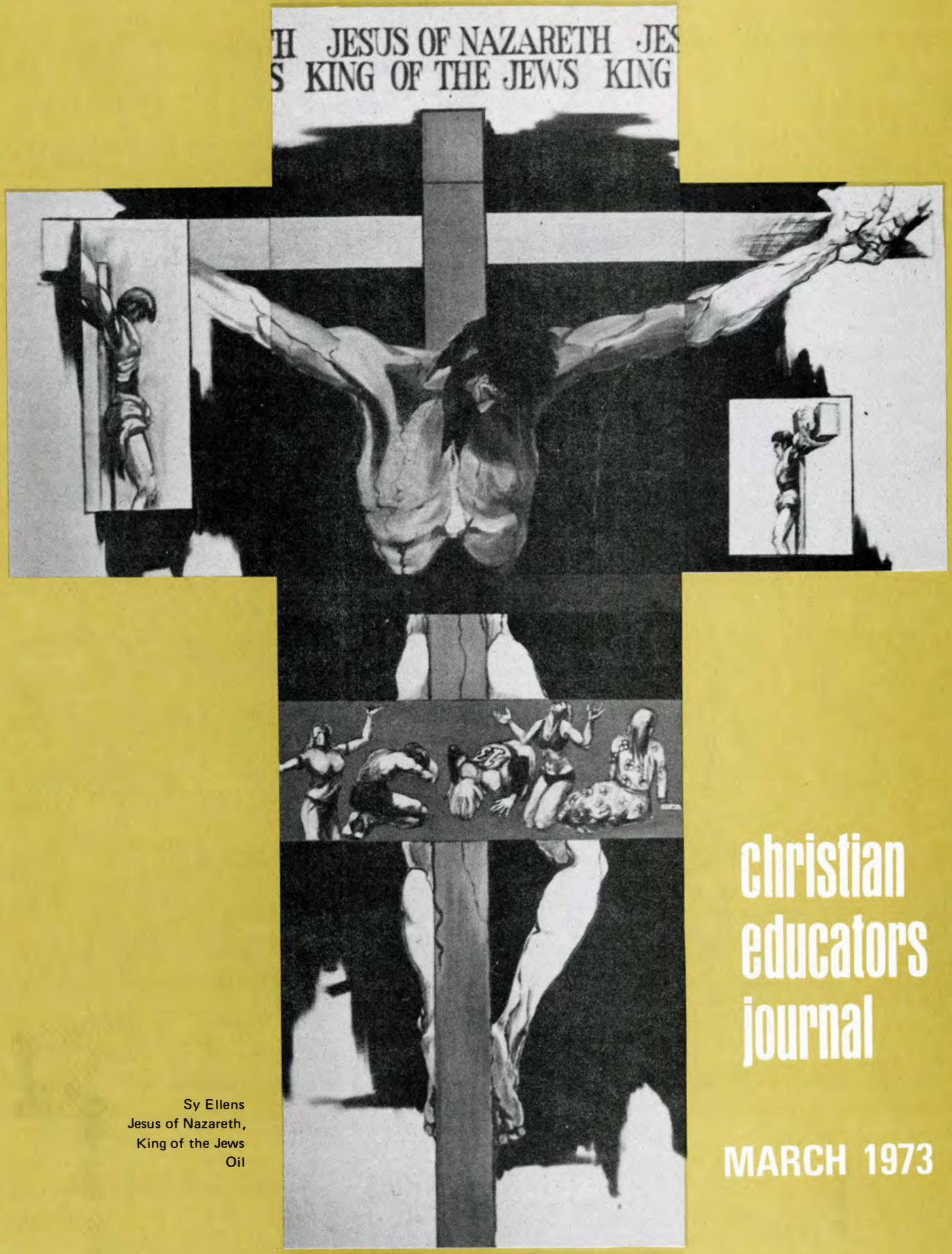
Miss N. Vander Ark



Sy Ellens
Jesus of Nazareth,
King of the Jews
Oil

christian educators journal

MARCH 1973

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CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS JOURNAL, Volume 12, Number 3, March, 1973. A medium of expression for the Calvinist school movement in the United States and Canada.
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Front Cover–
Photo Credit: Paul Stoub
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Kalamazoo, Michigan Christian High

Back Cover–
Cartoon: R. Jensen

MAKING THE AFFECTIVE EFFECTIVE

For well over a decade now a descriptive study of the way teachers talk about their objectives in teaching has concluded that all stated teacher objectives tend to fall into three types: the cognitive, the affective, and the psychomotor. Most teachers will recognize the three types that the terms are meant to distinguish, even if these words are not in their typical speaking vocabulary. Many teachers will call them by different names, depending on when and where they have been given their vocabulary for describing teaching, but they do distinguish between knowledge (cognitive) goals and attitude (affective) goals, for example. They also easily recognize the difference between increasing appreciation (affective) and increasing physical dexterity (psychomotor) as familiar.

The researchers published their findings in the form of two taxonomies* or classifications, and the third has yet to appear. One suspects that a complete taxonomy of the psychomotor domain is not forthcoming simply because not enough teachers do enough teaching of physical and manual dexterity to warrant its publication.

While the cognitive domain objectives get the lion's share of the attention on the part of most teachers, there are reasons in our own tradition for arguing for at least equal time for attention to the affective domain. Surely the hortatory literature of Christian education is full of urgings to educate the heart as well as the head, to teach the whole child, i.e. his mind, his will, his emotions. These are all ways to say that the affective goals of education are as important as the cognitive in Christian education.

I believe a number of very practical reasons have kept us from making effective our commitment to the affective, as expressed by our own goals of education and the Christian theory of man and society which lies behind them. None of these should deter us from giving renewed attention to this in the next decade, if we are going to take seriously our commitment.

One of the practical problems facing anyone who wishes to make the affective areas of education effective is that growth in attitudes, appreciations, motivations are harder to measure than are growth in doing multiplication and increase in accuracy in spelling. Measuring growth in self-awareness, and calculating how much one has come to accept certain values in one's lifestyle, are infinitely harder to do with accuracy than determining how fast one reads or how many presidents one can remember.

The second problem I see in implementing affective teaching is the lack of teaching materials in which the value dimension is made explicit. It is gratifying to see that the National Union of Christian Schools is producing materials not only in Bible, but in science, social studies, and literature as well, in which the affective goals are prominently featured. But the fact remains that the vast amount of texts and teaching materials available to the classroom teacher keep hidden the value dimension of the subject, and thus make the teacher work extra hard if he or she is to exploit the potential of the material for achieving affective goals.

Two promising techniques have come on the educational scene recently that have great potential for Christian teachers who wish to stress the attitudinal and value dimension of life. They are the value inventory and the simulation game. Space does not allow a description of each of these here, but the secular literature of education has increasing attention given to these teaching methods.

Suffice it to say here that all those who wish to make the affective effective will explore these two teaching devices for their potential in achieving one of the professed goals of Christian education. In service teacher education and teacher institute program committees have plenty to work with here.

—D.O.

*_Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain,_ Benjamin Bloom (ed.) David McKay Co., N.Y., 1956.
Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook II: Affective Domain. David Krathwohl _et. al.,_ David McKay Co., N.Y., 1964

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL AND AMERICAN SOCIETY

by John De Jager*

In the last few months there has been considerable agitation against the private or parochial school and also against the Christian School such as found in our own midst. Even at the present moment the Wayne County Civic Association is making an attempt to secure the adoption of an amendment to the Michigan Constitution whereby all children of common school age would be compelled to attend the public schools of the state, and it is evident that this amendment, should it be adopted, though admittedly aimed at the Catholic parochial schools, would automatically close the doors of all other private and parochial schools as well. Moreover, agitation against the Christian School took the form of violent opposition in more than one place of the West where school buildings were destroyed and the supporters of the Christian School were subjected to more or less virulent persecution.

It cannot be gainsaid that most of the opposition against the private school in general and against the Christian School in particular roots in the assumption that these schools are not in harmony with the spirit of America and with American ideals, that, instead of tending to unify the American people, they embody a tendency toward clannishness, toward the formation of groups or clans living side by side with other citizens but having no sympathy for them and not entering into their spirit. It is evident that in a country such as ours an institution that would exert an influence toward such isolation would tend to disrupt society and would therefore be harmful. Since, according to the assumption, such is the effect of the private or parochial school, the sooner the doors of such schools are closed the better.

The fact that this agitation has become more and more plainly felt in the last year or so, is no doubt to be ascribed to the recent war. The war has made us Americans feel more than ever the necessity of internal union, it has made us feel as never before that foreigners who come to our shores must imbibe the spirit of America, must forswear not only their foreign allegiance, but also their former sympathies and ideals. It is not surprising that under these circumstances not a few

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* This column is under the editorship of Prof. William Hendricks, Education Department, Calvin College. This essay is reprinted from over 50 years ago, appearing in *Religion and Culture* (Vol I, No. 3, 1919).

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.

of our fellow-citizens look with suspicion upon our schools because to them they appear to savor too much of a foreign origin and to breathe a foreign spirit.

It is in a way remarkable that in all our propaganda for the cause of Christian primary instruction so little attention has been paid to these arguments of our opponents. We have limited ourselves chiefly to setting forth principles which underly the Christian School, namely, that the education of the child is the duty and right of the parent, that in the work of education the element of religious training is of supreme importance, that the child is fundamentally a unit so that all agencies in the work of education must co-operate and therefore should in no respect contradict or neutralize one another, etc. The opponents to our schools, though they do in some measure face these arguments and attempt to overthrow them, concentrate their bombardment upon a point that has been but too often overlooked by our propagandists or at least but perfunctorily defended. To a certain extent, at least, the discussions pro and con the Christian School have been unfruitful of result, for the simple reason that each side has failed to meet squarely the arguments of the other, and has concerned itself with rearing a structure of its own.

We do not mean, of course, that, in order to justify the existence and to point out the necessity of the Christian School, we must not base our propaganda upon the same fundamental principles upon which it has hitherto been based, some of which have been mentioned above. We do, however, mean that our propagandists cannot afford to lose sight or to pass lightly over the arguments advanced by our opponents. In other words, it is not only necessary that we show positively why we consider the Christian School necessary for the proper education of our children, but it is just as indispensable that we show negatively that the arguments against our schools do not hold, that our schools are in no wise harmful nor detrimental as is the contention of our opponents.

The argument against the private or parochial school may be epitomized somewhat as follows: Our country is a country whose population consists of widely different elements—there are native-born Americans, and there are immigrants of all kinds, English, French, Germans, Scandinavians, Italians, Poles, Russians, Jews, Austrians, Hollanders, etc. Even of the native-born citizens a great number are of foreign descent. In our country are found rich and poor, religious and non-religious, Roman Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Mohammedan. Men of every conceivable color of faith, of every race, of every language dwell on our shores. All these different elements must be molded into one whole, all must become faithful and loyal members of one nation. In order to attain this unity it is indispensable that all learn to know and to sympathize with one another, that all learn to prize and to seek for the same ideals. This result can be attained only by means of the public school, the great "melting-pot" of America. There all elements meet and are molded and developed together. The public school develops and Americanizes all that is good and bright and beautiful in foreign character, and thus enriches American character itself and all who come under its influence. On the other hand, to deprive some children of the benefits of the public school, the great "melting-pot", to isolate them from some types which they would meet in the public school, is detrimental, or, to put it mildly, is dangerous both for those children themselves and to American society in general.

In examining this argument it is immediately evident that the same logic consistently applied would condemn all isolation or separation of a part of the citizens from the rest as detrimental or harmful, no matter in what respect such isolation or separation were found. For surely, not even the staunchest supporter of the public school, as opposed to the private or parochial school, would maintain that the public school without the aid of any other agencies is able to mold the foreigner into a tip-top American citizen. It is clear that other agencies must co-operate with the school, for else even now the number of unamerican Americans would be negligible. The American citizen is molded and developed not only by the school, but also by the church and by the family in the home and by all his other associations. If, therefore, there may be no isolation of a part from the rest in the case of a child attending school, the church which also assists in developing American character has no right of existence in its present form since there also some citizens isolate themselves from the rest. Even the family itself, as an institution, is according to this logic detrimental to American society. For is it not true that Germans, Hollanders, Italians, in their family life remain German or Holland or Italian for a considerable length of time, so that neither the parents nor the children can enter into full sympathy with American life and American ideals?

Merely to say, therefore, that isolation or separation of some American children from the

rest during the hours spent in the common school is in itself detrimental or harmful to American society will hardly be convincing. In this case as well as in some others such as those mentioned above, the possibility exists that isolation or separation need not necessarily be attended by harmful consequences, if, indeed, it be not beneficial and sometimes even necessary.

All children ought indeed to attend the public schools of the country if it were not possible for them otherwise to receive a good education,—an education in harmony with the principles of American government and with American ideals. If in the public schools only, the child could be given such an education as would fit him in every way to be a good American citizen and a lover of American institutions and ideals, then it might be admitted that no school but the public school is worthy of our support and patronage. But why need such be the case? Is it not possible for a private or parochial school, and therefore for the Christian School, to give its scholars an education that in point of Americanism and patriotism and citizenship will stand fully as high as the public school? If this possibility does exist, why then oppose the private school, or, to put it specifically, why oppose the Christian School, so long as it comes up to this standard? If it comes up to this standard, it is as worthy of your support as the public school. If it does not, compel those who do support it to bring it up to that standard.

Is the education given in the Christian School such that it meets the requirements of the state and of society? Is it such that Americanism and patriotism and good citizenship generally are instilled in the hearts of its pupils? Is the Christian school adapted to American society? Let us admit that the public school is all this and may therefore be taken as a standard. It will then be difficult to see whether or not the Christian School falls short in these respects.

First of all let it be noted that the language employed and taught in our Christian Schools is the same as that of the public school. The name "Dutch School" was probably correct twenty or twenty-five years ago, but no one thinks of applying it to our schools today but those who know nothing about them. It is true, of course, that in some schools the Holland language is still taught as a subject, but to characterize our schools for that reason as foreign or "Dutch" is as logical, or rather as illogical, as to speak of a college which gives a course in French or German as a French or German college. Our schools are no Dutch schools; they are American schools, and at least so far as their language is concerned they satisfy the demands of the state and are adapted to American society.

Also with respect to the character and amount of instruction given in our schools we are not inferior to the public school. All subjects required by the state to be taught in public schools are taught in our schools. Our diplomas are recognized by public and other high schools as readily as those awarded by the common schools of the state. Our graduates are received by business men and other employers on the same terms and with the same readiness as those of the public schools. Pupils transferred from our schools to the public schools have no trouble in doing any of the work required in the corresponding grades of those schools. It seems to me that in this respect, also, the American Christian School is not inferior to any other school, and is therefore adapted to American life and American society as well as any other.

It is also true that our schools are as diligent in the active inculcation of patriotism and loyalty to country and of good citizenship generally as are the public schools. Probably we can, because of our unique character as schools for *Christian* Instruction, teach these virtues even more efficiently than can any other school, because we have the opportunity of basing our teaching not only on the grounds at the disposal of the public school, but also on the higher and truer and firmer ground, the Word of God. Also in our schools the child is taught to love his country; he is taught to obey his country's laws, to serve his country with his time, his talents, and, if necessary, with his life. In the Great War it has been shown that in Red Cross Work, in Y.M.C.A. and Liberty Loan campaigns, our schools were the equals of any other schools. It is evident that also with respect to the inculcation of patriotism and of good citizenship, our schools cannot be considered to exercise a harmful influence, or to be in any way detrimental to the interests of the state or of society.

It is also sometimes asserted that the private or parochial school voluntarily or involuntarily inculcates a spirit of antagonism in its pupils against the public school and all that pertains to it. It is said, for example, that in the Christian School and in the Roman Catholic Parochial School the child is taught that the public school is a hotbed of wickedness and vice, and that one therefore should shun it and its adherents. So far as the Christian School is concerned, at any rate, we make bold to say that this charge is entirely devoid of truth. The Christian School does not need such arguments and

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teachings to justify its separate existence. The adherents of the free Christian School willingly give to the rights and opinions of those who differ from them the same consideration and respect as they desire from others for their own rights and opinions. We are not guilty of intolerance. Suspicions, antagonisms, animosities, ought never to be instilled in any school, and if they are, that school certainly has not the spirit of Christ in it and is therefore no Christian school. Every school should teach justice and charity toward every fellow-citizen, and should, therefore, in the interests of the whole, co-operate with every other school in every possible way.

It would seem, therefore, that, with respect to language, with respect to the character and amount of instruction given, with respect to the inculcation of good citizenship, our schools are not in any sense inferior to the public schools of the state, and that instead of instilling suspicions and antagonisms against the public schools, they co-operate with them as much as possible. In every respect, therefore, the Christian School is adapted to American life and American society as well as the public school. They only point of objection against our schools would seem to be that our children receive their instruction in separate buildings and from other instructors. For, with regard to every requirement of the state and of society our schools can give satisfaction. And, although our children are taught in our own buildings and by our own teachers, it can not be said that they are taught in a separatistic way, or at least not in such a way that when they leave our schools, or even while they attend them, they will feel themselves out of place in American society. How could they, so long as our schools are adapted to American life? Our schools are American schools, first, last, and always, and so long as they remain such it is impossible that they should exert a harmful influence on American society.

The sole objection against our schools is, therefore, that our schools are *separate* schools. And it is not without grave reasons that the supporters of the Christian School make the great sacrifices entailed by the establishment and maintenance of their own schools.

The parent who sends his children to the Christian School believes that his children are given to him by God, and that he is therefore responsible to God for the care he exercises for his children, and not least for the education he gives them, and all that pertains to their training for life. For that reason his constant endeavor is that the mind and understanding of the child be enriched and developed, that his character be molded, that he may be turned away from every influence that may be harmful to him or to his fellowman or that may dishonor his Creator;—that he may be so educated that he may be best able to fulfill all his duties as a citizen of his country and of his community and of the Kingdom of God.

But now, like a sensible man, this parent fully understands the important part in the shaping of the child's mind and character which the school is to have,—the school in which is spent so large a portion of the molding-time of childhood and youth. And he knows well that the life-molding of his child will be no easy task. He knows that all the time of childhood and youth will be none too long for its thorough and lasting accomplishment, and that a judicious employment of all the influences which surround the young mind and tell on the young heart will be none too much to secure it. It should be the aim of home, of church, of companionships, of school. "And in all these agencies there is one influence which he considers indispensable, which he wishes to be the habitual element of the child's life, since, on it, above all things else, must the molding of the child's character, the securing of his temporal and eternal welfare, depend—and that is the influence of Christianity, the guiding and helpful action of the Christian religion. He knows from history and experience that without the light of Christianity the human intellect is in darkness as to the all-important questions which well up from the depths of the human soul, as to the all-embracing vital problems which ever force themselves on the attention of mankind. He knows, too, that without the restraining, chastening, and elevating influences of Christianity, human morals never have been, and never can reasonably be expected to be, honorable to human nature, and conducive to either public or private welfare. He is deeply convinced that its principles and its helps can alone make the relations of man with man, and of man with God, what they ought to be."* Because he believes these things, it is his earnest desire that the mind and heart and the entire life of the child be permeated with and molded according to the principles which are so dear to him and which he considers indispensable for the proper training of his child.

Realizing the extreme importance of the work of the school, and its great difficulty as well, how can such a parent be satisfied with any school but one in which besides other educational influences the light and tone and spirit of Christianity can sweetly influence and mold the child all the time?

"If there were any necessary incompatibility

between secular instruction and Christian training in a school—if one of these advantages had to be secured at the cost of some sacrifice of the other—his principles as a Christian would be apt to make him decide that the sacrifice should be of the material and worldly, rather than of the spiritual and eternal. But he knows full well that there is no such necessary incompatibility, since God is the author both of the material and of the spiritual, both of the temporal and the eternal, and that, as the apostle writes, 'Piety is profitable unto all things, having the promise both of the life that is, and of that which is to come'. A school is not made a Christian school by taking up a great deal of time in doctrinal instruction or in devotional exercises which would otherwise be spent in acquiring secular knowledge. Some time, indeed, must be given to these, and it ought to be, and can be, made the most instructive and beneficial part of the school hours; but that time need not be, and should not be, so long as to be wearisome to the pupils or damaging to the other studies. What above all make it a Christian school are the moral atmosphere, the general tone, the surrounding objects, the character of the teachers, the constant endeavor, the loving tact, the gentle skill, by which the light and spirit of Christianity—its lessons for the head, for the heart, for the whole character—are made to pervade and to animate the whole school-life of the child, just as the good parent desires that they should animate his whole future life in all his manifold duties and relations as man and as citizen. This is the kind of a school with a parent, anxious as in duty bound to give his child as thorough a Christian training as possible, will naturally choose.

"But will he judge differently because, being a Christian, he is also an American? Let him suppose so who imagines that between being a good Christian and a good American there is any incompatibility"*, that it is impossible for a person to be both a good Christian and a good American. On the contrary it appears to be almost self-evident that a good Christian can not be other than a good citizen, a true American. The school, therefore, which has as its aim to give its pupils a Christian education, to fit them for Christian life, will, in the same measure as it succeeds in this aim, train them to be good citizens. The Americanism in the child is not weakened by the elements of Christianity in the school but is strengthened thereby. Just because the Christian School can base its teachings upon the Word of God and upon God's Law, it can emphasize much more strongly than other schools the duties of citizens towards their community and towards their government. The public school and every other school that takes a "neutral" attitude with respect to religion and Christianity can train for citizenship only by pointing out utilitarian reasons, by showing that crime and disloyalty are base and degrading and that he who makes himself guilty of disobedience of the law is punished, while the school that bases itself upon the principles of Christianity has the opportunity of not only bringing to bear the same reasons, but also of laying stress on the fact that all government and all authority rest upon the divine authority of God, and that God will therefore require an account also of the manner in which every citizen has discharged the duties of citizenship. It would seem that rather than having a harmful influence on society, the Christian School can be beneficial to society and to the state.

"But", we hear some one object, "in the private or parochial school the education and instruction is onesided and narrow, it gives no largeness of mind and broadness of view." A singular objection, indeed. Must we believe then, that a person with a vague and indefinite conception of God and Christ and Christianity is really broadminded, while a person who has a very specific and clear conception of these things is narrow and one-sided? Then the Bible itself is narrow, and one-sided, too. If that is not the case, why bring this as an objection against the Christian School, whose only difference from the public school is that it takes a different attitude on these questions? It does not by any means follow, because the Christian School has positive and definite teachings on the subject of religion, that for that reason the education given by it is narrow and one-sided.

"But", says the objector, "can you not be satisfied with the inculcation of Christian morality that exists in public schools today?" Is it not true, however, that again and again and almost continuously, for the last thirty or forty years, educators and others, men of every religion and men of none, have lamented that the inculcation of morality in the schools of the United States was not by any means what it ought to be? Surely you would not require the Christian parent to be satisfied with such a system, which even among its own adherents is found wanting. It would be charitable to excuse him at least until the present system can be made more efficacious. And that it can ever be entirely satisfactory is extremely

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* From a Speech by Rev. John J. Keane, at Nashville, Tenn. July, 1889.

improbable, for there is nothing in Christianity that is superfluous, the whole of it is needed as a basis for the Christian life, and no compromised or miniatured Christianity can suffice. The education and the development of the child's character are too important for the Christian parent to allow them to be accomplished without the application of that one indispensable force, the force of the Christian religion.

"But", it is still argued, "can you not see that a denominational system of schools can never suit a country such as ours, where a heterogeneous population needs one unifying system of education?" But, does it follow, that because on Sunday I attend another church than does my neighbor, that therefore I will meet him less cordially and trustfully on Monday in the way of business and in society? Certainly not, if his church and mine have any of the spirit of Christ in them. And just as I can meet with all good and decent fellow-citizens and co-operate with them in every activity that will redound to the benefit of the community and of society, so will my child, educated to perform the duties of Christian citizenship, be able and ready to co-operate with every one in every good work.

Says the objector again, "But if parents support the private schools they will fail to support the public schools, and therefore the stronger the private school becomes, the weaker the public school must become." Probably this danger is more imaginary than real, for no doubt the number of private schools will always be small compared with that of the public school. Even so, however, the supporters of the private school recognize the necessity of the public school, and will co-operate in every movement that will make those schools what they should be.

It would seem, therefore, that the Christian School, with respect to its language, with respect to the instruction therein given, with respect to the inculcation of good citizenship, is as thoroughly adapted to American society as are the public schools of the state, and can therefore in no way be harmful to American society. And since, in the inculcation of Christian morality, they can appeal to higher motives than can the non-Christian schools, it even appears that they can be an influence for good in our country. So long as they keep in the foreground their distinctively Christian character, and so long as they continue to adapt themselves to American society, will they be ever more able to produce generations of good Christian citizens of America, men and women who are loyal to the principles of Christianity and who are lovers of American institutions and of American ideals.

THE SURPLUS TEACHER

Chapel had just ended. The faculty of Omni Christian High began to file into their "Asylum" for the morning coffee break.

The faculty room featured a bulletin board right above the table with the coffee urn and cups. It was Steve Vanden Prikkel, biology teacher and basketball coach, who was the first to spot the neatly-typed letter on the bulletin board. After a brief glance, he exclaimed loudly, "Hey people! Did you see this letter? Get a load of this!"

The room quieted quickly as Steve read.

> Dear faculty friends:
>
> A few nights ago I was informed by the School Board that my services as math teacher would no longer be needed after this school year, due to an anticipated decline in enrollment. Since my family can't afford a permanent state of shock, I've tentatively decided to enter real estate. If this new field of endeavor should look promising, I'll start full-time this summer. This letter solicits your future business.
>
> Your faithful servant,
> Jack Nieuwsma

Silence in the room hung heavily for a few moments; then incredulous voices cut through from all directions: "Did *you* know about this." "You mean they just *fired* him?" "Why *Jack*?" "Who's going to be next?"

Gradually, after the initial hubbub, a dialogue developed. Steve Vanden Prikkel, looking at Bob Den Denker, exclaimed bitterly, "What kind of a Christian institution is this that can throw a guy out on the street just like that as soon as he's considered expendable! Is that what we're all about?"

"Now just a minute, Steve," interrupted Kurt Winters in his gravelly voice "I know we're all pretty upset about this, but let's not lose our perspective. I'm a Business teacher and I look at it this way. Business is business, and that's true of a Christian school as well as General Motors. When there's a surplus of labor, people have to be laid off. To keep unnecessary personnel is, business-wise, irresponsible. We wouldn't be very good stewards now, would we, if we spent the parents' precious money on teachers no longer needed to do the job of education. It's as simple as that." On that note of finality, Kurt Winters picked up his coffee cup and emptied it noisily.

"And would you sit there so comfortably, yakking at us with that phoney rationalization if you had gotten the ax instead of Jack?" Steve Vanden Prikkel challenged with undisguised anger in his voice.

But Kurt Winters didn't get a chance to reply. Bob Den Denker, history teacher, had stood up and walked to the window. Now he turned and addressed the group. "Look people, Kurt has a point and so does Steve. It is sad but true that our enrollment is declining. We can all appreciate the bind that puts the Board in. Besides, I don't think any of us would actually want to hang around longer than we're needed, even when we desperately need the job. But Steve is right too. What bothers me terribly about the whole thing is the way this new kind of problem is handled. A teacher of five years experience is suddenly notified that he'll no longer be needed. Just like that! He's out of a job, but that's just "tough luck." Well, I don't think that a Christian school community ought to operate exactly like G.M. I don't think that so sensitive and painful a problem should be handled so crassly and coldly. A community's concern for one of its members should not be limited to his economic contribution!"

"Yes, that bugs me too," Karl Den Meester chimed in, for once in agreement with Den Denker, "And I would also like to know upon what basis the Board selected Jack as the first casualty. Why Jack instead of Kurt or John Leff?"

The question hung unanswered as the school bell rang an insistent ending to the coffee break.

But no one moved.

"Say Bob," said Ginny Traansma suddenly as she turned to Den Denker, "you have the next period off, right?"

Bob nodded with a quizzical look on his face.

"Well," Ginny continued, "it's obvious now that we need a policy that addresses itself to the problem of teacher reduction. We've been talking for a long time about teacher evaluation procedures. It's time we get something down on paper that reflects both fairness and the spirit of Christian community. Could you give it a try during the next period so we have something to talk from during noon hour?"

Other faculty chimed in affirmatively as they began to file out of the Asylum door now. When the last one had left, Bob Den Denker heaved a deep sigh, took a notebook out of his briefcase, placed it before him on the table, and poured himself another cup of black coffee. After a few moments of deliberation, he began his assigned task.

When the teachers re-entered their Asylum during the noon hour, they quickly spotted Den Denker's contribution neatly tacked on the bulletin board right next to Jack Nieuwsma's letter. What they read was this:

A Tentative Proposal for an
Evaluation and Dismissal Policy

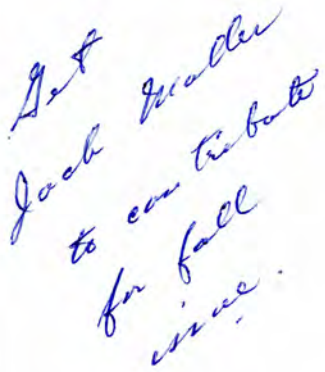
We propose that all teachers and administrative personnel be evaluated on a regular basis, and that such evaluation include the judgment of the teacher's peers, of his department chairman and/or principal, of his students, of the parents, and of himself. (Criteria checklists should be developed for this purpose as soon as possible.)

We further propose that the School Board be closely guided by the evaluation data when it becomes necessary to consider a teacher's dismissal or rehiring. We propose that the Board also include in its consideration such factors as a teacher's contribution to the school in the role of a club sponsor, or coach, or curriculum leader, his financial status, and his potential for future employment.

We also propose that in the event it becomes necessary to deny a teacher reappointment, the Board do so in a spirit of Christian love and concern. Such a spirit might be expressed tangibly in personal conferences with the teacher, in the seeking and possible procurement of other employment for the teacher, in offering financial assistance when needed. Indeed, we would suggest that it is incumbent upon all of us as members of a Christian community to share each other's burden, that the plight of one become the prayerful and active concern of us all: Board, parents, and faculty.

Values and Social Action in Christian Education are an Obligatory Risk

by Ronald VanderKooi*



After speaking to a group of high school students at a Sunday evening meeting recently, I was approached by an enthusiastic and anxious young man. I had presented some information from my studies of homeless people in American cities and urged the audience to positive action. There response showed that they did not need to be "sold," but that in their youth they were frustrated. And the young man, who saw the practical challenge so clearly, was being inhibited by adults around him. To be more specific the Christian High which he attended, because of parental pressure, was backing off from such positive social involvements as the tutoring of young black children.

If Christian schools are fulfilling their chief stated purpose, they are instilling essential values in youth. They were not established primarily to protect our youth from outside exposure or to encourage provincialism. They were certainly not begun as racist efforts to avoid public school integration as were the private "seg" schools of the South (which bus students much further than does interracial school "bussing"). Neither were they started to provide an exclusive, private school atmosphere of upper or upper-middle class snobbery. Admittedly all of these have played a part in our imperfect motivations in Christian education, and at times loom as almost insurmountable. At times the bits and pieces of data engender a very cynical attitude toward Christian education. We see little integration of social classes there and tragically little racial integration. One must wonder about the values we espouse when we see so little action following them. But values are the heart of the matter. And if we are to have faith in the educational process, then we must believe that the repeated profession of our values, with some corresponding action, is our first obligation.

Education in its broadest sense is socialization, preparing young people in a variety of ways for adult life, whether it is to be enlightened or stifled, open or closed-minded, culturally-expanded or isolationist. In a narrower sense education is propagandistic in the negative meaning, selling the existing, static way of life within the subculture with blanket criticism for other ways of life.

To me the propagandistic approach is the easier, at least for a while. Humans, and particularly young ones, are susceptible to very narrow forms of enculturation, and this is especially easy when few questions are asked. There are fixed explanations available for a variety of questions about life that come up naturally, and there are standard put-downs for other answers to the same questions.

But in a world where subcultural isolation is becoming quite impossible due to the mass media, but more so to the heterogeneity within many American institutions, the propagandistic approach has lost much of its credibility. In the long run a more enlightened socialization is necessary. The Christian school movement has never claimed to be isolationist, and it has claimed both to be "in the world" and an asset there. Its leaders have wished to be a "salt of the world" and a "candle . . . not hidden under a bushel."

But to be objective we must give some thought

*This column is contributed by the members of the Sociology Department, Calvin College.

to what the reputation of the Christian schools is especially in the local communities in which they exist. So often we are completely involved in our own subcommunities, and the kind of secondary relationships we have with outsiders do not lend themselves to much more than the most polite and bland commentary. Christian schools do receive attention in the local media but in most cases it is in the form of public announcement material or in sports. In the announcement of graduations, scholarships, concerts and the like, the Christian school is taken as a stable part of the larger community, and worthy of support in public print and on the airwaves. On the sports pages, the competition between the Christian school and others is made explicit and, even if games are reported objectively, the partisan response of fans is well known.

Since graduating from Calvin College, I have had the opportunity to interact a good deal with "outsiders" (nonChristian school people) in university and urban subcommunities within Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids and Chicago. Having in my own youth heard the common cliche that Christian schools were academically superior, I later experienced the same "cultural shock" of which a Calvin teacher spoke concerning his own entrance into graduate school. Professors and students there were more knowledgeable than we expected about issues we considered our own including the doctrine of Calvinism and what they accurately insisted on calling the Dutch Reformed Church. They had some critical insights about the effect of our schools as well as some negative experiences to relate. One professor, thinking that the Christian school would be useful to his daughter who was not doing well in a public school, was discouraged from applying by the staff, due to his rather liberal Christian confession.

Living for four years in the downtown area of Chicago, our only exposure to Christian schools, other than through Christian school friends, was in the media treatment of a strong basketball team and in the tragic press coverage of our failure to integrate in Cicero. Now much better news comes to us as insiders from Roseland where our school survives even after all our churches have left. (In 1972, 203 of 222 students were black.) Unfortunately few Chicagoans hear about this experiment or similar programs in several Catholic and other parochial schools.

On the other hand it is fairly well known that Christian schools do graduate a good proportion of conscientious, effective citizens who do well in higher education and in various professions. Somehow their backgrounds, including primarily their homes, but also their churches and schools, have contributed to the kind of personality formation and value-orientation that yields responsibility and personal contribution to the system rather than exploitation. An example of this is the reputation Calvin College has had for many years of providing good candidates to graduate schools of social work and to that profession in the several regions of the country where we live.

The essence is that we provide a background of values that are useful, and increasingly more essential, in American society. A solid background providing a Christian world-view seems to instill important values in many students. But at this time of national polarization and unrest, when our contributions are most needed, we seem to be providing less. We have been divided by the same issues that divide the larger society including political conflicts and the aspirations of materialistic affluence. We have perhaps become cynical and opportunistic. Or perhaps there is simply more demand that we examine ourselves today, being no longer able to pronounce our abstract values without being tested, without being required to be relevant to social problems.

Some Comparative Evidence:

Recently two students of mine, James Leunk and David Klooster, did a study of "Student Racial Attitudes" in three Grand Rapids high schools. Their survey research revealed some pointed differences in attitudes among 1) two schools with respective major and limited racial integration, Public and Catholic Central, and 2) all-white Christian Central. All three schools have in recent years been "directly affected by racial tensions in Grand Rapids." But Christian is most distinctly placed in the black ghetto (and in that sense has the most community opportunity). About ten percent of each student population in a cross-section of "required" courses were sampled.

The conscience of Christian school students and their acceptance of the sin and guilt of all men is seemingly demonstrated in their significantly higher agreement with the statement, "It has been said that white racism is essentially responsible for the conditions in which blacks live in American cities."

	Christian	Catholic	Public
Agree	49	35	28
Disagree	35	46	49
No opinion	10	9	9
Other or no response	6	10	14
	100%	100%	100%

Continued On Next Page

In response to a statement that "Blacks in this community are making too much progress in getting the things they want," only seven percent of Christian students agreed, while 23 percent of Catholic's did (perhaps due to being more working class and also threatened by the five to ten percent black admission there).

In comparison to the liberal attitudes which the above data suggest for Christian schools, the response to one other statement suggests a condescension and implicit paternalism. When asked, "Which race is more civilized, blacks or whites?", the surprising response showed Christian students to be most self-assured.

	Christian	Catholic	Public
Blacks	3	4	7
Whites	43	33	28
Equal	35	46	44
No opinion or response	19	17	21
	100%	100%	100%

The data in the remainder of their study are consistent with the highlights above. Christian school students expressed attitudes of responsibility and guilt for the status of blacks, but they also expressed a feeling of definite superiority. While they might feel an obligation to "do something," that action might very well consist of attempts to make blacks and other minority people more like ourselves. That common sense desire to change those people who are encountering social problems, rather than the structures that are basic to problems, results in misunderstood efforts and alienation.

Conclusions:

What is needed, in addition to the value-providing philosophical background which we receive, is experience in interaction with the people we are responsible to help. We must understand them before we apply our "answers" to their problems. And we must start early in life, for postponing activities to adulthood means that we never get in the habit. The social distance between us and others becomes crystalized through inaction.

There are risks in becoming involved in those sections of society where there are severe social problems, but they are not great for those who are careful and well-directed. It is doubtless safer to stay in our own homes, churches and schools, but the command is to, "Go ye into all the world. . . ." And the principle is that, "he that would save his own life will lose it." We lose so much by not trying, and the fears and stereotypes of other groups of people are greatest among those who are most removed from them. We become more blandly middleclass in our lifestyles even while remaining ethnically isolated. To consolidate the Christian background we have and take it, in word and deed, into those parts of society which are most in need and most receptive is, for those who take Christian education seriously, the great opportunity and the obligatory risk. The real values of Christian love and charity can be obvious to those who observe our activities in the world outside.

READER RESPONSE

Christian and Public Schools are Significantly Different

By Ken Bootsma*

An article entitled "Christian and Public Schools ARE NOT significantly Different" did not appear to agree with the stated general purpose of the Journal, which is "to foster the continuing improvement of educational theory and practice in Christian schools" In this article, Dr. Henry Holstege quoted repeatedly from Dr. Donald Bouma's book, *Kids and Cops,*[1] and arrived at the following conclusion:

> Hence once more an attempt at comparing Christian School and public school children does not result in the statistically significant differences that a supporter of the Christian School system would hope to find.

*Mr. Bootsma, Ed.d., Western Michigan University, is Superintendent of the Jenison, Michigan Christian Schools.

1Bouma, Donald, *Kids and Cops,* Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969.

It is extremely unfortunate that we were exposed to such weak research. A review of the book, which appeared in a 1971 issue of the *American Sociological Review* (by Brian Vargus, University of Pittsburgh, pp. 367-8), indicated that:

> "Overall, the continuing pattern of "methodological disasters" renders the results uninterpretable and the book suspect. And "in one spot, the book 'writes' its own epitaph. Discussing police-community relations, Bouma writes: 'Simplistic stereotyping illumines nothing and serves only the purpose of demagoguery.' "

A little story may be helpful in understanding *statistically significant relationships or differences,* which may be due to a cause-and effect relationship, or just a simple relationship. Here it is:

> Once upon a time, a large-scale study was con-d u c t e d to determine the relationship between the number of deaths due to drowning and ice cream consumption. The data was gathered by a group of behavioral scientists at a midwestern university from police files and the observable behavior of kids. After performing a very detailed statistical analysis of the data collected, it was found that there was a direct relationship between the two variables. In other words, as ice cream consumption increased, so did the number of drownings.

Undoubtedly, you realize that such a relationship could exist, but to think there is a cause-and-effect relationship seems absurd—each increased because of weather conditions! Now, hopefully, your reaction to this little story was the same for the above mentioned "research." The following questions appear appropriate when attempting to analyze Bouma's study and the results reported by Holstege.

1. *What was the purpose of the study?* According to the introductory chapter, it was to gain some insight and information about police-community relations and particularly police-youth relations in the inner city. However, as indicated in the *ASR* article, "the rest of the book demonstrates that the author's goals are rarely achieved."

2. *Was there an attempt made to discredit Christian schools?* This is not apparent; however, the statistical analysis is too simple and incomplete to even make it possible for the reader to know the character of composition of the subject population, thereby yielding questionable data and results.

3. *Were appropriate statistical analysis utilized?* Bouma stated that the variables studied had been determined through "detailed statistical analysis." Holstege indicated that "Bouma unfortunately does not present the type of correlational analysis that would be needed to indicate the relative importance of all of these variables."

Vargus, in the article which appeared in the *American Sociological Review* stated the following:

> A few of the more glaring errors are evident in the reports of simple percentage distributions with no indication of the total number of cases involved, the omission of all but the most simple of cross-tabulations, and lengthy discussion of spurious relationships or relationships whose significance is unclear. . . The data clearly demanded more complex techniques of analysis such as regression analysis.

In summary, "the promise of the study is unfulfilled due to inadequate attention to basic issues in the study design and to shoddy data analysis" (Vargus, *ASR,* 1971). However, to end on a more positive note concerning Christian education as compared to public education, the following should be noted.

Many goals and values of the public systems, with their humanistic philosophy, are similar to those of the Christian schools: the students and faculties of both are creatures of God and both share in the basic demands of humanity. However, the humanists reject what we believe to be the highest fulfillment of the members of Christ's Kingdom, that of living the law and love of our God. In the belief system expressed by Christian teachers in Christian schools, it is understood that the *whole person* (the intellectual, physical, and emotional) is capable of being renewed in Christ, completely! Scientific investigation is incapable of proving the fundamentals upon which Christian education stands—the existence of God, the relationship between God and man, Christ's birth and resurrection, and the proof that by faith we will someday be with Him. Empirical research is important for improving our understanding of how children learn, our teaching methods, our understanding of the teaching-learning processes, and depends upon the cognitive ability of the investigator. These are significant, but so is the development of each child's affective domain—fruits of the spirit, gifts of God, and the immeasureable results of our direct relationship with God, and we had better be "significantly different."

Response To Response

I was at first elated when I began reading Dr. Bootsma's letter; however his ending left me with a tremendous feeling of disillusionment.

Dr. Bootsma attacks Bouma's book by using Brian Vargus's vitriolic book review in *The American Sociological Review.* At my first reading of the book review two years ago my opinion was, and still is, that Vargus's comments are not only excessive, but border on being a personal vendetta against Bouma. However, as I stated in my report, and as Bootsma quotes me in his letter, I do not believe Bouma's book to be methodologically strong, and certainly not deserving of any panegyric. Bouma, though dealing with a study of police-youth relations and presenting data comparing Christian and public schools, does not indicate significant differences between the attitudes of Christian and public school students. Since Bouma was dealing with matters about which the Christian community has apologetics: the belief in the sovereignty of God over the political institution, the belief that the political institution must be responsible for the rewarding of those that do good and the punishing of those that do evil, the belief in the citizenry obeying those in authority over them, I thought that the research would indeed show a significant difference between Christian and public school children. It did not. Therefore my conclusion:

> Hence once more an attempt at comparing Christian School and public school children does not result in the significant differences that a supporter of the Christian School system would hope to find.

However, in regard to all of this Dr. Bootsma has a right to disagree. I was elated about this part of his letter. It is the type of dialogue that I believe that we should be having: a dialogue that deals with the question of how does one empirically determine the efficacy of Christian education. Bootsma utterly misinterprets my article as being negative, because it reports no positive findings of differences between Christian and public school children. Quite the contrary, I have been hoping that it would stimulate Christian school administrators, such as Bootsma, to do research which would in fact demonstrate the differences between Christian and public school students. In regard to this point all of us could have a continuing discussion about methodology, a discussion that I believe to be long overdue. It is a discussion in which we would at times of course disagree, but which would prove to be fruitful, as hopefully it would clarify issues and lead to greater understanding. Interestingly, this is not Bootsma's intent at all, and his last paragraph indicates what his real intentions are in regard to the above discussion.

I was very disillusioned with that last paragraph. Let me start by stating that I agree with Dr. Bootsma that we cannot empirically prove the existence of God, the miraculous birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that salvation comes through belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Does anyone, I wonder, believe those "fundamentals upon which Christian education stands" to be scientifically verifiable propositions? Bootsma makes a fundamental error here. He confuses the fundamentals upon which Christian education stands with my emphasis on the end product of that education. But then later in that paragraph he goes further when he concludes by stating that the final results of that education cannot be verified either. I am amazed that any Christian School administrator would make any such assertion, and wonder if Bootsma realizes where his logic takes him. Attitudes, values, and behavioral patterns are measurable. However, Bootsma states that one cannot measure the results of Christian education. The results, he states, are "immeasurable." Therefore, given his logic, the Christian school does not produce students who are significantly different in attitudes, values, and behavioral patterns from students in the secular-humanistic public schools. Let us all hope and pray that he is wrong. One final *obiter dicta.* Dr. Bootsma's little illustration about ice cream consumption and drowning, as I assume he knows (?), does not really do much to clarify the quarrel about multiple and partial correlations in Bouma's book. That illustration might aid some of you teaching at the 6th or 7th grade level in explaining the difference between correlations and cause and effect. I have personally always insisted that the high positive correlation between the number of arms and the number of legs in the human population clearly proves that legs cause arms.

Henry Holstege

Theory... Administration... Practice

By Warren Otte*

Undoubtedly, administration is a very demanding job. It has been this way from the very first time that a group of people became organized to serve a particular purpose. As society has become more complex, there has been an increasing need for more organizations. The only purpose for organizations is to meet a need that people, individually, can no longer provide. Typically, the purpose of a particular organization can be discovered by reading its stated goals and objectives.

Administrators are charged with the responsibility of keeping organizations in a reasonable state of balance (or, at least, controlled imbalance) so that the organization can meet its defined goals. Because organizations are made up of human beings (in a school—teachers, parents, janitors, etc.) who have personal goals that may or may not be in agreement with the goals of the organization, the chances for conflict within an organization are inevitable.

Schools are organizations whose purpose is the education of children. If you have ever been involved in writing goals for your school, you are well aware of the conflict that develops when people have personal goals that differ from stated organizational goals—*and they always will.* This "difference in opinion" is positive if the ultimate resolution of conflict results in a better school. Generally, the goals of the organization must always be placed above the goals of individuals. However, if the "difference in opinion" results in total chaos within the organization, the conflict is negative. There are only a few cases in which revolution can be justified. In any event, a school without goals doesn't know what direction it should be going, or in fact, whether it really is going any place. It brings to memory an excerpt from *Alice in Wonderland.*

"Cheshire Puss, "she began . . . "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to go to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where—" said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go." said the Cat.

" . . . so long as I get *somewhere,*" Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, You're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

It has been stated that there is nothing more practical than a good theory. There is plenty of evidence that it is sound organizational theory to establish organizational goals. The practical aspect of writing goals, although not easy, is necessary for the progress of schools. The formulation of goals should involve *all* elements of the organization (teachers, parents, students, janitors, etc.). This places the administrator in a key position. It is not his job to define the goals (it is not his school), but rather, to insure that a legitimate process is used in writing goals for the school in which he happens to be the administrator.

This article has described just one small part of organizational theory. If you consider additional factors such as leadership, power, authority, influence, formal and informal communication, motivation, group theory, . . . etc., there is a great deal of material which has been written to assist an administrator as he works within his own organization. Reading available information will also assist him in defining his role within the organization.

I began this article by stating that administration is a very difficult job. In my opinion, there are two major factors that cause us to face so many difficult situations. The first weakness most of us have is a lack of knowledge of what it means to be an administrator. A second, but just as important factor, is our own personal weaknesses in dealing with people. (The writer includes himself in both categories.) In any case, we can consider ourselves fortunate that we *can improve* as administrators if we really want to. If we aren't interested in becoming better administrators, we should, in honesty, and for the good of society, remove ourselves from our administrative positions.

This continuing column is under the editorship of Warren Otte, Assistant Principal of Sylvan Christian school of Grand Rapids, Michigan. In this issue he mounts the podium himself.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS— In The Shadow Of Secular Education

by Ronald Johnson*

"Its high time," a term used by country folks, stresses the point, "You better quit fooling around and get on with the job."

Christians have for several years lamented the fact that secular schools have not adequately prepared children to sustain America's Christian-based heritage. And some fundamental churches have recently stepped out to establish their own schools.

But observation of teaching methods and curricula employed by many church-controlled schools reveals they are in practice "fooling around" with education. This is in part due to a lack of pastoral understanding of the educational process and a lack of sufficiently prepared Christian educators who are able to establish instructional programs based on Biblical admonitions rather than on secular reasoning.

Early colonial schools were founded by Christians whose purpose was to prepare young men for the Gospel ministry. But those once-Gospel institutions, and most of today's Christian schools, are merely encounter mills where youngsters dabble in books for several years while they run a gamut of experiences arranged by secular educators.

Alfred North Whitehead, once Harvard University's most influential thinker, made an interesting statement in his book, *THE AIMS OF EDUCATION:* "My main position is that the dominant role of education in its beginning and at its end is freedom." His point is sound and appealing to Christians. John Dewey, referred to as the father of progressive education, suggested we should be "concerned about the whole child." That, too, sounds reasonable, almost Biblical. Another noted educator philosopher, Robert Hutchins, said, " . . . The universities, instead of leading us through the chaos of the modern world, mirror its confusion." He recommended that we, " . . . must reconstruct education directing it to virtue and intelligence . . . ."

Who, seemingly, could argue these apparently valid points by rational, intelligent men?

The Christian educator can and should. Why?

Because there is a more basic issue in question than the intelligence, compassion, or rationality of the theories expounded by these men and others who designed the secular educational mirror which reflects their own image.

The issue is Christ's direction . . . or perhaps to be more specific I should say, the issue is the lack of Christ's direction.

For many years Christian institutions have allowed the didactic reasoning and philosophy of such men as Dewey, Hutchins, and Whitehead to set the goals and establish the methods for educating our youth. Their techniques are employed daily in Christian schools, almost universally accepted as being evidence of superior thinking.

Yet neither Dewey, Hutchins, nor Whitehead sought the counsel of Christ in formulating their approaches to education. We have supplanted Christ-believing, Bible-teaching educators with secular-minded humanitarians, and we have done so willingly. We have given over our schools to teaching in the way of man, apparently ignoring that we are admonished to bring up our children in the way of Christ. For example. A sophomore transferred to Gideon from another Christian

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school. He had no transcript. Questioning revealed he had had *no organized Bible* instruction, no science, and skipped Freshman English because the teacher supposedly didn't have time to prepare. Another Christian school uses a well-known science textbook series that is permeated with evolution, and the school has no planned Biblical counterbalance. A western church-school has its pastor as the Bible teacher, but "he is never around for class." In untold number of schools Christian children are told "Pupils, open your books to page 291; read through page 304 and answer the questions at the end of the chapter." This procedure is followed in history, science, language, literature—and in almost every Christian school.

How absurd! Those texts rest on foundations laid by Dewey, Hutchins, Whitehead, and others whose rejection of Christian principles is printed on every page!

And the other extreme. A Christian teacher suggested that pupils be put on an individualized instruction program for history, English and literature, utilizing Christian material whenever possible. Was she permitted? "No!" said the pastor-director, "That individualized instruction stuff is progressive. Let's just stick to the good-old traditional way." What is good about Christians sticking to traditional programs composed of secular educational materials? I am afraid that pastor, and so many like him, are guilty of practicing mis-education. Sound learning disciplines are un-tapped, unused and foreign to born-again youth because their schools have fallen into a national habit of following the secular educator.

It's high time we changed. Government textbooks, a church building, a few bits and pieces of Bible verses and prayer do not constitute a Christian School.

I steadfastly maintain we must accurately and adequately assess all our educational programs to determine whether or not they are sufficiently sound practices for preparing our youth in the way Christ would have them go. Pastors and Christian educators must step from the shadows of the world's pedantic crowd and decide what ought to be taught and how that learning should take place.

Education must become Christian through and through . . . in approach, techniques, and content.

Projects? Projects! Projects!!!

By Charles Witters, Jr.*

If you don't just skim over or bypass this testimonial on behalf of projects—you may obtain ideas or become sold on the idea of having your class work on these projects, as I was when my fourth and fifth grade classes (I have both in the same room) made a book about the Great South Bay. A project is simply a method or means of studying a certain subject, and applying accumulated knowledge to a visual medium.

There are good and bad aspects in using projects as a method of study. Look at some negative aspects. (As you read you will readily see that these can be overcome and not be negative at all.) The first is that the teacher must spend time planning broadly and preparing for the execution of each day's work. A second is that other study time must be given up in order to have time each day to work on the project. A third is that enthusiasm must be kept high and continuous throughout the duration of the project. But if the project is relevant to class understanding and plans are implemented, enthusiasm will be no problem!

There are also many good aspects of working with projects, which outweigh and outnumber any negative ones. First, projects help unify the class in their thinking, end production, and thought. Instead of competing individually, as is done in some much other work, the child is now working together with his peers and is part of a team.

Secondly, you can be pouring many subject

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*Mr. Witters is a teacher at West Sayville, New York, Christian School.

areas into one project, and the students don't feel they are doing an individual subject. For the project "The Great South Bay," we incorporated language arts (spelling, penmanship, language arts skills: writing poems, stories, interviews), art (all pictures were hand-drawn, except the ones taken by camera), science (articles were written on tides, weathering, the growth of the various fish in the bay), social studies, organization and talking with others for interviews.

Thirdly, by using a project, the students can usually see what they have learned and can put this to practice. Abstract learning is one thing, but putting it into physical, visual action is another.

Fourthly, you can give each child a sense of achievement by having him do something that he likes and is capable of. This gives the child who does not apply himself in class a new confidence and a new outlook, because he is now needed and respected for his contribution. This resulting enthusiasm often motivates him to do better in his classwork.

Fifthly, a well-done project can also lead to a feeling of group success and achievement because the "impossible goal" has been reached. Invite other grades, schools, or parents to look at the finished work.

You might ask, how do I do this mammoth undertaking of an all-class project. These are the simple steps I followed.

–GIVE THE IDEA! You must be the catalyst: present the idea, explain possibilities, suggest details.

–FORM COMMITTEES: Let the students choose the committee on which they would like to work, or gear those with special talents to those committees where you know they can best make a contribution. Explain the function of each committee and what is expected of it.

–RESEARCH: Have each member of each committee research the area he or she is to work on. Let them find the books and begin the work. You must *guide* the work. Your main job is to give advice, encouragement, and help.

–EVALUATE WORK: As an on-going helper, constantly check and re-check the work, and keep in mind the format of the project.

HANG LOOSE FOR ANYTHING!!

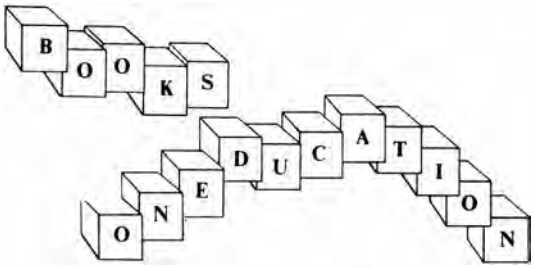
We have used the following in our class projects:

1. A STORE set up in the classroom. The children build it with their hands, learn to label and price items, learn the business of selling and making change.
2. A BOOK can involve any subject. The students can do all the research, writing, art, and organization.
3. A PLAY can involve any subject.
4. WRITTEN REPORTS
5. A FILM is expensive, but the class can write the script, do the make-up, and act in it.
6. A CLASSROOM FINE ARTS FESTIVAL can use entries in the arts-penmanship, reciting poems and stories, writing original poems and stories, singing, playing instruments, art work (colors, black and white), wood craft, knitting, sewing, and baking.

Don't sell the students short. Your responsibility as a teacher is to teach and to make learning as enjoyable as possible. Use of projects is one way I have found to help make learning enjoyable and lasting.

Math - Science

RICHARD VANDER LAAN
Editor



BOOK REVIEW

Science Teaching: A Christian Approach, by Robert J. Ream, Nutley, N.J. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 130 pp., $2.50

Reviewed by Harry Cook, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois.

Putting "Science" and "Christian" into one title brings all kinds of knotty problems to mind. One of these is science teaching. Somehow, most people feel that Christian teaching is more difficult in the sciences than it is in any of the other subjects. One reason for this is that the sciences are thought to be so exact and mathematical. Aren't scientific results the same for everyone? From this it is often concluded that science and faith each have their own areas: the areas of facts and values.

But, if we attempt to teach other areas Christianly, may science be an exception? Most people in the Christian schools feel that this is not the case. A common compromise, and it is a compromise, is to say that science and faith *touch* each other. Therefore, the Christian teacher and Christian scientist are called to reverence. They are lucky to be able to teach children about the handiwork of the Creator! While praise of the Creator is laudable of course, this compromise maintains the autonomy of science. Answers to basic questions such as these are not forthcoming: What is science, its purpose and value? What are facts? How does scientific knowledge grow? What makes science possible? What is the relationship between the various branches of science? As soon as we attempt to answer these questions in an intelligent way, we find that there is more to science than "facts."

That science is thought to be a difficult area is noticeable in some of the teachers rooms and classrooms in our schools. "Don't press the science teacher too hard; it is, after all, such a difficult area to be truly distinctive in." So the educational committee tries to get a good man, hopes he does a good job, and has to leave it at that.

However, the situation is not as bleak as all that! While the above comments may be true, it is also noticeable that there is increased interest in curriculum development in the sciences. Some of the resulting studies go right to the classroom, but accept the distinction between facts and values and thus lose some of their impact and potential. Others start with a study of the history of western civilization and philosophy, but don't quite make it to the classroom.

All this serves as an introduction to the book under review. Ream has done us a service. Each chapter starts with an evaluation of a problem such as the role of scriptures in science, the problem of causality, or the nature of physical laws. The chapter ends with an assessment of what this evaluation means for the teacher. Thus, Ream attempts to take us all the way from theory into the classroom, and in several cases he makes it successfully.

I wonder whether Ream uses the words paradigm and model a little too loosely and interchangeably. Model, to most people who use the word, means more than conceptual framework; it also implies that there is no need for a scientific theory (the model) to reflect reality. Progress is all that is required of a scientific model. Thus, the scientist's ordering, creating reason is emphasized, but the creating and upholding laws of God are neglected. Ream is aware of this problem, and tries to get around it, unsuccessfully, I feel. I have other reservations about the way Ream uses T.S. Kuhn's concept of paradigm. More important than the use of these words is that Ream does stress the dangers of accepting the rationalistic and pragmatistic tendencies evident in science today. So, ultimately there can be little disagreement on the use of these concepts.

More could be said about the book, of course. Some sections are more successful than others. I found chapters one to six the best. Ream writes well and has the sympathy of the reader (at least he had mine) so that even in those chapters where the applications are not as strong as they might be, one finds himself pulling for the writer, rather than being turned off by his efforts. After all, this is not just Ream's problem. It is a good book, therefore, to start a discussion. The Christian teacher today cannot ignore the problematics with which it attempts to deal. Get a copy!

Environmental Concern *YOUR BUSINESS*

by Harlan Kredit*

Earth Day, 1970 is only a memory now. Doomsday films don't arouse us much anymore. Neither do shock pictures of oil spills, dead fish, garbage, littering, and dirty air. TV documentaries on the clubbing of baby hair seals or the rape of strip mining are turned off in favor of *Flip Wilson* and *Love American Style.* Undoubtedly, this is happening all over America now and after all what difference does it make? Won't the ecoconcern of the past three years be just another fad of Americans similar to their temporary fascination with Apollo shots, or the Beatles, or Hula Hoops? If the answer to the last question is yes, will it occur partially because of *your* stance in *your* classroom? What have you done in this past week to demonstrate to your students that you really care about God's earth? Will you be remembered by your students five or ten years from now as someone who pricked their conscience as a Christian science teacher can, and who stimulated them to carefully and objectively consider their role in God's plan for His planet,—or as one who showed a total lack of interest in environmental issues?

As one can readily sense by now, I believe strongly that our concern is crucially important in order that many of the above statements do not become fact. I would like to attempt to justify this contention.

The ecology movement has suffered from verbal overkill on both sides of the various issues and thus it has become very difficult to separate fact from distortion. A knowledgeable science teacher can greatly increase the ability of his students to objectively analyze the contradictory claims of, for example, detergent manufacturers and some aquatic ecologists. We still are being exposed to TV specials of various kinds but not nearly as often as several years ago. Does this mean that most environmental problems have been solved or that TV executives have realized that the interest of the viewing audience has shifted to other areas? Science teachers should be well aware that the latter choice is probably the correct one. We know that little actual progress has been made despite the millions of words spoken and the claims of major industries and politicians; and it is therefore up to us to define carefully, scientifically, and with a Christian perspective the exact nature of the problem and the massive inertia to resist change. We must explode the myth that environmental problems exist largely because of "they" out there; and instead relate such problems specifically to our own personal life style with its requirements for recreational vehicles, electric tooth brushes, plastic convenience items, etc.

As Christian science educators with factual information about the life span of discarded throwaways we can ask questions about whether succeeding generations will curse us for embracing the "out of sight, out of mind" syndrome. At this point a Christian teacher has a unique contribution

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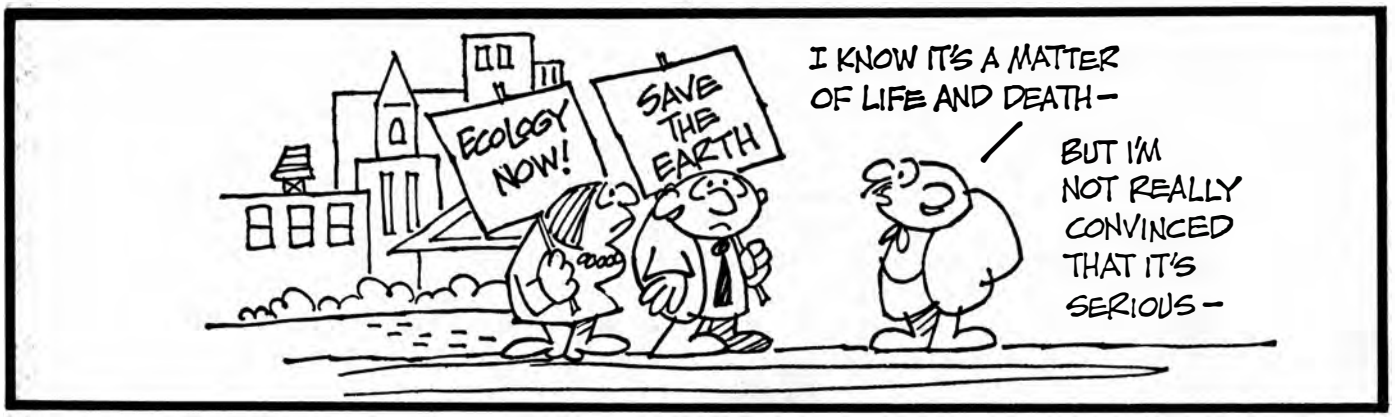
Harlan Kredit, A.B. Calvin College, M.T.S. College of William and Mary, is a biology teacher at Unity Christian High, Hudsonville, Michigan.



to make—most environmentalists preach the doctrine of resource management because of its effect on them personally or their descendants. A Christian certainly should be concerned about polluting his neighbor's air because of the commandment to love his neighbor, but in addition he recognizes that it is God's creation that is being defaced and destroyed. I can think of no better reason on which to base an ethic of environmental concern.

There is another basic issue at stake; science and scientists have lost much of their glamor image of the sixties. Today they are widely being accused of being chiefly responsible for many of our global ills. This is just another method of misplacing the blame and an opportunity for a science teacher to demonstrate that it is society who is really determining what science should do. Witness the recent ending of the Apollo flights in favor of solving our problems at home. The nature of science with its limitations should be discussed in depth in our classrooms. Our students should see the connection between our demand for luxury goods, the employment of scientists and technologists, and the environmental degradation which often accompanies the production of these goods.

Though there are many demands on our time in our classrooms, we are hopefully all trying to make our teaching "relevant" to the important issues of today. How many topics are of more relevance than population pressures with its moral overtones, or mass transit, or perhaps our present national energy policy or lack of one. A few months after high school graduation we expect our former students to vote intelligently on many important issues, bond proposals, initiatives, and propositions—isn't it our sober responsibility to attempt to develop an objective perspective on environmental issues? Certainly it is preferable to develop that perspective in the context of a Christian classroom where our stewardship is emphasized rather than from TV or the daily newspaper.

There are probably as many different teaching techniques as teachers involved, but the key to all of them is whether the teacher is honestly concerned himself. Many excellent textbooks, resource materials, paper backs, and audiovisual materials have been produced recently, but they all depend on a committed Christian teacher.

One day all of us will be asked to account for our past and I can't help wonder if our Creator will judge us by a slightly higher standard; for if we fail to develop a truly Christian perspective on our environment, we have done a disservice both to our students and our God.

Language Arts

DON CORAY, *Editor*

Beyond All This Fiddle

by Don Coray*

One could . . . 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 exclusively, 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 demonstrated 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. . . .*
—Richard R. Tiemersma, CEJ *(Nov., 1972), p. 27*

I, for one, welcome Professor Tiemersma's admirable polemic advocating "the genre approach to literature." I suspect, however, that in seeking to revivify this genre batting-style on the high-school diamond, he and I have at least two strikes on us when we come to the plate. But no matter; let the grandstand heckle. Professor Tiemersma (till Spiro Agnew, at least) has been in the past a chronic defender of lost causes, and I draw fresh inspiration from his Christian courage as well as from his Aristotelian judiciousness. In the forthcoming numbers of this journal, let us explore the "approach problems" as we see them. *CEJ* invites contributions concerning these, as other, issues.

But here, a related can of worms. The high-school English department in which I work tries to integrate the genre and the thematic approaches into a harmonious literary synthesis. For the most part (the enormous possibilities of self-deception aside, for the moment) we feel we do rather well. Nevertheless, every now and then something occurs to remind us that there are more basic, more primitive, problematics out there. Take, for example,

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*Mr. Coray, A.B., Calvin College, is an English teacher at Eastern Christian High School, North Haledon, New Jersey.

the case of just plain old red-blooded American hatred toward literature—specifically, the contempt for poetry. I met this contempt, in a rather arresting and energetic form, just the other day, I had been teaching the sophomore Poetry Unit for less than a week, for long enough, at least, to invite inadvertently the following letter, which I found tucked into my mail-slot in the main office. I shall let it speak for itself, spelling and diction uncluttered with *sics:*

To Mr. Coray

This is just a friendly joke. Don't take it seriously at all. We just wanted to share with you our satire!

Anonymous

If you enjoyed it, kindly send 1 quarter to Box 1673 Grand Central Station N.Y. N.Y. 10019

POEMS
dedicated to Mr. D. Coray
Please don't get sore,
Or we might do some more.

Don't take it too hard,
We started with a foot,
And took the whole yard!
This is just a friendly joke,
Please, please do not choke!!

OUR POEMS.
We sure hate poems.
We'd rather throw stones.
And if you don't like it,
We'll just go home,
And sit on our thrones.

We'd rather watch the grass
Than sit in your poetry class!
And if you don't like it,
We'll just listen to jazz
Or go attend a mass.

We'd rather tell a story,
Or visit the lavatory
Than listen to Coray,
'Cause listining to Coray,
Is borey, borey, borey!

We think poems are a bore,
We'd rather take a snore,
We just can't grasp the core,
Without our stomachs giving a roar.
We're gonna walk out the door.

Our minds are a complete blank.
Poems hit us like a tank,
We'd rather go to the bank.
Oh dear, our money sank.
At least we're awfully frank.

I'd like to take a bat,
And hit a poem—smack.
Let it land on a tack
And break its mothers back.
Poems stink like a rat.

Some poems don't even rhyme
For sure, that is a crime.
Who ever heard of such a line
That poems don't even rhyme.
We'd rather eat a lime,
Or pay a dime.

Our teacher must think we're slow
Because we don't want to know
What the poem is trying to show.
Gee, I wish it would snow,
Or my brother would grow.

Speak English, for goodness' sake,
Poems sound so queer, so fake.
We'd rather bake a cake,
Or eat a steak
Or swim in a lake.

We HATE poems
We'd rather go home
Or wander and roam,
See some domes
But NO poems!

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW ON "OUR POEMS"

1. In paragragh one, do you think the authors are taking a superior attitude? ("sit on thrones.") Why or why not?
2. In the first 2 paragraghs, one line from each verse is the same. Which one and what significance does that have?
3. What kind of attitude do the authors have through out this poem? Does it change at all?
4. Can you depict a rhythm throughout the poem? What does the syncopation suggest to you?
5. What emotions do you feel when finished reading the poem?
6. Do you think the authors have a deeper meaning behind their story?
7. Are there any conflicts?
8. Do the authors contradict themselves at all in what they say?
9. The overall theme is their hatred for poetry which contains feelings and deeper meanings and words that don't really make sense. Do you think this is really a hatred? Why did they write their story in the form of poetry then? Does it possibly suggest mockery?

10. Why do all the verses speak in second person (we). But in the sixth paragragh it starts with "I". Why?

11. In the sixth paragragh, do you think the authors are a little harsh? Afterall, they wrote this poetry, right?

12. What does the ninth paragragh suggest to you?

13. In the first paragragh the authors seem superior because of their thrones. In the eighth paragragh what do you think they feel?

14. In the 8th paragraph, why do the authors change the subject in the fourth line?

15. What, in your opinion, is the authors background? Why do they show a dislike for poetry? Do you think they ever had a bad experience with poems? What is their emotional state while writing this?

Clearly I had a problem. I laughed, then groaned, then laughed again. The Geist of the thing was good-natured enough, and I recognized the handwriting and spelling as those of one of the most amiable and willing masculine spirits in the fourth-period class. But I had thought the Poetry Unit was moving rather smoothly (again, the enormous possibilities of self-deception). And now this?—after only three or four pages of verse, and three more weeks of it on the curricular blueprint!

Casting about mentally for some plucky response that would somehow turn this comic adversity to our class's advantage, I thought first of presenting to them Marianne Moore's "Poetry" ("I too dislike it: there are things that are important beyond all this fiddle . . . "). But a second thought seemed more promising. Marianne Moore's apologetic could wait till later. It was obvious that there was a good deal in this sophomoric parody that ought to be encouraged. The spoof on the textbook questions was better, more perceptive, than the light verse, but the lines too had their moments. I could hear Professor Tiemersma's deep voice, as from a depth of years, saying, "You might, with the right emphasis, use this to teach the parodic form. These youngsters clearly apprehend the rightness of presenting their particular ideas in this particular form, though they've got a way to go before they demonstrate a mastery . . . " I hurried home and scribbled for a while, producing the following magisterial monkeyshine (the last word of the verse is the name of my friend and colleague, my department head who will have this class as juniors next year):

To the bard-bombers of 4th Period,
This is a friendly attempt to repay you in your own coin. Take it as seriously as you like—seriously enough, I hope, to recognize that some poetry arises out of all-too-human situations.

Mr. C.

P.S. If you find it all engaging, take to your pens again and send your raucous replies to my mail-slot in our battalion headquarters.

LINES

dedicated to the rhyme-roasters of Period 4

I'm not terribly sore:
So you'd better do more.

For I'll never yield
Till you've captured the field!

Though our versified ragging
May have our class gagging!!

MY LINES

If most of this verse
Takes a turn for the worse,
And our class, with a curse,
Takes a turn for the nurse,
Just recall: 'twas your folly
That fired the first volley.
You perch on your thrones,
Giving out sorry groans
With such rancorous tones—
Why, it chills my old bones
In posterior zones!

Am I over-defensive
Or slightly too tense if
In rhymes inexpensive
I take the offensive?—
Pedantically dense if
I get a bit pensive?

I admit that old Coray
Can get pretty "borey"
Proclaiming the glory
Of lines metaphory;
But is your sad story
Discriminatory
Or quite hunky-dory
When you get so gory?

Don't want to be floral
Or fervently moral
Or say that you libel
The Psalms in the Bible
(How dare they not rhyme—
'Tis a capital crime!),
And 'twould be downright Quakery
To charge thee with fakery:

You'd flee to a bakery
Or a bank's money-makery.
But "stink like a rat"?
And smash with a bat;
Such brutal demeanor!
Can't malice be cleaner?

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You're right in suspecting
Our simile-collecting
And image-inspecting
Needs drastic correcting,
Or I'll be expecting
Our class's defecting.
But let's be protecting
Instead of rejecting
Our poets' reflecting!

So cease, if you will,
This severe overkill,
And pronounce your wry blessin's
On teacher's dry lessons,
And do not bestow 'em
Upon the poor poem.
It seems that you won't
Ever like it, but don't
Just take out your depression
With clouting agressing
On little word-clusters
A lyricist musters

A poem's a part
Of humanity's heart,
And if you can't enjoy it
Then please don't destroy it
Or beat it or smash it
Or crush it or mash it
When the text-booky question
Gives you indigestion.

If you don't try to spike it—
Who knows? You may like it.
So if they seem queer
And not always quite clear,
Please be kind to the stanzas
That history hands us:

It's better than fightin'
With Coray and Eiten.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW ON "MY LINES"

1. What, in the poem, suggests that the poet, like his correspondents, would rather just go "watch the grass"?
2. There is an old saying to the effect that many teachers are simply failed and frustrated artists. Does the quality of this teacher's poetry shed any light on the question of why he is frustrated? Explain.
3. The poet suggests, not very subtly, that his correspondents fight dirty. What hints are there, in the poem itself, to make us feel that he himself has a few sneaky tactics up his own Machiavellian sleeve itself?
4. Some educational theorists claim that, in conflicts such as the one we find here, there are no winners but only losers. Who, in your opinion, is the *real* loser here—the poet? his correspondents? poetry itself?
5. We know, from biographical sources, that the poet claimed to be a Romantic. What clues, in the poem itself, might lead us to suspect that he is really a crypto-Classicist?
6. Do you see any hidden meaning in the first line of stanza two? Keep it to yourself.
7. Why or why not?

I look forward to presenting this correspondence (both the students' thrust and my riposte) on ditto-mastered handouts soon, hoping that something profitable may come of the whole business. I offer these here to illustrate just one aspect of a fairly serious problem that every teacher of literature probably has faced all too often. The problem has its comic side, as I have tried to show, but the comedy still hurts. It hurts, I think, because it lies largely in the helplessness of both teacher and student when the teacher seeks help mainly from pedagogical "approaches." While Generics and Thematics slug it out, the kid may be standing by indifferently because he or she would prefer not to "approach" the Stuff at all. Of course, this is not true of all kids, not even all the ones in my Fourth Period, and I am not pessimistic, because I believe, with the late Paul Goodman, that all subjects are *intrinsically* interesting, poetry included. Perhaps my young poetry-haters may even come to love poetry if I can con them into writing more lampoons of it—like those of us who scorned golf until we went onto the links and started doing bizarre imitations of golfers.

But the problem of poetry-hating is serious for teachers because of its enormity. Our problem (as with many other subjects) involves *the entire culture,* not simply the classroom and the approach. Why should a kid in our Christian school, or any school, *hate* poetry found in books? Ritualistic radicalism will blame the school here—the teachers or the approaches or the coercive nature of the classroom set-up. Surely this accounting explains much; I have done my own share of foundering in an assignment-ridden school, and I plead guilty. But this is too simple. There are other important considerations: technological (poetry on T.V. and recordings is nearly always blended with supplied visual and musical concomitants), domestic (do the parents experience much poetry apart from T.V. commercials or the *Psalter Hymnal?*), sexual (why do more boys than girls "hate poetry"?), and so on. These and other considerations should, with your help, be explored in these pages during the coming months. Meanwhile, tell me not in sanguine numbers that we will solve our poetry problems by simply finding the Right Approach.

Brickbats and Bouquets

Anything between two cardboard covers is a "book", and we enthusiastically commend Professor Meeter for his use of that word in his title "Basic Books for the Christian High School or College Library" (*The Christian Educators Journal,* January, 1973). Not only is it a safe term (in contrast to the more demanding concept, literature) but it serves as an accurate description, with few exceptions, of what the professor has so kindly offered us. Any gray-haired church librarian with a pocket full of donations should rightly be gratified by the suggested addition of some thirty feet of the printed page (1½" per book times approximately 220 volumes) to her sparse shelves.

But we're not so certain that either Dr. Kuyper or Dr. Zylstra would be equally thrilled by the incongruous support Mr. Meeter calls them to. Although the pleasure of Dr. Zylstra's or Dr. Kuyper's company has not been ours, we feel fairly certain that the learned professors would turn over in their respective graves, had they read the reading list their protegé, so kindly appended to their names.

Mr. Meeter's reading of Zylstra's *Testament of Vision* seems rather sketchy. It is certainly true that Zylstra eagerly awaited the day that some inspired, aspiring Calvinist would top the best seller list. It is, however, obvious throughout this posthumous volume that the good Doctor hardly occupied himself by thumb twiddling while awaiting either the meteoric rise of a novelist of our own faith or the miraculous appearance of a list of "Evangelical Christian Literature in Several Genres."

Dr. Zylstra, of course, admits the existence of such reading material as Meeter presented in the last *Christian Educators Journal* and even suggests, in "Notes on Novel Reading," that it may be worth our time—but just barely. "It is fiction," he writes of such material, "which emerges from the outside of the total culture rather than from the inside, it has no real relations with the structure of life and reality." Dr. Zylstra concludes his examination of "Religious Fiction" by noting that neither is such fiction as Mr. Meeter offers our high schools and colleges "literature," nor is it "a substantial contribution to . . . [one's] aesthetic education." The point that hurts us as teachers of English at a Christian high school is not that Mr. Meeter suggests such religious fiction, but that he calls it literature and has the audacity to use Dr. Zylstra in support of his own questionable taste.

In addition, what Professor Meeter's library list seems to indicate is that this "Evangelical Christian Literature" is *all* that is worth reading. And that is patent tripe. Omission of such authors as Hemingway, Steinbeck, Joyce, Faulkner, Dostoyevsky—dozens of others—makes a mockery of such time-honored, well-known words in our English language as "Basic," and "Christian," and "High School," "College," and, finally, "Library." Dr. Zylstra, in his *Testament of Vision* article, "Why Read Novels?" notes that such "modern fiction, if it be authentic fiction, is religiously and morally rewarding, and that everything a person encounters in it is grist for the mill of his Christian education." Note that he writes "everything,"—not just biographies of John Calvin's wife and books with a "premil. slant" or "Roman Catholic bias."

Dr. Meeter's article is (or should be) grating to the sensibilities of any student or teacher of literature. And for another reason also. In "Notes on Novel Reading" Dr. Zylstra actually recommends the reading of such authors as Goethe, Tolstoy, and Hardy—and, one might suspect, the "pagan-spirited" Joyce—for those who are "spiritually mature." The author, apparently, meets this prerequisite. But his omission of such literature from his library list implicitly hangs the cardboard sign "Babes in Christ" around the necks of high school and college student alike. True, it's a Biblical sign. But it is also very insulting.

Actually, we think Dr. Meeter's article is a subversive plot to destroy the libraries of colleges possessing a "million or more books" with thirty feet of third- or fourth-rate reading.

Luke Reinsma
Dawn Vanderveen,
Grand Rapids Christian High

College Forum
DR. NORMAN DE JONG
Editor

Feeding The College Flock

by N. De Jong and G. O'Donnell*

If congregations are flocks of sheep, and if children are lambs, then college students are somewhere between those weakling lambs and full-grown rams. They are too young to be sheared and too old to be bottle-fed, yet very much in need of wise, concerned leadership. The college students we have known are simultaneously very critical and very gullible. They will feast in the fields of abstract, conflicting ideas with sometimes reckless abandon, swallowing noxious halftruths, subtle perversions and even flagrant falsehoods. Consistently discerning judges of intellectual diet they are not.

Feed them a menu of Social Darwinism mixed with presumably Christian philosophy, or blend some Jeffersonian Democracy with Calvinistic sovereignty, and few will even grimace at the taste. Mix a little Skinnerian Behaviorism with some Biblical anthropology and they will promptly ingest. Far too often they fail to sift the truth from that which is subtle distortion of the truth.

Christian college students, nonetheless, are part of Christ's flock, and it is our peculiar task as Christian professors to oversee their mental consumption. It is our unique job, then, to try the ideas, to test the spirits of that which is their daily fare. In a word, we are their ideological dietitians. Such a spector of "thought control" may scare us into absurd defensive stances, but the characterization cannot be avoided. We are called by Christ to feed a part of His flock, and that requires our careful consideration. It also requires insight, authority and power beyond our native intelligence or combined wisdom. It requires an infallible guidebook whose scope is greater than all our multifarious servings combined and whose authority transcends human opinion. That guidebook must be none other than the Holy Scriptures, which we recognize as the inerrant Word of God.

The Inerrant Guidebook

Probably no article of the Christian faith has come under heavier criticism in recent years than the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy. The doctrine of inerrancy has been labeled rationalistic, scholastic, intellectualistic, biblicistic, and a host of other derogatory titles. Often the Christian who believes in Biblical inerrancy is accused of using the Bible only as a handy reference encyclopedia which has all the answers he needs dogmatically to refute his opponents. Admittedly, some who hold to this doctrine have been guilty of misconstruing certain prophecies, wrenching Biblical passages out of their historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts, and even attempting to make the Bible teach science with the same precision and methodology as the modern natural sciences. Such abuse of a doctrine, however, should never negate the validity of that doctrine.

Perhaps some of this controversy can be resolved if it is clarified exactly what is meant by calling the Bible inerrant and what is *not* meant by the term inerrant. First, inerrancy does not imply that our present translations are free from all error. Our English Bibles contain printing, translation, and textual errors that corrupt the translation. Absolute inerrancy is claimed only for the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible. This qualification does not make inerrancy a meaningless concept, however, since errors of this type are for the most part easily recognized by competent Bible scholars and are usually so slight that they do not affect the meaning of the passage.

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Second, inerrancy does not imply that every statement which is recorded in the Bible is a normative guideline. As a historical book, the Bible often records the words of uninspired men and even of Satan (as, for example, in Job 2:4). Such words are inerrant in the sense that they are a historically accurate (true) account of what was said, but not in the sense that their content is invariably normative for our lives. Every statement in the Bible must be read in light of its context, which includes the person doing the speaking.

Third, inerrancy does not imply that every statement of the Bible must be interpreted literally. When we read the Bible, we find that it contains various types of writing: poetry, song, prayer, historical narrative, and biography, as well as direct instruction. Whether a particular passage is to be taken literally, figuratively, poetically, allegorically, or whatever, must be determined by a careful exegesis of the passage itself.

Fourth, inerrancy does not imply that the Bible is exhaustive in its treatment of detail. Often the writers omit many details in their reporting of historical events, and, frequently, they quote only loosely. Whatever is important and of lasting significance in God's value scheme, however, is included and completely trustworthy.

Fifth, inerrancy does not imply that any human *interpretation* of the Bible can ever be inerrant. Too often Christians have attributed infallibility to their interpretations, forgetting that it is only the divine document which is inerrant.

On the positive side of the issue, to speak of the Bible as inerrant is simply to say that the Bible speaks truly, accurately, and reliably on every topic with which it deals. The doctrine of inerrancy affirms that because the Scriptures are the written Word of God, they are as inerrant as their divine Author. Because God is truth, so "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17), and since God cannot lie, so His "Word is very pure" (Ps. 119:140).

When the Christian affirms the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy, he is basically confessing: (1) the divine authorship of Scripture; (2) the truthfulness and perfection of God; and (3) his own willingness to "receive all these books [of Holy Scripture] . . . believing without any doubt *all* things contained in them" (*Belgic Confession,* Art. V.).

Thus, affirming the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy does not necessarily lead to rationalism, biblicism, scholasticism, and the like. But to hold to this confession is simply to believe God and trust in His Word in an age when many professing Christians are ashamed of that Word and ready to make excuses for their failure to use it.

The Bible and Christian Scholarship

Several things must now be said about the practical implications of Biblical inerrancy for the Christian teacher. First, the aforesaid doctrine does not imply that the Bible can be approached as an *encyclopedic* textbook on science.[1] Although the Bible does contain information directly relevant to the various sciences, nevertheless, as a general rule, the Bible touches only tangentially on many scientific issues. The Christian teacher ought fully to accept the statements in the Scriptures that bear upon his area of study, but he must expect to derive most of the detailed data of a science from studies of the creation itself.

Nevertheless, this word of caution ought to be balanced with the recognition that a Biblical perspective is a necessary prerequisite for the attaining of any true scientific knowledge. For, it is only *after* a person has been enlightened by the Holy Spirit applying the Scriptures to his heart that the detailed data of science can be seen in their full significance and meaning. For this reason, Calvin likens the unregenerate man's attempt to understand nature to the half-blind stumbling of the aged or nearsighted, who when given a book to read "are scarcely able to make out two consecutive words" (*Institutes,* I, VI, 1). It is only when a man puts on the glasses of Scripture, says Calvin, that he will be able to see something of the real meaning of created things. Thus, it is the Christian scholar, trained in both science and the Scriptures, who is best qualified to interpret the significance of scientific findings.

Second, the Christian scholar ought to use the Bible as a norm, which, at least to some extent, determines the veracity of theories and hypotheses in science. This does not mean that every concept of a Christian science must be found in the Bible, but it does mean that every concept of a Christian science must be *consistent with* it.

In many instances, the Christian scholar will be able clearly to refute or verify a secular theory on the basis of Scripture. For example, the theory that the universe has always existed, never having had a beginning, should be ruled out categorically by the Christian physical scientist. John Dewey's assertion that there are no absolutes presents another easy choice. Likewise, B. F. Skinner's hypothesis that punishment has no significant val-

Continued On Next Page

1 "Science," a word derived from the Latin verb *scire* (to know), may be defined as man's conscious and systematic attempt to know reality. It is used here in a very broad way to encompass history, literature, education and philosophy as well as the natural and social sciences.

ue in shaping behavior ought to be refuted by the Christian who is enlightened by God's Word.

Many times, however, there may be several contradictory hypotheses which are all seemingly compatible with Scripture. For example, investigation into the nature of color vision has generated several different theories regarding the biochemical basis of human color vision. These theories basically fall into two types: three-color theories and four-color theories. It would be ludicrous for a Christian scientist to attempt to support one of these theories by arguing that a four-color theory, for example, is more Biblical than a three-color theory. In such cases, the dispute must be resolved by appeal to empirical investigation alone. The point is, however, that every scientific hypothesis must *first* be judged in terms of its consistency or inconsistency with Scripture.

It should be parenthetically noted, too, that the more important or significant a theory, the easier it will be to test the consistency, and the more attention we ought to devote to its analysis. The Scripture, after all, is also our guide to what is valuable and significant.

Third, using the Bible as our guidebook does not demean all empirical work performed by non-Christians. True, it is only *after* one has been enlightened by the Scriptures that one can understand creation properly. But the Christian can nevertheless benefit from the non-Christian's skill in conducting systematic observation. We can learn a great deal from the example of Solomon's attitude toward the Phoenicians. When Solomon was commanded by God to build the temple, he did so, following God's revealed instructions to the letter. But for much of the detailed engraving and fashioning of the building, Solomon employed pagan Phoenician craftsmen (II Chron. 2). He was not ashamed to admit that these Phoenicians were more skilled in their trades than were the covenant people. We also need to recognize that, like the Phoenicians, many non-Christian scientists are more skillful in performing the details of their work than are some covenant-keeping scientists.

But, in interacting with non-Christian research and writing, the Christian must remember that he is to be the judge and master, and the non-Christian the servant, not vice versa. For, "He who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man" (I Cor. 2:15). Therefore, the Christian teacher should not be intimidated by the attempts of unbelievers to disprove his Biblical perspective by appeal to "the facts." Rather, the Christian should judge the research of the non-Christian by using the Bible as his standard for separating what is valuable and true from that which is worthless and false. Research discovered to be consistent with Scripture can be of great value in the Christian community and wholesome to the diet, even though the research was performed by a non-Christian.

We are all called, students and teachers alike, to "try the spirits," to test whether the concepts and theories which fill our various disciplines be of God or of the great deceiver. In our chaotic, confused society we are constantly called upon to judge and discern whether something be true or false. Our students must become discerning Christians and fussy about their mental diet, but how can they unless we lead them? And how can we lead them except we ourselves be guided by the Word of God and in that Light see light?

BOOK REVIEW

Insight, Authority, and Power. by Peter Schouls. Toronto: Wedge Press, 1972. 46 pp. Reviewed by William Nibbelink, Assistant Professor, Mathematics Education, University of Iowa.

It often appears that the Christian is a person who will go out of his way to deny desiring power. The ideal seems rather a peculiar brand of humility, one which would cause any serious aspirant to cringe at the thought of being elected deacon by a unanimous vote. According to the book *Insight, Authority, and Power* by Peter Schouls, this is hardly the proper treatment of power. The book's main thesis is that to the extent one possesses knowledge (insight) regarding God's will for man, he possesses authority by definition; and therefore he ought to be placed in a position of power. Suggested, of course, is that the Christian community should be a highly involved force in this world; and that its members should not display a paralyzing humility that depends on a dishonest devaluation of self or group potential.

The chapters of the book are adaptations of lectures presented by Dr. Schouls, brief, and easily readable. In Chapter I the terms "insight," "authority" and "power" are defined, and the main thesis is stated and clarified. Chapters II, III and IV are intended to support and further clarify the main thesis by appealing to Christ's dealings with both his opponents and his followers. A number of statements secondary to the main thesis also appear in these chapters. Chapter V presents the

proposition that authority and power are properly overseen by the community of believers, not by the individual. Chapters VI, VII and VIII are devoted to the application of the main thesis and secondary statements to three social structures: the church, the home and the school. Chapter IX is a partial summary of the preceding chapters.

The case made in the book for the main thesis is a strong one. However, some of the secondary statements supposedly supported by or complementary to the main thesis are debatable and not readily embraced by the reviewer. The following three paragraphs will deal with one such secondary statement.

Power held by one not having insight is defined in the book as "illegitimate" power. "Insight" is defined to mean "hearing (heeding) the word of the Lord." The secondary statement singled out by this review as debatable is one which claims that illegitimate power is destructive to those over whom that power is exercised. Chapter V ends with:

> I assume, in conclusion, this is enough to clarify these items:
>
> —the authority of Christ is founded on his knowing and doing the will of God, and
>
> —the power of Christ, in the end, is unlimited because he fully knows and does the Father's will. Also,
>
> —those who are in positions of power but have no knowledge of the will of God possess no authority, and
>
> —their power is destructive for it hinders those led from entering the Kingdom of God, and thus hinders the coming of the Kingdom itself.

This last idea seems to exclude the possibility that right actions (right to an observer) may be spawned by wrong motives, certainly a defensible possibility. For example, a clever school administrator with no motives beyond job security and salary increases may make the same decision and state the same rationale as would one "hearing the word of the Lord." Schouls' position also seems to ignore the possibility that a wrong action, when seen in a historical context, may accomplish consequences in opposition to intentions. For example, the early persecution (would-be destruction) of the early Christians may be seen as a cause for the rapid spread and growth of Christianity. A more profound example, of course, is the action against Christ which resulted in his death and simultaneously contributed to God's plan for man's salvation. The puzzled beginning catechumen's prayer of thanksgiving for God's allowing Christ's opponents such unbelievable illegitimate power may not be completely naive.

Regarding the main thesis and the secondary statements, two possible sources of difficulty are as follows: First, the main thesis is concerned primarily with the legitimacy of power being possessed by an individual, while the secondary statements are often concerned primarily with the consequences for others when one holds power illegitimately. Second, the main thesis is concerned with who ought to be given power when a community has it to give, while the secondary statements often require a secondary thesis about who should not have power. Defining power as "illegitimate" is neither adequate to characterize the effects of its being exercised nor adequate to make the case that it ought not exist. At the core of this difficulty lies a noticeable lack of attention to the whole matter of common grace with all its implications for human government.

The idea that a leader's lack of "insight" should be tolerated out of "respect for an office" is condemned by the book. The suggestions given for appropriate action in the church, home or school in the face of evident lack of insight by office-holders are bold, either requiring removal of the illegitimate power-holder from office or requiring that his claim to power be ignored. Several of these suggestions are likely to cause even the more self-confident soul to scramble for the security of arbitrary tradition. Whether agreed to or not, these suggestions are consistent with the secondary statements previously referred to as controversial.

Of the several condemnations of North American education presented in the book, one is that students are hindered from seeing life as a unity by both the over-compartmentalization of the curriculum and an insistance that a teacher's individual convictions do not influence his teaching. Such education (called "non-education" in this book) is named as responsible for at least some student rebellion . . . . which, at its best, should be a legitimate demand for power from those who hold it illegitimately. Such education is attributed in the book to North American society's replacing "commitment and conviction, certainty, and knowledge with the 'technique of suspended judgment,' " defined to mean "the refusal to take any position on any question one may call 'ultimate.' "

Peter Schouls certainly cannot be accused of practicing the above technique. Enough claims and suggestions are stated with enough certainty to ensure that most readers will find at least some statements to embrace and some to hold as controversial. It is my hunch at this point that a book based on lectures is a much more interesting phenomenon than a lecture based on books.

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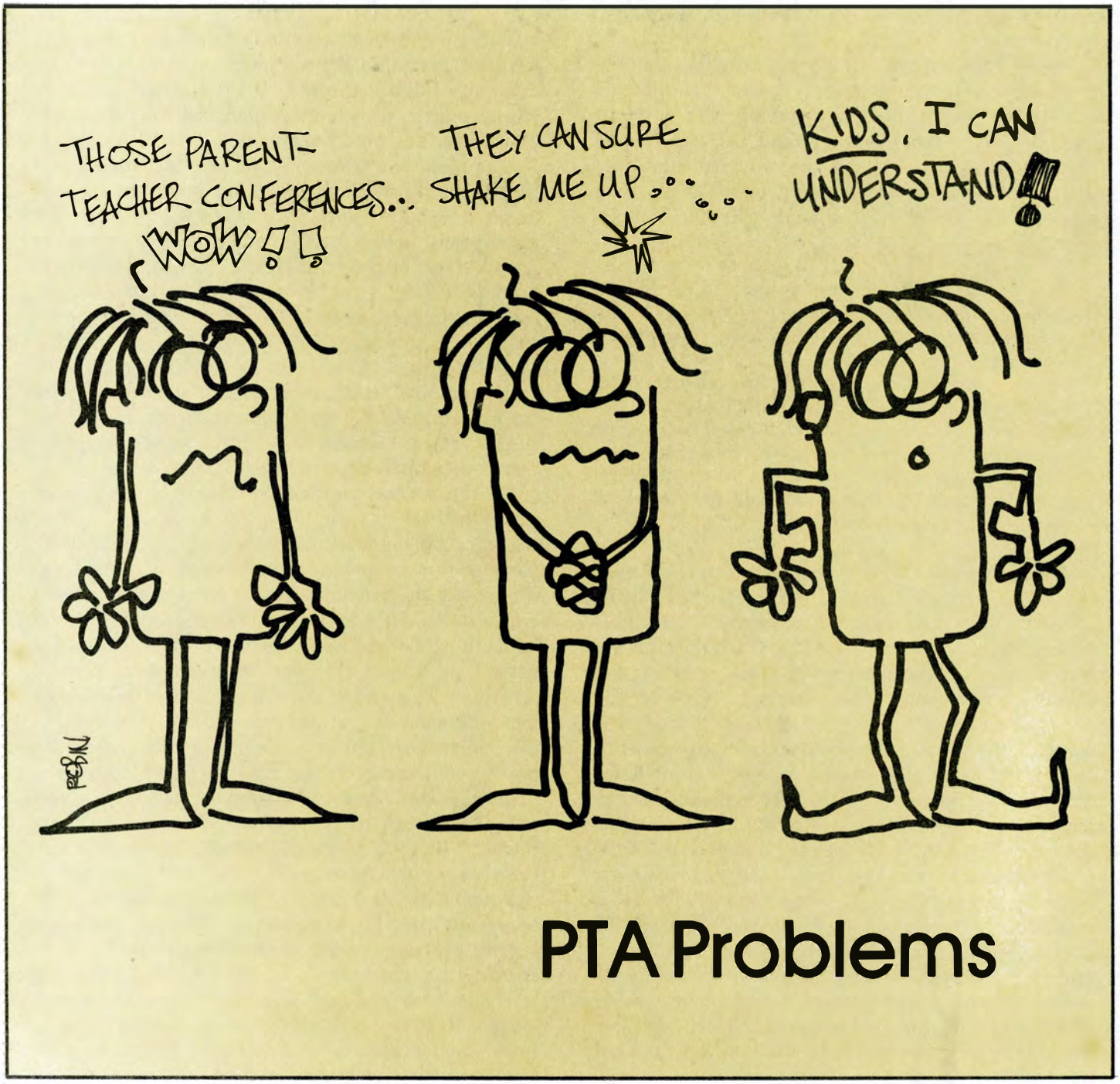

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