationship established between student and teacher. For effective teaching and actual learning there must be a positive rapport, but the traditional preoccupation with grades had not produced this. True, some students responded and learned, but why had they learned? Far too often it's because they were really working for grades and not for knowledge, wisdom, or understanding.

Thus, I was looked upon by students too often as a grade dispenser rather than a dispenser of experience and knowledge. I suppose it was my professional pride and sensitivity that was hurt by this, but I would really rather have my students look at me differently. Since they work for the grades that parents, colleges, and part of society seem to expect of them, I too often was considered a barrier to their goals—an obstacle to get past in order to accumulate a bank account of grades to supposedly draw upon in their future.

Grades Thrive on Fear and Negativism

Under the grade game, still other students learn because they look upon the teacher as a threat, one who will whip them with bad grades if they do not learn. What a delightful relationship to have with a student when you are trying to get him to grow and mature and to have viable experiences leading to an interesting future! This threat works at cross purposes with all that I hope to accomplish, and I do not see any chance of greater success until the present grading system is removed. Learning because one is threatened is a very poor foundation for education, fostering little respect for education or its real purposes.

And then there is the student who has quit being curious and no longer wants to learn because he has been continually graded and "measured low" by the system. School is empty and meaningless for him now, whether at fourth grade or tenth, and whatever attitudes and appreciations and real life exposures we want him to respond to he avoids and circumvents. This is the student who probably needs us most, yet has the least regard for our efforts because we have for too long beaten him down with "bad grades."

We have many good and lofty goals as educators, but the insertion of a grading system into the relationship between us and our students often prevents students from recognizing them, and—more seriously—from working for them. Instead, they are concentrating on the grading system. How often a student wants to know whether or not he will be tested on it—only then might it be worth his while to study it! "Will I be graded on it?" is a question repeated over and over.

Grades Encourage Mediocrity

The very grading system which is supposed to measure the student's learning has in many cases a parallel effect of fostering and even sanctioning mediocrity. This violates all our goals of excellence and quality. Since we give grades ranging from A to F, with all the increments in between, a student can settle where he likes. He can do well enough occasionally to get some credit established and then can slide into a mediocre performance, or down to nothing, knowing full well that things will average out to "a passing grade" in the end. He has us figured out. He beats the system repeatedly. And such a student can largely avoid whatever is valuable in our teaching. We even allow it by accepting a mediocre performance and passing him on a low grade. This grade does not measure his ability or potential, but merely lack of involvement. Thus, we ourselves have created the loophole that lets him escape from whatever we

Continued On Next Page

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think is valuable and good about our curriculum.

The threat of grades often keeps the medium-gifted student away from good experiences which we could offer him. If a course or project looks hard and challenging, he might avoid it because he runs the risk of "a poor grade." Whatever positive experience he could get there he misses because he is protecting himself by taking an easier way out. Surely this negates much of what we would really like to have happen in education.

Perhaps some students are not adversely affected by the present system. They take it in stride: they are perceptive enough to see past the grades. And since grades are not their motivation or reward, their self-motivation would carry over into practically any system. But in view of the negative effects on most other kinds of students, these students who are unaffected are no reason for witholding change.

Grades Are Arbitrary

Aside from the false motivation that grades develop, and aside from the fear and negative attitudes they generate in others, I think grades are a horribly arbitrary measuring device. In most cases grades are ill-defined and poorly determined. In scientific terms, we can have little confidence in what grades claim to measure. The standards for calculating grades are undefined and are up to each individual teacher to establish as he sees fit. An "A" for one teacher is a "B" for another; a "B" in one school is a "C" in another.

Grades supposedly measure a student's accomplishments, but that depends on what a given teacher decides is important to measure and on how he chooses to measure. Differing measuring instruments give different results: oral tests *vs.* written, periodic tests *vs.* daily work, objective tests *vs.* essay, and so forth. Besides, in this teacher-playing-god, the grade is usually justified on the basis of "considering all aspects of the student's performance." Are these goals, objectives, and criteria spelled out (both short-range and long-range ones) for students and parents alike? Or is this "considering all aspects" a convenient dodge for the teacher to justify subjective grading as seemingly objective?

Grade Point Average Is Phony

To top it all off, we collect all of a student's individual grades and carefully calculate a grade point average, treating it as a precise number that ranks him in his class and perhaps some day gets him a scholarship. How we can put that much confidence in an arbitrarily determined grade point average and look upon it as a reliable measure of our student is beyond me. It seems to me that a nationally-given test with a carefully established norm would be a sensible device for some ranking purposes; only then would an individual school's high or low standards and the student's courage or cowardice in curriculum be overcome, with reasonable measure of his knowledge noted.

I suspect that colleges today are paying less attention to grades and grade point average and more attention to ACT scores and the like. Also, scholarships and college entrance are increasingly determined on the basis of interviews and recommendations rather than on grade point average. Why then should we make such an effort to maintain the imprecise and arbitrary grading relic? And furthermore, what benefit is derived from knowing, on our part or the student's, whether he is "first" or "last" in his class or somewhere in between? Is it really necessary or even important?

Grades Distort Testing and Life

Often grades are determined primarily by exams and tests. Then, in the student's eyes, a test is not an opportunity to see whether he has made progress, but it is a threatening situation out of which his label is going to come. Desperate cramming is an attempt to make the test look good and to feign that learning has really taken place. This is artificial, a distortion of reality, a misplacement of values. It is day-to-day faithful involvement rather than now-and-then tests which should be important. If a student can calculatedly loaf until test time and then put on a show, he has learned how to manage "the system," but what has he learned about life?

As far as I can determine, tests and grades are unique to the academic life. In most work situations, being faithful on the job is the test, and there the mediocre work that a school grading system permits and engenders is usually unacceptable. An employee is given a task and is expected not only to produce each day but also to work at it until the quality is acceptable for the standards in that situation. He usually cannot deliberately do mediocre work, figuring to scrape by on a "passing grade." There are no grades—he either passes or fails. There are no formal tests either—he gets tested every day in an open situation, and cramming is not an option. But in schools we supposedly "prepare students for life" by depending on unreal testing and grading situations!

A Better Way

Instead of spending a lot of time trying to measure how little or how much a student has done, or to measure who did most and who did least, the teacher should exercise his authority to see that every student has done all and has done it well. If a student fails to do the required work or does it poorly, he is given no credit. I feel this would avoid much of the labeling and mislabeling of students that we presently spend so much time on. We would do away with much of the mediocre junk that gets turned in as students deliberately aim for one of the eleven passing grades we now offer. We would hopefully evaluate much more personally each student and measure him as an individual in relationship to his own ability. We would avoid putting a relatively meaningless grade on him—commenting instead directly and personally on his achievements, attitudes, and strengths, as well as on specific improvements expected of him. And the greatest asset of such a new approach would be that teachers would be considered sharers and givers of experience and learning rather than givers of grades. We could honestly be considered personal assistants to a student's development rather than slave drivers carrying the grade whip.

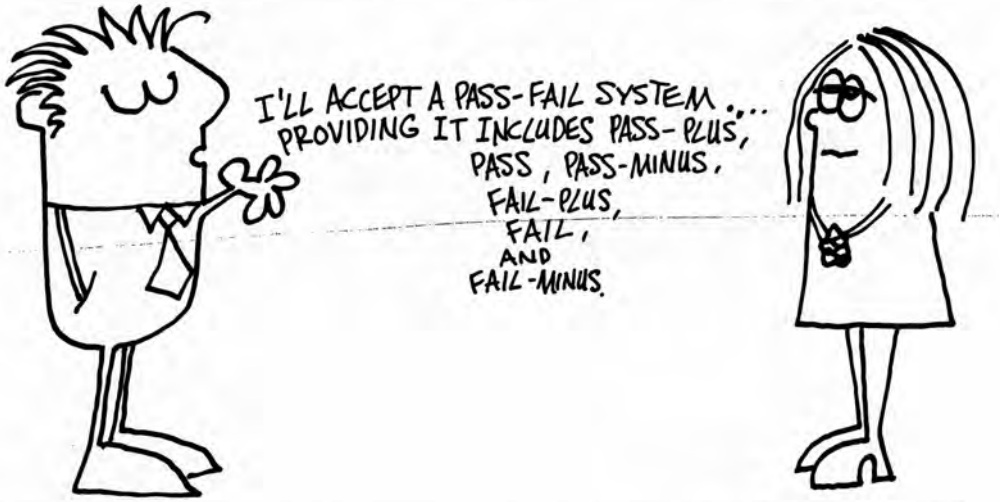
When we put aside grades—arbitrary, imprecise, open to

endless and meaningless interpretation—we can then concentrate on authoritatively seeing to it that each student develops as he has the talent and potential to do so. We should be responsible for the capable students reaching high, and should expect and accept only high quality work for credit. This is realistic preparation for their adult lives, and is consistent with the Biblical "To whom much is given, of him much is expected."

For those who are less gifted (or more accurately, differently gifted) we should work with fellow teachers and counselors to determine what we should reasonably achieve with each. Here we account for individual differences in a dignified manner, where each student is accepted for what he is, with his integrity honored! We need not any longer constantly elevate some and humiliate others—and at the same time will not be accepting mediocrity and "garbage" that passes for education under the grade game.

By challenging each student as a person we can more easily and effectively establish the rapport we know is so necessary to stimulate the thinking, curiosity, enjoyment, and exposure we want him to have. On a pass/fail, or credit/no credit, system we do not run the risk of feeding lust for grades and status, or of scaring some timid soul away from a challenge, or of destroying rapport by threat, or of humiliating the one-talent man, or of deluding the ten-talent one.

Instead of a system with values centered on grades, let us establish a system with values established on gaining experiences with God's creation, and on ideas and ideals for living as Christians in His world. Rather than a system which can be virtually ignored and beaten, and where we teachers look foolish to those we wish to educate, let us have a system which is better defined and which preserves integrity, dignity, and respect for all involved. God judges a person's faithfulness in meeting his responsibilities—should we do any less?



News Report From Dordt College...

Dordt College Freshmen were involved this spring in a research project involving a relatively new teaching method, "programmed instruction texts."

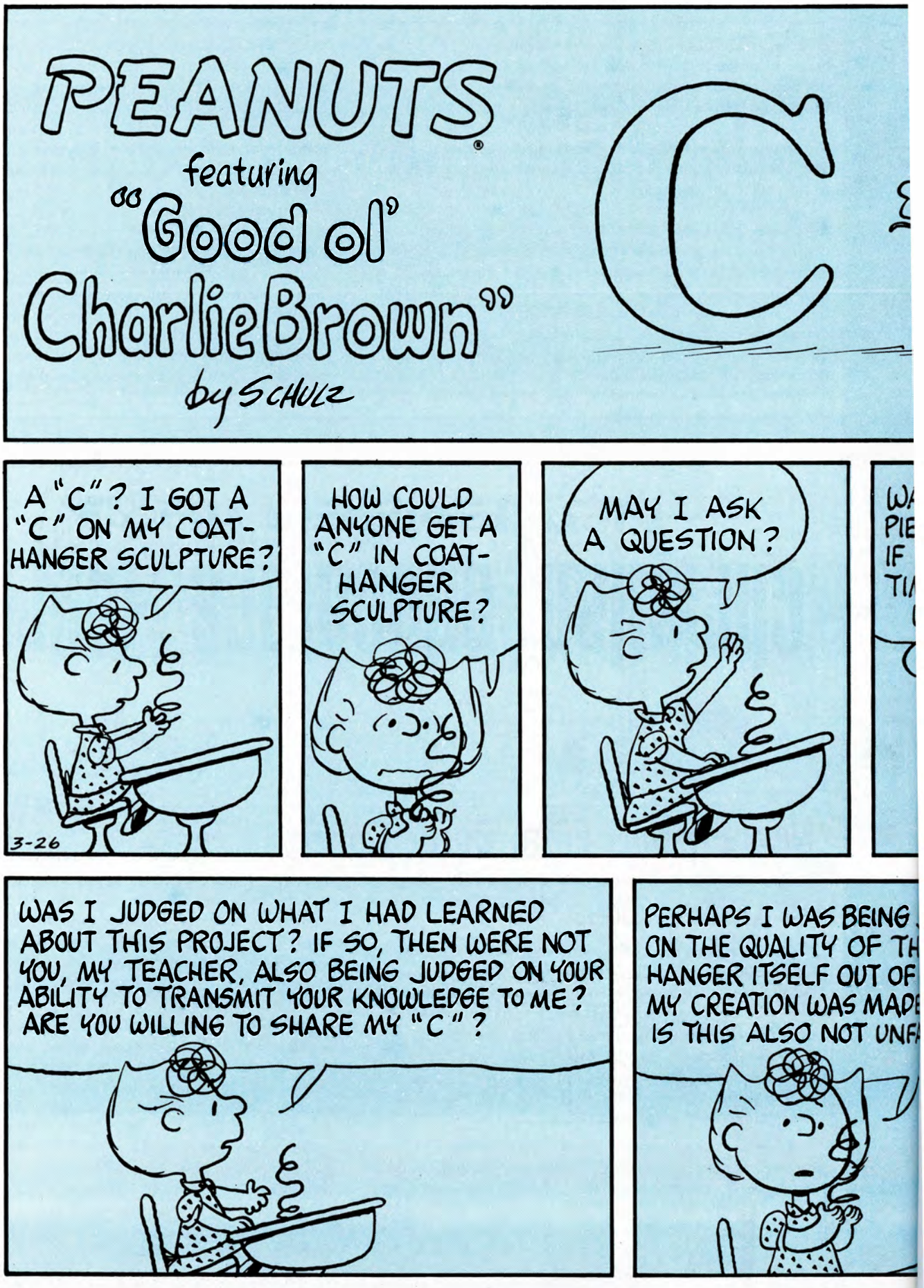
The programs used in the research project were written by Mr. Gary Parker, Assistant Professor of Biology at Dordt. Mr. Parker used three texts which had been published a few years ago with Educational Methods Company of Chicago, and a fourth text, written especially for this research project, was recently accepted for publication by John Wiley and Sons, New York. The programs are each about 100 pages long, and require two to twelve hours of student time.

Programmed instruction texts present a topic in a step by step manner and each step or frame requires the student to answer a question and then check his answer before going on to the next step.

The research project involved students in the two sections of Mr. Parker's freshman Biology course. One group was taught a topic in the usual lecture-discussion manner; the other group was taught solely from a programmed text over the same topic. Students taught with the program did much better on five out of six tests than the students taught in the usual way. The program-taught students also participated more actively in class discussions over several of the topics covered.

The Dordt students freely acknowledged that they learned more and remembered better from the programs than the more typical teaching. However, students also reported that they felt regular classes were more interesting and that they felt too much programmed instruction would be boring.

The programming research project is being carried out by Mr. Parker as part of his doctoral dissertation. Presently a candidate for the Ed.D. in Science, Parker is a native of Indiana receiving his B.A. degree from Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana and his M.A. degree from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.


PEANUTS®
featuring
"Good ol' CharlieBrown"
by SCHULZ
C
A "C"? I GOT A "C" ON MY COAT-HANGER SCULPTURE?
3-26
HOW COULD ANYONE GET A "C" IN COAT-HANGER SCULPTURE?
MAY I ASK A QUESTION?
WAS I JUDGED ON WHAT I HAD LEARNED ABOUT THIS PROJECT? IF SO, THEN WERE NOT YOU, MY TEACHER, ALSO BEING JUDGED ON YOUR ABILITY TO TRANSMIT YOUR KNOWLEDGE TO ME? ARE YOU WILLING TO SHARE MY "C"?
PERHAPS I WAS BEING
ON THE QUALITY OF TH
HANGER ITSELF OUT OF
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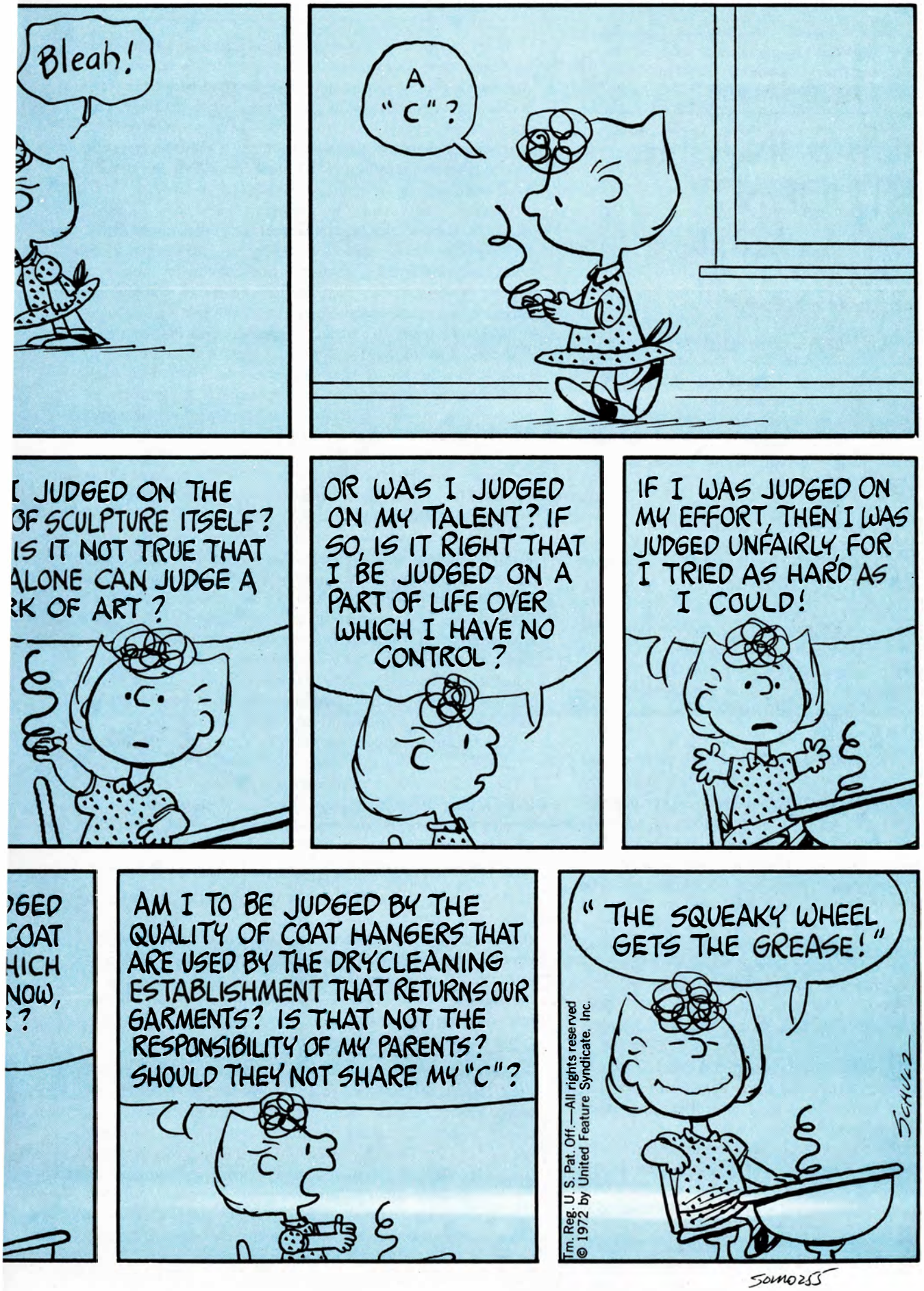
IS THIS ALSO NOT UNFA



Do GRADES as such tend to quench the spirit in our students? Read this timely article by someone who interviews these students for a living!

GRADES INJURE STUDENT Self-Worth

By Stanley Brouwer*

When talking to students I find certain concerns seem quite evident as they talk about "how it is." Some express thoughts about being lonely. Some feel they are not accepted by their peers or others. But what is more disturbing are the feelings expressed that they are not acceptable. In other words, some students feel very inadequate, inferior, less than worthwhile. These kids are really saying, "I just don't measure up, I'm a failure." For these students, certain needs have not been met in their lives, at least as they perceive it.

Glaser's book *Schools Without Failure* focuses upon this whole issue very clearly. He suggests that the basic needs of kids are the need for LOVE and the need for SELF-WORTH. He says:

A person must learn to give and receive love; he must find someone in the world to love and someone in the world who loves him, many people if possible, but at a minimum one person he loves and one person who loves him. If a person succeeds in giving and receiving love . . . he is to some degree a success.

We are social beings; we have strong desires to be loved and accepted. Children need affection desperately, not only from teachers but also from peers and particularly parents.

As a school we are more directly concerned with the second basic need that Glaser points out: the need to feel WORTHwhile. We need to believe we are someone in distinction to others, and that we are important and worthwhile. In other words, it is necessary to gain and maintain a successful identity. Here is where schools have failed the most. Kids generally begin school quite receptive to learning. Very few enter school already labeled as failures, since most have had some success identity.

Just as children have seldom met total failure before their school experience, so also in most areas of life – work, athletics, etc. – *total* failure will seldom be a concern. (In life we are more concerned with *levels* of success, and almost everyone has some degree of success in any job.) But it seems that in school more than any other area individuals are labeled "failure."

Very likely there are a number of factors that tend both to stifle enthusiasm for learning and to cause students to find failure in school. For example, it may be that we don't make learning relevant enough; or that we stress facts and memory rather than thinking. However, one area that seems to have a very negative effect on a student's self-image is the use of *grades.* Grades (A-B-C-D-F) tend to set the stage for failure in school. While grades are *supposed to* motivate students to learn, I have found this is very often not the case. Glaser emphatically noted, "Once a child receives the failure label and sees himself a failure, he will rarely succeed in school."

Author John Holt in *School Is Bad for Children* discusses some of the negative effects of grades on students. He suggests that continued failure in performance or continued mediocrity leads to the conclusion one *is* a failure. When a student fails a subject or even a test, there is often a more far-reaching effect than just failing that subject! Instead, it means personal failure to many students. Eventually for these students the desire to try ends. Thus, it seems that grades tend to promote such unwholesome concepts of self-worth. Students seem to believe that they are constantly having to prove their worth or value as persons. It is as though each has some place on a continuum ranging from WORTHless to WORTHwhile: "The better my *grades,* the higher I rate." Other students think of this in terms of a ladder where the higher your performance, the higher you place on the ladder.

These and a variety of other factors are very important in determining how a student sees himself. If he sees himself as a failure, this is how he believes himself to be. . . you are what you believe. And as you believe, so you live! This to me is the greatest liability regarding GRADES. Students begin to identify their work as persons on the basis of their grades. They mistakenly assume from their educational experience that failing a subject makes them failures. What I am trying to say is that it is not the grades as such, but the connotations, meaning, and implication inferred from them by students. This causes the undesirable negative self-concepts.

So far I have been emphasizing some areas that do affect kids – their attitudes toward themselves, their self-images. It seems that the greater the negative image kids have, the greater their chances of looking for less conforming ways of receiving satisfaction ("kicks") to cover their inadequacies.

Therefore we should provide all our students a reasonable chance of success. Unless students can gain some encouraging degree of academic success they will usually become discouraged and antagonistic. Psychologists seem to agree that positive reinforcement is much more effective in motivation than negative reinforcement. (Most of us respond more favorably to a "pat on the back" or a compliment than to criticism!)

Also, we must counteract any thinking which includes the mistaken notion that a student's WORTH is commensurate with his performance. Students must understand that whether one received A's or F's, has many friends or few, has no effect on an individual's personal WORTH. We are worthwhile only because we are beings created in the image of God. Our worth lies not in our own merits, but only – by the grace of God – in the merits of Christ. The standard of our worthiness must be Jesus Christ, not a series of A's, F's, or other grades.

*Mr. Brouwer, M.A., is a counsellor at Illiana Christian High, Lansing, Illinois.

AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD FOR K-9

By Lyle Ahrenholz*

Teachers have felt the inadequacies of the standard evaluation system for many years. Ask any conscientious teacher how he feels when he must give a single grade on a report card for 45 days of hard work. They all know that that mark is not giving a true picture of the student's ability or achievement. As teachers many of us have tried to incorporate into this one symbol achievement, effort, and ability. But how are parents and students to know how much effect each one of these had on the mark? What does a "B" in arithmetic really say about the child's ability to handle numerical reasoning or his knowledge of the multiplication tables? For one student getting a "B" may mean he is doing his best, but he hasn't really mastered the multiplication tables. For another student it may mean he knows all the facts but is generally careless about his work.

I've talked for some time now about some of the weaknesses of the traditional grading system. I have not forgotten the rule that you shouldn't knock something down if you have nothing to replace it. The following is an outline of a program, complete with some sample recommended forms for implementing such a program.

I. OBJECTIVES
- A. To individualize the evaluation of each child.
- B. To attempt to give a much more accurate report to the students and parents of ability, achievement, and behavioral characteristics of the student.
- C. To assist children to evaluate their own progress.
- D. To make children responsible for their own progress.
- E. To assist parents in cooperating with the school in all matters pertaining to the child.
- F. This method is designed to give the teachers, parents, and the pupils better answers to these questions:
  1. Is the child doing as well as he can?
  2. How well is the child doing in terms of what the school expects for this age?
  3. What are his strong points and on what can . . build in years to come?

II. MECHANICS OF PROGRAM
- A. Teacher evaluation of student.
  1. Teacher keeps file on every student.
     - a. Standardized Teacher Evaluation Sheet of each student is to be filled out at least once per quarter and placed in file.
     - b. As any out-of-the-way occurrences happen the teacher should keep an anecdotal record. This is

Continued On Next Page

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to help the teacher remember the special circumstances of the situation. This is not intended only as a record of discipline situations but also and even more so a record of accomplishments.

c. Teacher should make his or her own schedule to watch each student closely throughout the day in as many different school activities as possible. This should be done at least once per quarter. It is hoped that this will give a fuller understanding of the child and thus a step toward more individualized education.

2. Teacher will keep a loose-leaf notebook in which will be placed a record of student achievement.
   a. In every feasible situation achievement will be recorded on a graph on which daily and test marks are entered as per cents. (It is recommended that the teacher make some allowance for distinguishing between daily and test percents. This might be revealing in certain situations.)
   b. Evaluation charts are to be used in situations where the graph is not feasible. Some of these charts will be standardized but others will need to be constructed by the teacher to fit the situation.
   c. These are to be the only records of achievement and at no time is a teacher to place an A, B, C, D, or E on any student's work.
   d. This notebook may also be used to record attendance, tardiness, etc.
3. The teacher is to hold a personal interview with each student before the end of each quarter. Together a look can be taken at the student's achievement, attitudes, etc. Anything special may be recorded and placed in the student's file.

B. Student evaluation of himself.
1. An open file is to be kept in the room in which the student places all marked papers after they have been returned.
2. The student is to make a graph similar to the one made by the teacher. At some time throughout the quarter it might be good to compare the student's and the teacher's graph.
3. Periodically throughout the year the student is to evaluate his own work using the standardized Student Evaluation sheet. The individual teacher may find it necessary to alter or add to the questions. This is to be kept in the teacher's file.

C. Parent evaluation of student.
1. A questionaire is to be sent out about two weeks before the end of the quarter (first and third). This questionaire is to be thoughtfully filled out by the parents in advance and brought along to conferences where it will be discussed.

D. Conferences.
1. Conferences will be held at the end of the first and third quarters. At this time the teacher has available to him all the materials which he has collected throughout the quarter; graphs, evaluation sheets, anecdotes, record of student interview, student's personal evaluation, student's work, etc. The parent will come to this interview having answered carefully and thoughtfully the questionnaire. A close look at and discussion of these materials will comprise completely the report of achievement throughout the first and third quarter. The second and fourth quarter will be reported to the parent by sending through the mail a copy of any vital information such as graphs, etc. No report card will be given the student directly. At no time will the work of a student be reported as a letter grade.

Given below are three suggested evaluation forms, to be completed by the student himself, by the parent of the student, and by his teacher. The one by the teacher could easily be supplemented by space for comments about each of the curriculum areas and the pupils performance in it.

STUDENT SELF–EVALUATION

NAME _____
GRADE _____
DATE _____

1. I always do my homework faithfully, regardless of what it is. Yes or no. If not, why?
2. How well do I cooperate with students and teachers?
3. How well do I manage my own time?
4. What can I do to improve my own weaknesses?
5. What are my favorite subjects and why?
6. What do I do best in and why?
7. What helps me most with my work? The teacher, studying by myself, help from my classmates, or help from my parents?
8. I try to do well in school because . . .
9. In general my work is (improving) (not improving) because . . .
10. Are you ever afraid to ask your teacher for help in your school work?

PARENT REPORT

Parents: Please fill this parent form questionnaire out carefully and bring it along to conferences.

1. What attitude does your child display toward his (her) teacher?
2. In what extracurricular activities is your child involved?
3. How many hours of sleep does your child usually get on school nights?

4. Can you state any special interests or hobbies your child has which would be beneficial for the teacher to know?
5. What is your child's attitude toward his (her) homework?
6. What do you think about the homework load of your child?
7. How much help do you as a parent offer your child in his (her) school work?
8. Under what conditions does your child do his (her) homework?
9. To what extent does your child make use of the public library?
10. What are the reading habits of your child?
11. Do you feel that your child is working up to his (her) mental ability?
12. Do you find praise or punishment as a better motivation in your child's achievement?
13. Does your child express himself (herself) freely at home concerning school happenings? What are some representative comments?
14. Is there anything about the social atmosphere of the school which disturbs your child?
15. Do you know of any special goals which your child has set for himself (herself) which would be an advantage for the teacher(s) to know?

TEACHER EVALUATION

1. The student is working up to his ability.
2. The student is willing to participate in class discussion.
3. The student enjoys being in the classroom.
4. The student's work is completed promptly and neatly.
5. The student accepts responsibility.
6. The student enjoys and is capable of providing leadership.
7. The student is adjusted socially.
8. The student is cooperative in work and play.
9. The student accepts and respects the teacher.
10. The student reacts favorably when disciplined.
11. The student shows personal initiative.
12. The student is able to grasp concepts and understandings.
13. The student is able to memorize easily.
14. The student is attentive.
15. The student follows directions.
16. The student has good work habits.

PROPOSED NEW GRADING SYSTEM*

PERFORMANCE FACTORS	FAR EXCEEDS REQUIREMENTS	EXCEEDS REQUIREMENTS	MEETS REQUIREMENT	NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT	DOES NOT MEET REQUIREMENTS
QUALITY	Leaps tall buildings with a single bound	Must take a running start	Can leap short buildings	Crashes into buildings when attempting to leap	Cannot recognize a building
TIMELINESS	Faster than a speeding bullet	As fast as a speeding bullet	Not quite as fast as a bullet	Would you believe a slow bullet?	Wounds himself when attempting to shoot
INITIATIVE	Is stronger than a locomotive	Is stronger than a bull elephant	Is stronger than a bull	Shoots the bull	Smells like a bull
ADAPTABILITY	Walks on water consistently	Walks on water in emergencies	Washes with water	Drinks water	Passes water in emergencies
COMMUNICATIONS	Can communicate without speaking	Talks with angels	Talks to himself	Argues with himself	Loses the argument

REPORT CARD

*Anonymous

A RESPONSE TO

Contrasting Christian Approaches to Teaching the Sciences

(A CALVIN COLLEGE MONOLOGUE, 1971)

By John J. Hoekstra*

The pamphlet bearing this title contains a paper entitled "Christian Education Through Science Studies", by Russell Maatman of Dordt College and another paper by Gerald Bakker of Earlham College entitled "On Placing Limits on Christian Education."

In his paper Maatman proceeds from the concept that man is able to do scientific work because man is created in harmony with nature to several conclusions about Christian scientific education. As evidence for the man-nature harmony he cites the ability of man to make correct predictions on the basis of natural laws which have been formulated by men as reasonable explanations of observed phenomena. Of the several conclusions presented about Christian scientific education the following seem to be most pertinent:

(1) "Our science students should be taught so as to make it impossible for them to grasp what is being taught unless they make the assumption that God created and guides every thing they study."

(2) "Christian education should be education in what God has done and is doing."

(3) "A correct description (of some phenomenon) is not possible if it does not recognize that God created and cares for the universe."

(4) "The teacher should show that behind the observations (of natural phenomena) are a few laws and behind those few is the ultimate in unity, the one true God, the Creator and Upholder."

The Final summary conclusion with respect to a program for Christian scientific education is that "there is only one way to teach science correctly, the way that teaches that God is the Creator and Upholder of the universe and which shows the relationship between His creative and providential acts and our observations."

Bakker takes a more operational approach to the question of what is proper Christian science education. After outlining several philosophical positions ranging from the Realist to the Nominalist with the Conceptualist in between, Bakker states his belief that a Christian may approach science with any one of these positions. He also expresses a concern that attempting a too distinctive definition of Christian scientific education may have the result that a "teacher never really knows if he has mentioned the creating and sustaining Hand often enough for his efforts to be called Christian." Bakker defines good scientific education in operational terms applicable to Christian and non-Christian alike and believes that the Christian student should learn to bring the principles of Christianity to bear on the moral issues which occur during research and the application of the technology which is often the fruit of scientific endeavor.

MY RESPONSE

I agree that on a metaphysical level the true and fullest appreciation of physical reality—which is the area of activity for science—requires the acknowledgement and belief in God as Creator and Upholder of His Universe. However, this position is taken as an act of faith—not as a logical consequence of the scientific study of natural phenomena. One makes the "leap of faith" from noting the existence of a few simple natural laws to the acknowledgement of God as Creator and Upholder only by the inspiration of God Himself and His Word.

Through their God-given creativity many brilliant men have found and admired the inherent beauty and simplicity of creation without recognizing the God we worship as the author. Further, neither such men nor our students will come to believe in the creatorship of God by our statements alone that the simplicity and unity of natural law is due to the creative activity of God. (It must be said here that many scientists through their observations have been led to believe in a kind of Jeffersonian deism.)

Granted the metaphysical commitment that one must acknowledge the creatorship of God to fully appreciate the wonders of physical reality, how does one proceed on an aperational level in one's classroom? I have difficulty with the first cited principle proposed by Maatman. For example, if I have clearly presented the arguments that led to the acceptance of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, how can I prevent the unregenerated student who may have slipped into this Christian college class from grasping this principle? (On the other hand this may explain why so many students have trouble with the concept of entropy!)

Is teaching science on an operational level really any different in Christian science education than secular science education? Bakker points out that this has not been the case in the past and probably will not be so in the future. A spectrophotometer will yield the sought after information without regard for the metaphysical commitment of the person turning its knobs.

It seems to me that in our quest for Christian systems,

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philospohical positions on this and that, we have conferred on "science" a higher esteem than it deserves; a higher esteem than many working scientists would expect it to receive. What is science anyway? Merely a collection of explanations formulated by men to explain the phenomena observed in God's created universe! Are these explanations reliable and rigorous? One has only to recall from the history of the formulation of the Second Law of Thermodynamics that Clausius in the 1850's made quite a logical hop in extending the entropy concept from heat engines to all processes, a step justified on pragmatic grounds only, in order to have some slight uneasiness about the logical foundations of science. Another such example is the De Broglies' hypothesis basic to modern quantum mechanics. As Maatman has said, natural laws have been modified and theoretical structures built on these "logical hops" or postulates may sometimes also have to be modified to describe reality better; yet God's created reality has not changed. It thus seems presumptuous to present any current theories as evidences of God's glory; the reality of God's creation does not depend upon man's natural science. As the working scientist knows, today's scientific "facts" are hypotheses that have not yet been disproven.

Given this evaluation of natural science what should then be the Christian approach to science education? Beginning with Christian teachers who have by faith recognized God's hand in all of the universe, a creation culminating in the coming of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, let us in an atmosphere of this acknowledgement and faith teach our students the working explanations proposed by man to describe the operations of God's creation as just what they are. Let us invite them to participate in finding more explanations, "to think God's thoughts after Him", to take part in the on-going process of unfolding the mysteries of God's world—known as scientific investigation or research. But let us always remind ourselves and them that their thoughts and explanations may fall short of coincidence with God's reality. We must let our students see that we ourselves, in the classroom and out, have made the "leap of faith" from our contemplation of the observed universe to acknowledgement of the Creator as Lord of our lives.

EXCERPTS FROM *The Bible, Natural Science and Evolution*

By R. Maatman

In a world that views science from an evolutionary viewpoint, a new book The Bible, Natural Science, and Evolution, *by Russell Maatman of Dordt College is a refreshing contrast, for it presents a creation approach to science. The following are excerpts from this 165 page paperback available for $3.50 from Reformed Fellowship Publishers, Box 7383, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49510.*

—R. Vd. L.

Consider the experiences of a certain pair of parachutists who jump simultaneously from two planes flying close together. The parachutists are able to converse as they fall. The one parachutist opens his chute with confidence because he trusts the person who packed the chute. The other parachutist has some misgivings as he attempts to open his chute: he remembers that prior to jumping he did not trust the person who had packed his chute, and consequently the parachutist re-packed the chute, even though re-packing is against the rules. He is an amateur at packing chutes, and so his chute does not open, and he is destroyed. His friend, with whom he communicated during the first part of their descent, descends safely.

As the parachutists were falling before the one chute opened, they seemed to be in equal situations. One could conceivably hold that they then were on common ground. They could communicate with each other. Yet, the one parachutist had done something as he prepared for the descent which insured that he would be killed. The starting points of the two were thus quite different, and consequently the ends of their experiences would also be radically different. Notice that the brief time that they were in apparently equal situations is not separated from the beginning and the end of their experiences. It is not as if their temporarily-equal situations concerned a matter wholly separated from their descents. The time they were in apparently equal situations was for each parachutist his *necessary link* between his starting point and his fate.

When the natural man and the Christian carry out scientific work away from the "edges" of science, they seem to be in equal situations. Yet, like the parachutists, their starting points and the ultimate consequences of their starting points are quite different. What is most important is that their apparently equal situations are *necessary links* between their starting points and where they are going.

Here is the crux of the matter: the day-to-day work of the scientist is the *necessary link* between his starting point and the ultimate destiny of both the scientist and his work. The existence of this link can be seen for both the natural man and the Christian.

The natural man begins in science with the idea that man can, in principle, become the master of his environment. He can comprehend it and control it. The natural man expects that eventually he will fully understand nature and control his environment so that he can live the "good life." Some disease has been virtually eradicated; he expects that science will achieve much more. Some areas are now affluent, even though they once knew poverty because they seemed to be subject to the vagaries of nature; the natural man expects this improvement process to continue

Continued On Next Page

indefinitely, so that all areas of the world will improve. Where there was once a small life expectancy and little leisure, there is now not only longer life and more leisure, but also many more ways to use leisure time enjoyably; again, the natural man expects science to achieve more and more. In other words, on the theoretical level the goal the natural man has set for himself is complete understanding; on the practical level, he aims to be master by using science.

For the natural man, the god-concept is the concept of an unknown force accounting for events man cannot otherwise understand. The natural man expects that a primitive society would believe lightning and thunder to be evidence that there is a god. The natural man says that as man understands lightning and thunder in terms of natural forces, man no longer needs a god. Mastering theory means there is no need to postulate the existence of a god. Similarly, the practical victories of science in matters of comfort, health, etc. make it less and less necessary to rely upon a god for comfort, for health, or for any other thing man desires.

There is therefore no part of the science of the natural man, whether it is engineering or quantum theory, the study of distant galaxies or unraveling the structure of the molecules found in living cells, which is not a necessary link between his man-honoring, God-dishonoring starting point, and his personal goal as well as his goal for science.

In spite of all this, the Christian can work with the natural man. All the scientific areas of activity – engineering, medicine, astronomy, etc. – are also for the Christian necessary links between his starting point and his goal for himself and for his science. The Christian is impressed with physical theory (even though it is a theory posited by man and subject to revision) because it reveals the inner structure of God's creation. This theory shows that God is the God of harmony, and that the universe is not cluttered with isolated facts. There is a subtle harmony which God allows men to see. When in some branch these theoretical ideas are developed enough so that man is given health, comfort or some other desirable thing, the Christian sees a providential God. His creation is a good creation, with great potential. Furthermore, the Christian sees in these desirable things a faint foretaste of that which God has promised him in eternal life in heaven. The God who promises and provides the good things of this life also promises infinitely more in a heavenly life.

No man works without motivation. The labor of each day in the life of the scientist is labelled in one of two ways, and the label indicates the kind of motivation the scientist has. The label reads either, "Performed by man in his attempt to become the master of the universe," or "Performed by man in obedience to God for the purpose of honouring God".

* * * * *

All men have known in their hearts (the heart is the innermost being of man) that God's will is the ultimate law. God created man with the desire and the ability to formulate some natural laws, which are infinitesimal parts of that ultimate law. Since men have always known that there is such an ultimate law, man's desire to formulate laws did not arise because of some initial successes in formulation. Rather, the desire is a consequence of the knowledge that there is such a law. Man's ability to formulate natural laws exists because man was created in harmony with the rest of the universe. This harmony between man and the rest of the universe cannot be separated from his innate knowledge that there is an ultimate, all-encompassing law. Thus, order in the universe is fundamentally known by all men. Some men understand that God has revealed order to them. The others, who are aware of this order, have darkened hearts and they believe that they see order only because of man's achievements.

In summary, the various reasons for man to study nature are connected. God commanded man to subdue the earth, and so by implication he commanded man to carry out scientific work. God created man and the rest of the universe in harmony, and thus man can perceive an order in creation. The order which man perceives is just that which makes scientific work possible. Man can obey God's command to subdue the earth because man and the rest of the universe are in harmony. What God requires, he made possible by creating as he did. Many scientific products, whether they are new building materials, hybrid corn, or radar are possible only because of this harmony in creation. Behind the command to subdue, the products of science, and man's response as he marvels at the order in creation, is God's care for his creation, which is the heart of the matter.

* * * * *

The discussion concerning the natural man's inconsistency concerning the evolution of life from non-life may be summarized as follows:

(1) The natural man debunks the evidence for miracles, but his primary objection to miracles is that they could not have occurred.

(2) Therefore, according to the natural man, the origin of life is non-miraculous.

(3) The only remaining way in which life could have originated, according to the natural man, is by evolution of the simplest living material from non-living material.

(4) The probability of such evoluation has been shown to be vanishingly small.

(5) Many miracles are not physically impossible, but the probability of their occurrence, calculated according to modern physical theory, is also vanishingly small.

(6) Accepting evolution despite its vanishingly small probability (point 4) requires that the vanishingly small probability of miracles (point 5) cannot be ruled out, even if it should be that the probability of miracles is smaller.

(7) The natural man rules out all miracles, even if the probability of a miracles could be shown to be no less than the probability of evolution of life. Therefore, the reasoning of the natural man is internally inconsistent. If he accepts evolution of life from non-life, he must admit the *possibility* of a miracle. On the other hand, if he holds that no miracle can seriously be considered to be explained by quantum mechanical reasoning, he should by the same token reject the non-life to life possibility. He cannot reject the non-life to life possibility, since the only alternative. . . is something like a miracle, the very things he has denied.

Language Arts
NELLE VANDER ARK, *Editor*

STICKING TO ONE'S LAST:

A Plea For Organizing Literature By Genre

By Richard R. Tiemersma*

In the current discussion concerning the most effective organization of the literature curriculum there is much to remind one of the long-standing quarrel between the proponents of the "whole-man" and the intellectural approaches to education in general. In both discussions, one senses, there is general agreement concerning long-range objectives for the development of the human being but some strong differences of opinion as to who is responsible for what. Proponents of the whole-man philosophy argue that the objective of the school is to produce a person capable of living the good life—with all that "good," depending on the speaker's religious and philosophical orientation, entails. Those who hold that the school's primary function is the intellectual development of the student counter with the proposition that the development of the whole man is the responsibility of the whole of society—the church, the home, and the state, as well as the school—and that the school is peculiarly equipped and responsible for nurturing that aspect of the individual that is likely to be neglected by other social institutions in the pursuit of their peculiar objectives.

In the matter of the most effective organization of the study of literature there appears to be a similar division into opposing camps, with the proponents of the thematic approach leaning heavily toward the whole-man philosophy of education and the proponents of the chronological and genre approaches, for reasons of their own, adopting the more specifically intellectual stance.

In both instances it would be a serious mistake to assume that those who reflect some bias toward the intellectual are necessarily inimical to the broader objectives envisioned by their opponents. Even the most ivory-towered philosopher would hardly deny that the demands of the body and the psyche, as well as those of the intellect, must be satisfied if the man is to achieve full humanity. Nor, despite the frequent charges of some whole-man proponents, would he insist on a neat Platonic does not treat. Indeed, it is the hallmark of great literature that it deals in a timeless manner with man's fundamental relationships—to his God, to his fellowman, to his state, to his inner self, and to the physical universe—and with the basic problems that arise out of those relationships in all ages.

But this is obviously not the whole story of literature; nor is it a peculiar mark of literature as such. Theology and philosophy are also concerned with all of these matters. The social sciences speak more particularly of man's relationship to man and state. The behavioral sciences deal with man's inner self. And the natural sciences consider the physical universe. In short, when one views literature in terms of its content, one finds almost invariably that there is a reputable discipline that has made the study of that content its particular province.

Furthermore, not every expression of a heartfelt sentiment or of a universal truth can be considered literature. Blind men, one would suppose, have always lamented their blindness, and some, no doubt, have even seen in their affliction an admonition to patience. Man has almost certainly always been awed by natural phenomena, and many men have recognized nature as the handiwork of God; whole ages, further, have assumed the essential unity of the physical and moral frameworks of the universe. But there is something peculiarly excellent about Milton's statement on his blindness that makes his sonnet a piece of literature, and Psalm 19 stands out as an inspired and classic expression of what many men have observed and, no doubt, commented on.

Clearly, then, it is not content alone that makes literature what it is, for the subject matter of literature is formally taught in many disciplines and is informally expressed by many people every day. The thing that happens to all this content when it becomes literature is *form*. It is the form that distinguishes John Donne's meditation on the oneness of the human race and, especially, of the Body of Christ from a run-of-the-mill ecumenical homily on the same subject. It is the form that makes the difference between Spenser's "Epithalamion"

Continued On Next Page

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trichotomy. Similarly, to deny that the objective to the study of literature is solely, or even primarily, "to reach the heart of the student, . . . [to] make the learner not only *see* and understand opposing outlooks on man, evil, etc., but also feel personally the tug of opposing basic outlooks" [1] is not to say that the learner's heart is to remain untouched while his mind is being honed to a keen edge.

Here, I believe, is the real crux of the issue—whether it is the function of the literature course to achieve this broad objective or whether the achieving of that objective should be the net result of the total educational process, including all of the formal disciplines that the school teaches, as well as the training afforded by the home, the church, and the state.

One of the decided virtues of the study of literature, surely, is that there is hardly an area of human experience or an aspect of God, man, and the universe that literature and the effusions of just any prospective Elizabethan bridegroom as he anticipates his wedding night. For literature, like Pope's "true wit," is "Nature to advantage dressed,/ What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."

Literature, as distinct from ordinary statement, is art. And art, as Laurence Perrine has observed

> ultimately, is organization. It is a searching after order, after form. The primal artistic act was God's creation of the universe out of chaos, shaping the formless into form; and every artist since, on a lesser scale, has sought to imitate Him—by selection and arrangement to reduce the chaotic in experience to a meaningful and pleasing order.

To observe, to study, to understand—and, perhaps, though this is not a necessary function of the study of literature, to emulate—this reduction of chaos to pleasing, meaningful, verbal order is the peculiar province of the literature course. Other of the fine arts are, of course, also concerned with formal statement, but among the arts only literature achieves its objective through the formal disposition of words. Here, then, is an aspect of the universal order, an opportunity to observe man imitating something of God's creativity that no other discipline is prepared to deal with. If the student is not taught literary form in his literature courses, he simply will not be studying it elsewhere.

That, I believe, is the primary reason for insisting on the study of literature *as literature* and not primarily as theology, philosophy, political science, sociology, psychology, and the like. Again, a word of caution: to insist on the study of literature as literature is not to deprecate the effect of content. Indeed, one might wish that practitioners of the non-literary disciplines would make more use than they do of the literature that speaks in terms of their subject matter. For, as Matthew Arnold has noted, it is the men of letters

> who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to another the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have labored to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive.[3]

And the aesthetically sensitive soul would welcome more of that kind of knowledge in the classroom.

Nor should the insistence on the study of form be misread as a plea for ignoring content even in the literature course. The very study of form presupposes a hard look at the content to see whether or not the one is properly adapted to the other.[4] And the final judgment of the

[1] Donald Oppewal, "Organizing Literature by Theme: A Defense, *Christian Educators Journal* (April, 1966), p. 25.

[2] *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1956), p. 183.

[3] *Culture and Anarchy*, Ch. I., "Sweetness and Light."

[4] It is precisely his injudicious choice of form (meter, rhyme, diction) that makes certain of Wordsworth's poems unworthy of the poet at his best. An egregious example is "The Reverie of Poor Susan," couched in anapests, a meter better suited to bringing good news on horseback from Ghent to Aix than to relating the pathetic daydream of a displaced person.

worth of a literary work must be made in terms of the content as well as the form, for it is at this point that the moral impinges on the aesthetic and may well be the factor that finally determines whether or not a given piece of writing is great literature. [5]

One could go further and affirm that at a certain stage of the student's literary experience it may be perfectly legitimate to take for granted an appreciation of the form and to deal primarily, or even exclusivily, with the ideas conveyed in a work of art. But—and this is the point of insisting on a study of form—that stage is not reached until one *can* take the form for granted, in other words, when the instructor can assume, on the basis of the student's domonstrated mastery of the intricacies of literary form, that the student will, without the point's being belabored, apprehend the rightness of presenting a particular idea in a particular form. At that stage the study of literature begins more and more to overlap with the humanities as broadly conceived, and that is, perhaps, the level to which the instructor should aspire to bring the student.

But, meanwhile, there is the matter of getting to know what literature consists of, if only because literature is a phenomenon, the analysis of which is as important to the student of literature as the analysis of a chemical compound is to the chemist. There are "things" in our universe that answer to the names of *sonnet, terza rima, rhyme royal limerick, ode, epic, short story, novel,* and the like. And going into the creation of those things are other "things" such as alliteration, assonance, onamatopoeia, meter, rhyme, exposition, climax, catastrophe, denouement, simile, and metaphor.

It is the nature of man to know, and it is the duty of Christian man to subjugate, in the realm of literary phenomena as well as in the natural order. If the student is not taught these matters in the literature course, he will assuredly not learn them elsewhere, as the experience of every instructor of advanced literature courses will attest.

The proponent of the thematic approach is likely to object, however, that grouping by themes does not entail an ignoring of genre. True enough; yet the practical result of a literature curriculum thematically organized is all too often an appalling ignorance of form and structure on the part of students who are the product of such a curriculm.

One reason for this is that the thematic approach does not require the inclusion of every literary form. When an editor selects in terms of subject matter, he simply is not primarily concerned that every genre be included. Nor is it his business to be so; his avowed objective is to present works, in a variety of forms, to be sure, but works that in content address themselves to a particular theme.

Suppose, however, that an editor were to achieve the improbable and include in his thematic groupings examples of not only every existing literary form but also every established literary device. There would still be the practical problem of instructing the student in those matters when the course is deliberately oriented toward getting the "ideas" out of a work. Even if the instructor were to diverge from his primary objective and call attention to the structure of the sonnet whenever a sonnet was used as vehicle for the theme being studied, such an oblique approach would hardly be as effective as a head-on encounter with the various types of sonnets by means of concentrated and sustained work with the sonnet *as form.* The almost inevitable result of studying literature for its themes is the neglect of what is the proper business of the literature class to teach, namely, the formal excellence that makes literature what it is. [6]

Objections, both practical and philosophical, appear immediately, however. The instructor who is faced with the task of teaching literature by genre objects that today's students simply are not interested in such theoretical matters as scansion and stanzaic form, climax and catastrophe, image and symbol; they want nothing but what is "relevant"—and preferably with a minimum of intellectual strain involved; they must be "interested" before they can be taught.

As to relevance, whatever is, is by mere virtue of its existence not irrelevant to man; whatever reflects the orderliness of God's activity as Creator is relevant to man as the image bearer and imitator of God; and the very things that make literature what it is are surely relevant to a course purportedly devoted to the study of literature. As to interest, the teaching of literary form *can* be made interesting to most students, though showing a congenitally dull teacher how to do so may well tax the talents of the best college education staff in the world.

But what of the increasing numbers of students who, in spite of even inspired teaching, fail to be "turned on"? The notion that the student should study only what is intrinsically interesting to him is a product of our barbarous and permissive age. [7] Aristotle may have put the case a bit strongly, but there is more than a grain of truth in his contention that there is no study that is not accompanied by pain. The intellect must be stretched as well as the muscles if a person is to grow, and for the student's own benefit no more quarter should be given to intellectual than to physical indolence. Every mature person can surely look back to learning experiences that he would gladly have avoided at the time, but the fruits of which he would not willingly forego now that he enjoys them; and it is gross

Continued On Next Page

[5] For a discussion of this subject, see Dr. John J. Timmerman's article "The Intentional 'Intentional' Fallacy," *Reformed Journal* (January, 1969), pp. 20-21.

[6] This neglect, not only in literature courses but also in creative writing courses, is at least partly responsible for the turgid prose that many contemporary writers—and publishers, too, if one may judge from the spate of printed matter issuing from the presses—fondly imagine to be "poetry." Lest this observation be taken as merely the animadversion of a crotchety traditionalist, see two fairly recent articles on the subject in the *Saturday Review*: John Ciardi's "On Leaving the Bench" (March 13, 1971), p. 23, and Louis Untermeyer's "The Law of Order, the Promise of Poetry" (March 20, 1971), pp. 18 ff.

[7] The late Dr. Henry Zylstra's essay entitled " 'Interestes' and Education," in *Testament of Vision* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958), pp. 157-160, is worth reading—and rereading—on this point.

dereliction of pedagogical responsibility to abandon a subject merely because the unlettered student is not interested.

Let it be recognized that the study of literature necessarily involves a study of its forms, and then let it be taught—interestingly if possible, but in any case thoroughly. To do less is to be less than honest in calling "literature" what is actually a course in sociology, ethics, life adjustment, or what have you.

The philosophical objections to the genre approach to literature, as has been observed, are largely based on the questionable assumption that the literature course must be responsible for what is really the responsibility of the entire educational system and, indeed, of all of society. At the risk of being repetitious, let it be observed once more that the peculiar task of literature departments is to instruct the student in those specific areas of human knowledge for which no other discipline or institution assumes—or can reasonably be charged with assuming—the responsibility.

Should the literature curriculum, then, be devoted entirely to the study genre? Well, hardly. There is a point in any discipline where for the purposes of liberal education the propaedeutics may be discontinued even though, for more specifically professional purposes, they be far from exhausted. After the student has demonstrated a thorough familiarity with the forms of literature, the curriculum could well branch out, beginning with a chronological survey of major authors in which the interaction of various *Weltanschauungen* and modes of literary expression can be viewed in a reasonable and orderly sequence. After that, if there is room in the curriculum, a more intensive study of individual authors or literary movements could be used to deepen the student's understanding of what the genre and survey studies have laid the groundwork for. But basic to a profitable study in these more advanced areas of the literature curriculum is still a knowledge of what makes a poem, a certain kind of poem an epic or a sonnet or an ode, and the like.

How much time would remain in, say, the typical high school literature program for these more advanced approaches will, of course, depend on a number of factors, including the student's previous preparation, the amount of time allocated to the study of literature, and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning going on in a given school. It is not too much to say, however, that the various types of literature offer sufficient variety and complexity to warrant devoting to them at least the first several years of the high school student's literary experience.

For those instructors of literature who can honestly say that their reluctance to abandon the thematic approach is motivated by their concern for what their students may lose in terms of "heart engagement" and not because it is more entertaining and, perhaps, less demanding to discuss ideas than to grapple with anapests and alexandrines, there is always the possibility of getting one's colleagues in other disciplines to make greater use of literature in teaching their courses. Meanwhile, let the shoemaker stick to his last and the instructor of literature accord his materials the respect that other professionals accord theirs.

College Forum
DR. PETER DE BOER
Editor

Academic Program Development at Calvin College

By John Vanden Berg*

A college is, essentially, a combination of three factors: a faculty, academic programs, and the facilities within which the programs are carried out. Calvin College continues to have changes in each of these areas, enabling it to adjust to the changing demands of its students and constituency and to continue to provide the kind of quality education that will enable its alumni to perform effectively in vocations of their choosing and as Christian citizens. This report on developments at Calvin College will comment about each of the three factors but it will be devoted primarily to academic program developments.

Criteria for Program Development

The development of academic programs at Calvin College is influenced by a large number of factors but most of these can be classified under one of three main headings:

(1) the needs of the students and constituency,
(2) the cost of the programs, and
(3) the educational philosophy of the college

Sound program development demands that all of these factors be kept in a balance lest the college fail to serve is constituency, operate at a deficit, or lose its character and reason for being.

The needs of the students and constituency have never been stable but they have been changing more rapidly over the past decade and particularly over the past five or six years than in the earlier history of the college. Specifically, there has been a significant increase in the demand for preprofessional and professional programs which are different from those traditionally offered at Calvin College. In responding to this change in the kinds of programs desired by students and constituency Calvin College has had to consider the relation between Christian liberal arts education and Christian programs in professional education. This is, indeed, a major question of educational policy and philosophy, one which is under continuing study but which

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has been under more formal study by a faculty committee for several years.

Although the Calvin College faculty has not adopted a formal statement on the relation between Christian liberal arts education and Christian programs in professional education, it has followed a guideline in practice when considering new preprofessional or professional programs. In a preliminary draft of its report on professional programs the faculty committee studying the place of these programs at Calvin College stated: "the College does not seem to be opposed to professional education but it supports these programs in its curriculum only if the disciplines can be used as building blocks in the development of the program." The preprofessional and professional programs that have been introduced in recent years at Calvin College have met this guideline and have been built on the academic disciplines which have long been a part of the curriculum of the College.

Need and educational philosophy, however, are only two of the factors which enter the decision when considering new programs; economic feasibility is also an essential matter to consider. Generally speaking, most of the preprofessional and professional programs that are currently being demanded by students and constituency are very expensive programs, requiring expensive equipment, highly specialized faculty, and low student-faculty ratios. These programs are too expensive for most private colleges to be able to introduce them.

Combined Curriculum Programs

Calvin College has introduced several new preprofessional and professional programs at minimal cost by means of the combined-curriculum programs with other academic institutions. The essence of the combined-curriculum programs is that courses are taken at Calvin College and some other academic institution, either in a sequential basis at each college or concurrently at both colleges. The pre-engineering, pre-nursing, and pre-medical technology programs are illustrations of such combined-curriculum programs which have been offered by Calvin College for some time. All of these programs require students to attend Calvin College for from one to three years, and then the students transfer to another institution for the completion of the program. The most recent development in combined-curriculum programs is the program in special education developed in cooperation with Grand Valley State Colleges which is a much more closely integrated program and requires considerably more concurrent enrolment in two schools than other combined-curriculum programs.

The special education combined-curriculum program will be available to students in the 1972-73 academic year. It is a program which covers four years plus two summers, and qualifies a student to teach in the fields of mental retardation and the emotionally disturbed. The student will spend his first two years at Calvin College while in his junior and senior years he will spend part of his time enrolled in courses at Calvin College. Attendance at summer school will be required in at least two summers. At the conclusion of the program the student will be certified in special education by Grand Valley State Colleges but will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Special Education from Calvin College. A student who completes the program will also meet all of the requirements for certification in general education at the elementary level and will be so certified by Calvin College at the time of graduation.

We at Calvin College are elated to be able to offer such a program to our students, for there is substantial demand for graduates with such qualifications and the field of special education is particularly suited to provide opportunity for Christian service. Persons interested in entering the program at Calvin College should make early inquiry, for the program is tightly structured and will be limited to approximately fifteen to eighteen students per year.

Since 1933 Calvin College has had a nursing program in cooperation with Blodgett Hospital School of Nursing in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This diploma program continues to function and to be in great demand. A more recent development in the field of nursing is the increase in the demand for nurses' training in the colleges, culminating in a B.S. in Nursing Degree. Calvin College has studied the possibility of introducing such a degree for years but the economic costs of introducing and sustaining such a program have been far too great to permit it to do so. The College is now working on a combined-curriculum program, also with Grand Valley State Colleges, which will permit a student to obtain a B.S. in Nursing degree while doing his work at Calvin College and Grand Valley State Colleges. It is anticipated that the arrangements for the implementation of the program will be completed early in the academic year. Tentatively, the program would require a student to spend two years at Calvin College and two years at Grand Valley State Colleges.

A combined-curriculum program in forestry leading to the B.S. from Calvin College and a five-year professional degree in forestry, the B.S. in Forestry, from an accredited university is also now available at Calvin College. This program requires a student to take his first three years at Calvin College, completing a minimum of twenty-seven courses, and his final two years in the School of Natural Resources at the University of Michigan or some other accredited university. At the end of his third year at Calvin, the student transfers to the university for his last two years of training. After one year at the university the student will receive his Bachelor of Science degree from Calvin College and at the completion of his second year at the university he will receive the professional forestry degree from the university.

Finally, Calvin College has worked out an arrangement whereby some of its education students will be able to do their student teaching in Venezuela. This program will also be effected in cooperation with Grand Valley State Colleges and will be in operation in 1972-73 when three Calvin students will participate in the program.

Calvin College believes that the combined-curriculum approach to new programs is an effective way to meet the educational goals of the College and, at the same time, to minimize the economic costs of introducing these

Continued On Next Page

programs. It will continue to explore the possibility of extending its services by this means.

The Expanded Summer Sessions

For more than twenty years Calvin College has offered a variety of programs in the summer to meet the needs of students who were enrolled in the College during the regular academic year and the special needs of those persons who were unable to enroll in the regular academic year or who had special programs which they wished to pursue. Efforts have been intensified during the past three years to expand the summer session programs to meet the needs of regular college students and, particularly, the special needs of in-service teachers.

The format of the summer sessions has been changed from the traditional six and eight-week sessions to a series of three-and-one-half week sessions plus a large number of one-week workshops for teachers, most of which are offered in conjunction with the National Union of Christian Schools. The first session begins the first week after commencement and is designed primarily for students who were in attendance during the regular school year. The following three sessions can all be attended by in-service teachers, for the first of these normally begins sometime in late June. If a person attends all of the summer sessions, he can earn the equivalent of one semester's work.

Three developments in the summer of 1972 are of particular importance to in-service teachers: First, there was an increase in the number of one-week workshops, covering a wide range of interests, available to teachers. Of special interest is the fact that the staff for these workshops was recruited from the Calvin College faculty, the NUCS, and from the staffs of Christian elementary and secondary schools. Second, through a special arrangement with the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, several of the courses offered at Calvin were allowed graduate credit by the two universities. These courses were also listed in the offerings of the two Universities; hence, courses offered at Calvin College were actually integrated into the programs of the University of Michigan and Michigan State University. Finally, a very special project during the summer session was the first annual educational conference. This was a one-week conference dealing with reading instruction for individual needs. The purpose of the conference was to focus on resources and materials, develop strategies for systematic reading instruction, and to integrate the teaching of the four language arts. Participants in the conference could earn two semester hours of undergraduate credit from Calvin College or three term hours of graduate credit from Michigan State University.

The conference had an outstanding staff, including Dr. Frederic Walker and Kathryn Blok of the Calvin faculty, Betty Bosma, reading consultant of the Northview Schools, and Marian Dygert, Curriculum Consultant of the Kent Intermediate School District. In addition to the conference staff there were several guest speakers, including Dr. Leland Jacobs, Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University. The enrolment of approximately 135 participants in the conference is indicative of the interest generated by the quality of the program and staff.

The Academic Study of Religions

A new certfiable minor in the teacher education program will be introduced in the 1972-73 school year, viz. a minor in the academic study of religions. Calvin College first submitted its request for certification of the study of religions in teacher education to the State of Michigan Department of Education; hence, questions about the legality of such certification and the standards for such a program had to be answered before the State could reply to Calvin College's request. Providing the answers to these questions was an exceedingly slow process and it was not until the spring of 1972 that the State Board of Education finally approved the request.

Calvin College thus becomes the first college in the State of Michigan, and perhaps in the nation, to be authorized to offer a certifiable minor in the academic study of religions. This program will prepare persons to teach various subjects in the field of religion in the public schools and should be particularly helpful to those persons wishing to prepare for teaching courses in religion or closely related subjects in the Christian schools.

Faculty and Facilities

Programs cannot be implemented without a faculty and facilties. Calvin College has been blessed for many years with an excellent faculty and with excellent facilties. Two qualifications are required of everyone who teaches at Calvin College: they must be competent scholars and they must be committed Christians with a Reformed perspective on life and learning. These requirements have not changed over the years. As a consequence, the faculty at Calvin College is well equipped to provide students with an exciting and wide range of learning opportunities within the Reformed perspective of the Christian faith. In the 1972-73 academic year there will be 169 full-time members on the teaching staff, two-thirds of whom will have an earned doctorate. These degrees have been earned at more than fifty different colleges and universities, including most of the major universities in the United States. Every academic program at Calvin College is under the supervision of a faculty member with a doctorate or another terminal degree.

All of the academic programs offered by Calvin College will be housed on the Knollcrest Campus, beginning September, 1972. Here the facilities are superb, providing the faculty and students with the finest equipment and environment for the pursuit of their studies. The completion of the addition to the library two years ago added substantially to the space available for student study and the recent completion of the observatory has added a new dimension to the programs available at Calvin College.

The final major building to be placed on the Knollcrest Campus, a building which will include additional classrooms, art studios, a small auditorium, faculty offices, and administrative functions, is now being constructed. The completion of this building will enable all of the functions of the College to be housed on the Knollcrest Campus and will provide adequate space to take care of existing academic programs and to continue to introduce changes as these are needed.

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