(See Page 29—"Maxi-Content in Mini-Courses".)

christian educators journal

MARCH 1974

christian educators journal

March 1974

CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS JOURNAL, Volume 13, Number 4, March, 1974. A medium of expression for the Calvinist school movement in the United States and Canada.
MANAGING EDITOR: Donald Oppewal, Education Department, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506
MANUSCRIPT EDITOR: Betty Hesselink, 1406 Scenic Highway, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee 37350
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Joel Beversluis, 862 Dunham, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

DEPARTMENT EDITORS:
Language Arts: Don Coray, Eastern Christian Senior High, 50 Oakwood Ave., North Haledon, New Jersey 07508
Profession-Wide: Vernon Boerman, Illiana Christian High, 2261 Indiana Ave., Lansing, Illinois 60438
The Arts: Jeanne Buiter, 413 W. Hoover, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103
College Forum: Norman DeJong, Education Department, Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa 51250
Social Studies: James Vander Meulen, Denver Christian Intermediate, 735 E. Florida Ave., Denver, Colo. 80210
Science-Math: Richard Vander Laan, Pella Christian High, 604 Jefferson St., Pella, Iowa 50219

EDITORIAL BOARD:
For the Christian Educators Association: Greta Rey (secretary of board), William Heethuis, Jack Zondag, Dick Voetberg, David Schelhaas, Anne Holstege (vicar)
For the National Union of Christian Schools: John Vander Ark (vice-chairman), Paul Mulder
For Calvin College: Henry Baron (chairman of the board), Dale Topp
For Dordt College: Merle Meeter, James Veltkamp
For Trinity College: Harry Cook
For Covenant College: Jack Muller
For the Pacific Northwest Christian Teachers Association: Larry Stegink
For the Southwest Minnesota Christian Teachers Association: Ina Smith
For the California Christian Teachers Association: Sandy Faber
For the Eastern Christian Teachers Association: Eileen VanderMeulen

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

BUSINESS MATTERS

Business correspondence concerning subscriptions to the Journal or membership in the Association should be sent to the Circulation Manager. Subscription price is $3.00 per year for members of supporting organizations, $3.50 per year for a school faculty as a group, and $4.00 per year for individual subscriptions. Checks should be made payable to the *Christian Educators Journal*. Issues are published in the months of September, November, January, and March. Correspondence concerning articles or book reviews should be addressed to the editor of the appropriate department or to the Manuscript Editor.

Announcements and advertisements are accepted according to the following policy:

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

Contents

MARCH 1974

Editorial...

INSERVICE INSTITUTES:

Inspirational or Instructional?

Each year I do my share of speaking at and attending professional gatherings variously called Inservice Day, Institute, Conference, or Convention, depending upon their length or degrees of formality. Of late I have become convinced that they are presently poorly designed vehicles for the achievement of one of the most needed goals of such meetings. That goal is the improvement of the teaching and administrative skills of every educator, whether beginner or near-retiree.

I know that when professional groups meet, whether for a brief committee meeting or a three day session, multiple rather than single goals are being achieved. Renewing old acquaintances, seeing new places, sharing news and views, being inspired, having a change of pace: all of these are legitimate benefits of professional gatherings. But by themselves they would leave untouched and untapped a greater benefit: the specific improvement of the practice of the profession to which we are called.

At a typical convention or institute the formal sessions, identified by name, leader, and location are the heart of that gathering, and their function is to inform and instruct the members of the profession. If these formal sessions are inappropriately chosen or carried out their potential is lost.

The formal sessions I have observed or been asked to conduct have typically been one hour, and the person attending is asked to make a choice among two or more options in each of several time segments. Usually some mass meeting or general session appears somewhere in the total program. The whole day has the air of a smorgasbord, made up of an almost infinite variety of pickle-and-relish sessions, meat and potatoes sectionals, and finger food demonstrations. Small wonder that the longer the institute the more the teacher goes away with intellectual and emotional indigestion, engorged with varied goodies, but satisfied by none. Small wonder that with the longer conventions golfing, shopping, museum going, and strolling cut seriously into attendance.

I believe the difficulty lies in both the surfeit of topics treated and the relative brevity of the exposure to each. Short gulps of five foods are not superior to fewer courses more leisurely consumed.

Perhaps the most serious charge against the format typically followed is that it violates our own conception of how good learning occurs. It is contrary to how we ourselves behave toward our students when we wish our teaching to be effective. While we on any given day may spend only an hour on some topic or activity, there is always some follow-up or return to it before we feel we have completed any learning. We need to apply that very same principle to our own learning as professionals.

Learnings which have any enduring substance, which carry over into improved skills or other changed behavior, which affect teaching in any perceivable way, cannot be achieved by being exposed to a series of widely differing topics or experiences, each briefly pursued and passively absorbed.

If we teachers are to be instructed and not simply entertained, or only inspired (or bored) by our attendance at professional conferences, the model of learning used must be one that more adequately reflects the way learning takes place. The workshop model has such potential.

The workshop model, in distinction from a lecture-demonstration model, or informal discussion model, requires that the participants actively practice mastering some skill or applying some concept, as well as learning some new vocabulary. Since all of these elements can never be crowded into one hour, we must think in terms of longer sessions. Simply lengthening the sessions will, however, only increase the boredom unless the session has a concrete focus on some competence

which the teacher wants to increase, and unless the teacher is given practice sessions in actually doing the activity. Three hours is not at all too long a time if the teacher can walk out saying, "Now I know how to do . . . better than I did before," because of the opportunity to both hear and to do.

There is no shortage of competences which all teachers can learn to do better: grading essays, writing objective test items, interpreting standardized test scores, writing instructional objectives, counselling a student or colleague, writing a case study on a student, writing a committee report, making bulletin board displays, running A-V equipment including video-taping machinery, constructing visual aids, building simulation games and activities, constructing questionnaires, comparing textbooks, preparing a PTA talk, or chapel program. The list is almost endless, because the varied skills a teacher needs is almost endless.

Let the convention program committees of the future look to the workshop model for the improvement of the profession, and not perpetuate the pedagogical powerlessness of the past.

—D.O.

BOOK REVIEW:

Listening to Handel's *Messiah*

Listening to Handel's Messiah for Personalized Educational Progress by Dale Topp, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Calvin College. Published by The National Union of Christian Schools.

Reviewed by Anne Holstege, teacher of fifth grade of Holland Christian School.

This booklet contains twelve lessons based on various selections from Handel's *Messiah*. It is designed primarily for individualized instruction for students in grades four to twelve. However, it can be used very profitably for group instruction also.

The student listens to the music provided on tape cassettes and marks responses to the various questions. Usually more than one listening is necessary, depending on the student's age and musical competency. When responses are marked, the student compares them with the answers in the back of the booklet.

The following are some sample questions from the first lesson:

> Read questions one through eight to find out what you should listen for. Then listen to the *Overture* from the final section of Tape A, Side I. We have arranged the questions so that you can answer them one after the other all in one listening. You may need a second listening to check your answers and to fill in certain answers that you missed the first time.
>
> 1. The music opens
> ___with a fast tempo
> ___with a slow tempo
> 2. and
> ___with brass instruments
> ___with stringed instruments
> 3. The rhythms of the opening are mostly
> ___smooth and even
> ___jerky and uneven
> 4. The opening section is repeated. While listening to the repeat, double-check your first three answers.

With each lesson comes an Enrichment Activity based on the same musical selection as the Core Activity. The student may choose this activity or go on to another lesson.

Some materials are needed with these lessons. Each student should have either a copy of the booklet or mimeographed sheets of the lessons. A recording of the twelve selections from the *Messiah* is, of course, necessary. Cassette tapes of these twelve selections are available from the National Union of Christian Schools if no other recording is available. Additional equipment is needed to use the lessons individually. A listening station with headphones and a phonograph or cassette player works well in a classroom. The library or study hall might also provide listening equipment there.

When I used several of these lessons with my fifth graders, I found them too difficult for some of them to do individually. However, when the lessons were explained and used with the group, these students did quite well. Therefore, I feel that many of these lessons would be too difficult for

most fourth graders to use individually, but they could be used with a group or the especially gifted child.

These lessons are an excellent tool for the teacher not trained to teach music, but responsible for the music instruction, all or part of it, in the classroom.

Some of the lessons fit in very well with the "Revelation and Response" Bible lessons, especially at Christmas and Easter. The students could listen to the selection and work through the lesson to become familiar with the music, and then listen to the music for pure enjoyment along with the Bible lesson.

These lessons proved to be a good way to teach music appreciation as well as music in general. I have found in the past that most of my fifth-grade students do not fully appreciate classical music, but this was one time that they showed keen interest in it. I must admit that part of the appeal was the listening station with the headphones; nevertheless, it was a painless way to get them to listen. And hearing a not-too-musically-inclined fifth-grade boy humming snatches of the *Messiah* at recess time made the effort very rewarding.

THE Holiday CURRICULUM

By Richard E. Gross*

Just home from their day at elementary school, my four children trooped into the house. They carried on an animated conversation. "I'm going to be Red Riding Hood!" exclaimed Kay. "Me too," echoed little Elaine. The twins argued whether they would be tramps or clowns. But their father shook his head in dismay. We were off again on the annual ferial cycle. No matter the grade level, the same school-sponsored activities are featured over and over, year upon year. Oh, there have been *some* alterations. Elaine brought home a book wherein a Twentieth-century witch has shifted from broom to a vacuum for her October 31 flight; but, significantly, most changes in this continuing academic experience are of just such limited nature. Not only are the activities largely like those undergone by parents thirty-five years before; they are also considerably duplicative throughout the years of the lower grades.

Visit your school. The familiar old hobgoblin motif remains. Black cats and smiling pumpkins abound; shocks of corn and squash decorate the rooms; bats fill the windows and chalkboards. School has not been long underway but already we are on our first, or, if Columbus Day was taken seriously, our second gala spree. And no sooner are the black and orange symbols of the Holiday Curriculum filed away for another year, then out come the papier-mâché turkeys and cornucopias which signify the next festive orgy.

Soon Pilgrims will be marching off to log cabins that never existed in Plymouth, and John Alden will be propositioning Priscilla Mullins in ye olde English! Incidentally, the romanticized treatment

* Richard E. Gross is a Professor of Education at Stanford University, Stanford, California. He is co-author, with June R. Chapin, of *Teaching Social Studies Skills.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1973. Reprinted with permission from the editors of *Social Education* and the directors of the National Council for the Social Studies. Originally appeared in *Social Education*, November, 1973.

of Indians, early New England life, and a host more misinformation about our colonial days from John Smith to Betsy Ross provides an excellent start towards shaping the individual who in later life turns off history as fakelore. Far too many such bitterly cynical young people have been produced, in large part because of what has been perpetrated upon them by the schools in the name of history. And the related production of less-than-meaningful models is equally dangerous. Making sickly kraft paper log cabins may have some minimal educational value, but this activity cannot bring any real understanding of what living in such quarters truly meant. Many teachers need to reconsider seriously the project activities which accompany their social studies units. The impact of such work for many pupils is similar to that made upon my twin sons as pre-schoolers when they went to class on go-to-school night to observe the results of our daughter's fourth-grade Indian unit.

The room was jammed with many items, from actual artifacts to colorful notebooks on each desk beckoning for eager parental perusal. My sons became intrigued with a large model of a mesa house or pueblo which the children had constructed in a corner of the room. Edmund asked, "Did Indians really live like that?" I reassured him that some Indians still live in such dwellings in the American Southwest, but John maintained his brother's incredulity, inquiring, "In orange crates?"

My mind immediately returned to what I had observed in an urban schoolyard several days before. A fifth-grade American history class was culminating its unit on the Westward Movement by a simulated trek across the Great Plains. Coaster wagons were draped with calico tops; children played roles of oxen, scouts, wagon train personnel, and there were even a few ferocious Indians out on the fringe along the schoolyard fence. As pretended evening came, the venturesome pioneers circled their wagons on the hot asphalt in mock protection from the unknown threats of a western night. Immediately adjacent, auto horns blew and brakes squealed as autos came to a stop at a corner stop light. A drunk outside the fence stared in disbelief at what he saw but couldn't believe. Hungrily munching their "hardtack" cookies, the children next sang "Home on the Range" and several other rousing campfire songs.

The foregoing multi-disciplinary unit, especially its final and culminating effort, was undoubtedly recorded as an unqualified success; yet one can only ask how adult imagination could ever descend to such a level. The wonderful ability of children to transpose themselves to Never-Never Land is a quality to be cherished, and it holds valuable educational implications; but to impose artificial experiences like that recounted above in the hope that they may contribute to much more than the miseducation of our pupils is an unforgivable deed.

I have been castigating the excesses of mentors who fail to recognize the import of the kinds of media they may employ to try to gain student learning. The same errors in employing improper means characterize numerous activities of the festive approach to which we now return. Our next month's celebration moves rapidly upon us. Some eager teachers, almost outdoing the crass merchants of Main Street who now have their plastic pine trees and red bows set and their canned music blaring out even before Thanksgiving, rush into the Christmas Season in near frenzy. In certain situations almost all other school work comes to a standstill. A teacher anxious to complete, for example, some artistic or musical experience in her social studies unit on Japan or Ancient Egypt is told "no!" by others who normally cooperate. The children have to produce wreaths, paint snowy murals on the sheets of butcher paper now stretched around the room, work on the props and background for the Christmas pageant, and practice for the choir activities of the impending Christmas assembly.

Our family attended one of these programs recently. It was well done. The music consultant, all the teachers, and the darling children who performed so well gained accolades from the pleased parents. Upon collecting our two red-clad dwarfs and heading for the family car, my wife applauded the singing. I retorted, "Yes, but look at your program and every one of those reindeer-tannenbaum-snowflake songs. It was a Christmas program entirely without Christ!" This, of course, reflected our local associate school superintendent's astounding view that such secular songs were "in keeping with the multi-cultural spirit of the district." In a society based in large part upon a Christian tradition and generally loyal to Christian ideals, what has happened when we so fear the Babe in the manger? Once again the schools help a holiday lose its meaning. I realize there are other religions and that some of the folklore I have complained about also characterizes Christianity; but when we are going to celebrate an event that is intimately part of the lives of so many of us, we certainly fail in our role by substituting Santa Claus and Rudolph for the beauty and humanity expressed in "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht." I believe we should also appropriately memorialize

other religious figures and beliefs which form a part of our culture. I would not give equal time to Voodoo or Fertility Cults, but even these may hold valuable learnings and be deserving of attention when we consider "What Mankind Believes and Values"—a topic deserving much time in the elementary school program.

But again let us return to the new year and the promises of the Holiday Curriculum for the months ahead. January and February are months of some of our great but also tinseled heroes. I do not take one cubit from the stature of the important men who forged and saved America. How fortunate we were to have been blessed with such brilliant as well as dedicated individuals and their helpmates! Our misplaced enthusiasm, however, may outdo Parson Weems' snow-job on Washington. And Lincoln, magnificent character that he was, wasn't quite God. I believe that the questionable anecdotes and actual myths that have come down to us in history about our leaders can be used; but they should be studied either in terms of helping children understand the problem of historical authentication or as part of the evolution and impact of folklore.

Research into the building of loyalty and patriotism reveals that emotional channels are certainly one means of helping build such characteristics. Yet, in the long run, we can only insure the bitter disbeliever by perpetrating a Pollyanna approach in portraying our Founding Fathers. They didn't have halos—and what's wrong with underscoring their frank humanity? Perhaps youth would relate more effectively to a Washington whom they knew liked the ladies and upon occasion danced all night. If they understood our President as someone who could have competed with them on the discothèque floor, they might even respect him in a manner now sadly lacking for our tarnished heroes. If they knew that Lincoln enjoyed a racy story and, as did our first President and a number of others, a drink of hard cider, our heroes would seem more real. To be fully honest about Thomas Jefferson or Martin Luther King isn't debunking these gentlemen but helps them live as honest-to-goodness human beings, be they patrician or commoner. True heroes are all too few and far between. Let us not destroy those who have helped make this nation and shape it toward its worthy goals by portraying them as impossible saints to be shoved away with all the other impediments of schooling. Far too many youth have so been led to agree with Cowper, "Pedantry is all that schools impart; but taverns teach the knowledge of the heart."

February is also the month of St. Valentine's Day. Since we know so little about him, we couldn't have a day's study of his actual life and subsequent developments as we might well do with St. Nick on December 6th to deflate aspects of the coming Santa Claus saturation. Reflect on Valentine's Day and what we do with it or encourage the pupils to do. "Now, children, everyone must be nice to everyone else, and each of us has to have a Valentine for all of our classmates." Or, "We want everyone to be remembered, so each of you will draw the name of a classmate and deposit a Valentine addressed to that boy or girl in the classroom postbox." What are we perpetrating here? (Personally, I hated Valentine's Day in school because, as a foolish boy of that age, I had no use for girls; it was embarrassing to send those foolish notes. Besides that, there were a few kids in class I couldn't stand; if only then I had known about "poison Valentines"!) I wouldn't charge that our Valentine procedures mentioned above may warp the children's libido or incline some toward homosexual interests; but by insisting on such traditional Valentine exchanges, we shouldn't try to legislate love. Love is the essence of humanity and it should permeate so much of what we do that it seems a hollow parody to celebrate this ultimate quality of men and women by mass exchanges on February 14th. Rather, we should employ love as a cornerstone of classroom relationships; in fact, each and every school day should be a Valentine's day.

By this point in my exposition I am certain that my prejudices are clear. Yet the chronology is far from complete. The children must wend their way from Arbor Day to May Day and Memorial Day. Much that has already been complained about applies again. With Easter we once more paganize the epochal Christian event. When the children come home with their paper baskets of rabbits and ducklings, sick to their stomachs with undigested jelly beans, a parent is ready to lay a colored egg and deliver it personally to the principal! At this stage, in near revolt, I face the last month of the Holiday Curriculum. On May 1st, often I have secretly cherished the thought of teaching my boys the "Internationale"—the song of Socialist workers' solidarity. Certainly this would stir up the placid events of May Day and the marching around the Maypole, but, like most wearied parents, I surrender to the hegemony of the school.

How happy Plato would be with these attainments! Centuries ago he prescribed the elementary school as the place where we instill a devotion to

the national myths. For a free society, Plato was in outright error. There is no better way to produce disbelievers, let alone apostates, than by treating children to falsehoods masked as truth. Many great educators, including Herbart, Pestalozzi, and Froebel, have recognized the import of custom and loyalty to the maintenance of a society. They have suggested numerous ways by which the school could contribute to building a spirit of commonality among its charges. Commemorating famous individuals and celebrating national holidays provide appropriate opportunities to build essential understandings and attitudes toward the preservation of the culture; but the manner in which we approach this responsibility is all-important, and in many school situations we suffer from a duplicative overkill of improper emphases and wrong means.

This writer is not as negative as he may seem. Some of the previous reactions also indicate some positive suggestions. Others follow.

One approach would be to select a single grade level in which learnings might center upon the numerous special days and weeks that have been designated each month by tradition, executive proclamation, and more recently commercial advertisers and companies anxious to sell their products. So many special days exist each year that the problem will be one of selection. There is National Education Week as well as National Pickle Week; we have Susan B. Anthony Day and Pest Control Day. There really is a Sauerkraut Week along with Fire Prevention Week. There is a Pan American Day, and June 6th is Old Maids Day! It is clear that a timely, problem-centered curriculum could be centered upon the events, birthdays, and movements regularly celebrated. If a single grade is selected for such an approach, I would suggest the fifth year. This is where pupils normally have their first duplicated exposure to United States History, and this suggested variation would avoid much of the repetition they suffer two or three more times in their school careers when required to take American History.

Several governors have protested the continuing proliferation of newly designated days and weeks, such as the recently established National Raisin Week and Doughnut Day. These would promise to be tasty events in an experience curriculum, but teachers would have to be on their toes to regularly adapt the program to new choices. A second approach that would provide a little more leeway and variation would find the faculty allocating elements of the Holiday Curriculum throughout all the grades of the school. Sitting down with a calendar, a list of proclaimed days, and their own curriculum guide, they might decide on which special days would be reserved for each particular grade, depending upon the usual emphases in the curriculum for that grade. This would spread the treatment of holidays somewhat more sensibly throughout the K-6 or K-8 school program.

A third alternative would be to have each grade in elementary school take one or two selected months for emphasis. Here, again depending in part upon grade-level emphases, an intensive study of the great leaders, products, animals, songs, events, and the like that are featured in almanacs and calendars for almost every day of the month would provide a rich reservoir of varied learnings. As we move toward open and individualized school programs, such learnings could be packaged into mini-units or individual study kits. Children, independently or in small groups, could then pursue a given holiday or individual commemorated via a set of readings, tapes, film strips, and other sources in the school or library data bank file. Even in a more formal school situation with much larger group or total class instruction, such topical holiday units or mini-lessons could serve as valuable individually-paced enrichment programs for many of the children.

It is truly unfortunate that our prime national civic holiday comes on July Fourth when schools are normally not in session. This may, of course, have preserved hundreds of thousands of us from a perverted treatment of that great event. But our schools' failure to implant a proper understanding of the principles and ideals reflected by the Fourth of July has been revealed by several recent studies. In these instances, picnicking individuals on Independence Day were asked to sign petitions or to subscribe to statements drawn from our basic documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights; however, a large number of these citizens refused because the sentences were "radical," "Communist," or "un-American." Far beyond a change in mere holiday designation, the school has a fundamental charge in civic socialization that it has failed to adequately meet because of the kinds of practices outlined in this article. It may be fortunate that there are no classes on July Fourth, for the results taken seriously, might promote revolution on the part of the children. Such pupils, coming to realize their heritage, their rights, and their responsibilities, would rise up and demand what to date has been largely impossible—a program of civic education which we have not only been unprepared to offer but also largely unwilling to provide.

TEACHER SELECTION—

A Critical Administrative Decision

By Kenneth B. Bootsma*

Why Worry

Appropriate selection of teachers should be a major objective of Christian School administrators. After all, about 75% of each school's budget goes into teacher salaries. Maximizing our human resources, realizing cost effectiveness, and carrying out the mandate of our Christian homes are becoming items of great concern today. With educational costs on the rise and enrollments stabilizing, it's becoming apparent that we must be about the business of increased efficiency and improved effectiveness. Although running an educational institution effectively and efficiently involves many factors, it is time to develop our keenest awareness of what is involved in the process of selecting Christian teachers.

Two Approaches

Administrators and boards have, in the past, based their decisions on just plain *common sense;* they were often correct, and still are much of the time. However, because the current college student shows increased awareness of and involvement in today's social, political, and religious problems and solutions it is more difficult to discriminate now than it was ten or fifteen years ago. We are also faced with more applicants for fewer positions. Therefore, the selection techniques must be based on more than common sense and "feelings;" we must learn, within the applicant's academic achievement and experiences to sort out the qualities from the quantities. In other words, it is time to be more *scientific* than common-sensical, even though at times we may arrive at the same conclusion.

The two approaches differ sharply in several ways. First, the man on the street uses "theories" and concepts loosely, often with fanciful explanations, i.e. all illness is a punishment for sin; the scientist systematically builds and tests his ideas. Second, the man on the street often "selects" evidence simply because it is consistent with his hypothesis, i.e. blacks are musical; the scientist does not rely on the results of armchair exploration and presumed relationships. Third, the man on the street tends to accept explanations in agreement with his preconceptions and biases, i.e. slum conditions produce delinquency, rather than rule

*Kenneth B. Bootsma is superintendent of the Jenison Christian Schools, Jenison, Mich.

out the extraneous sources of influence, i.e. delinquency can be found in different kinds of neighborhoods. Fourth, the scientist is interested in what can be observed and tested, which does not mean that he ignores all other statements or considers them meaningless. He will not casually dismiss the statement that studying hard subjects improves a child's moral character. Reflecting on these differences shows that a scientific approach to the teacher selection process is clearly more desirable. And if we become more aware of appropriate devices for selection, then we should in turn be more sure of our decision and know that we are selecting the best candidate for a particular teaching assignment. But how do we *know?*

Four Methods

We know by four methods. First, the method of *tenacity.* If one holds tenaciously to one's belief system, even in the face of doubt, his beliefs seem to be strengthened. Second, the method of *authority.* If an idea has the weight of tradition and public sanction, it is considered so. Third, the method of *intuition.* Whatever idea men have reached agreement on is considered truth because their natural inclinations tend toward truth. Fourth, the method of *science.* Its unique characteristic is self-correction. This check system is anchored as much as possible in reality lying outside one's personal beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, and emotions, or in objectivity. All four are of value to us, although we may be limited to one method when making an immediate decision. Our obligation though is to use the most accurately predictive method available; for our decisions are placing teachers in lifetime positions of Christian leadership and training.

Being Scientific

Some variables in the selection process follow, to encourage this predictive method:

1. When the number of applicants is relatively large compared to the number of available positions, great care must be exercised in *matching* the applicant to the job.
2. The administrator must be aware of the *needs* of the school system as well as the *goals* of the individual.
3. Whenever *error* occurs, there is a definite *cost* involved. It may be wiser to "try a person out" on a job rather than risk hiring a dud.
4. *Training* is absolutely necessary to modify behavior, knowledge, skills, or attitudes so that the goals of the organization and of the individual become mutually acceptable, and so that the philosophical base, instructional program, and preferred methodology become incorporated into the teacher's thinking and behavior.
5. Each administrator must also consider *intra-individual variation,* i.e. differences in abilities, attributes, or attitudes, also whether a degree is from Calvin, Trinity, Dordt, or a public college or university, since often the institutions inculcate distinctiveness.
6. Finally, the administrator as well as the applicant should be aware of the *social* and *situational* factors which surround a teaching job, i.e. the economic conditions, the type of students, the thinking of the community.

Seven major teacher qualities are:

1. Christian commitment
2. Knowledge and judgment
3. Conscientiousness
4. Human relations skills
5. Organizational ability
6. Objectivity
7. Observational ability

The following fourteen variables, specific and directly related to the teaching-learning process, have been ordered by the faculties of several Christian schools:

1. Attitude toward students: Do you feel that this teacher likes you?
2. Success in stimulating interest: Is this class interesting and challenging?
3. Enthusiasm: Does he show interest in and enthusiasm for the subject? Does he appear to enjoy teaching this subject?
4. Clarity of presentation: Are ideas presented at a level which you can understand?
5. Knowledge of subject: Does he have a thorough knowledge and understanding of his teaching field?
6. Encouragement of student participation: Does this teacher encourage you to raise questions and express ideas in class?
7. Control: Is the classroom orderly but also relaxed and friendly?
8. Consideration of others: Is he patient, understanding, considerate, and courteous?
9. Fairness: Is he fair and impartial in his treatment of all students in the class?
10. Attitude toward student ideas: Does this teacher have respect for the things you have to say in class?

11. Self-control: Does this teacher become angry when little problems arise in the classroom?
12. Openness: Is this teacher able to see things from your point of view?
13. Sense of humor: Does he share amusing experiences and laugh at his own mistakes?
14. Assignments: Are assignments sufficiently challenging without being unreasonably long?

Probably many more variables could be identified and related to each situation, even as there are many different tests for determining skills and behaviors. Certainly we can not consider all variables, nor can we rely on past assumptions. Teaching success may not be directly related to G.P.A. It is not enough to read the recommendations of a pastor or college professors or to know the institutions from which applicants graduate. All of these may be related to other variables already mentioned, but not one appears to stand out as the best single predictor of one's teaching ability.

People differ greatly, obviously in physique, but also in intelligence, abilities, skills, motivation, and temperament. Some are friendly, sociable, and outgoing; others are meek, permissive, and following. Some are forceful, dominant, and leading; others are shy and withdrawn. The task of teaching, however, makes some common demands which have been identified and should be considered when attempting to make the correct decision about which teacher to hire. What method do we use?

Interviewing

Most administrators rely heavily on the method of *interviewing* (which is an interesting word in itself) for determining which candidate should be hired. When used with a well-conceived schedule (set of questions), it is probably the best method of gaining information about an applicant; it is also most likely man's oldest and most-often used device for such a purpose. It is flexible, adaptable to individual situations, and often useful when no other method is possible or adequate. Used inappropriately, it follows no schedule; the conversation becomes a discussion of old friends and familiar places, the interviewee leaving with an "in" feeling, and the interviewer left with a less than adequate amount of information upon which to base his decision. Interviewing itself is an art, but proper planning and writing of the interview schedule is even more of an art. Often we find no sharp and constant focus on the issues being examined, a background and little experience necessary for the job, and words that are ambiguous and loaded with multiple meanings. We should be asking what we are interested in knowing, very little more, and certainly, nothing less. We should be concerned with the applicant's stated philosophy of Christian education, his commitment to Christ, his relationship to the Church, his view of the child, his special talents, his personal experiences directly related to teaching, his understanding of the system doing the hiring, and any questions which he might ask.

Here are a few suggestions. If you are interested in one of the categories on the left, try one of the questions on the right.

Religious Commitment What has the church done for you? How would you make Christ relevant . . .?

Attitude Toward the Church If you were Synod, what would you praise and what would you change within the church?

Classroom Management What would you do if . . .? How was the room arranged in your last teaching situation? When would you send a student to the office?

Methodology What does individualization mean to you? What was the most successful lesson you ever taught? Why?

Aptitudes What do you see as your greatest asset? Do you have any weaknesses? What do you feel would be your most difficult task concerning this job? Why?

The administrator has the responsibility of defining the goals, objectives, and standards of the school system, and should make certain that these are understood by the prospective employee. Remember, the ultimate goal of selection is to place each applicant in the teaching position best suited to him and to the educational system. All information passed in either direction should be relevant to the screening process; there should be no "right" and "wrong" answers. Be consistent, ask some of the same questions in each interview, be positive, be informed. Knowing that the new employee will to some degree mirror you, you must accept the responsibility of utilizing a knowledgeable and positive selection process to improve the effectiveness of Christian education. We can't afford not to be accurate in our evaluation of the most influential resource within our Christian schools—our Christian teachers.

The Asylum

Pregnancies, Principles and Policies

By H. K. Zoeklicht*

Karl DenMeester walked into the asylum clutching in one hand the 5-lb. Domino sugar bag in which he self-consciously carried his lunch and in the other the latest library copy of *The Outlook*. He paused to claim his coffee cup from the rack, a large, chipped Maxwell House mug, well-stained with much use and little washing, and sighed himself into a corner chair. As he mechanically munched his peanut butter sandwich, his colleagues filed in to begin the twenty-minute formality called lunch.

Ginny Traansma was late as usual. She often paused in the halls between her classroom and the asylum to exchange pleasantries with students, even though it meant sacrificing precious minutes from an already too short lunch break. She mechanically sloshed some coffee into her cup and eased into the last empty chair, a gaudy yellow straight chair with a cracked seat, placed next to Karl and across the magazine rack from John Vroom. Vroom was eating his lunch with the usual gusto, oblivious to the fact that a fat dollop of mayonnaise had squeezed between bread and baloney and was now slowly spreading down his tie.

All around, the noon-hour debate was waged at full volume. It was the fourth day in a row on the same topic—that it was more ecologically sound to buy an artificial Christmas tree than a real one. Ginny, too, had hotly debated the issue, pleading on a platform of sentiment, romance, and tradition for a live tree; but today she seemed to take no interest in the discussion or even her lunch. The little brown sack remained tightly clutched in one hand as the other spasmodically opened and closed on a soggy, wrinkled Kleenex.

Karl looked up from *The Outlook* as Ginny blew her nose for the third time, soberly noting her teary eyes.

"What's happening, Gin," Karl began, "P.R. turn down your request to offer a cooking class for boys again?"

Ginny looked tragically at Karl, grateful for the sympathetic tone of his voice. "Isn't it just so sad," she whispered, leaning toward him, "it makes me feel just terrible—those poor kids, and their parents—oh, I wonder what the Board will do?" The latter thought stopped her long enough for Karl to respond.

"Ginny, what are you talking about?" Karl caught himself whispering in spite of himself, then reverted to his normal volume. "I mean, what's going on?"

"Oh Karl, don't you know? I mean, haven't all your kids been talking about it all morning?" Ginny's voice too had lost its super-secret quality, but was still discreetly subdued. Responding to Karl's blank look, Ginny went on, "It's Mark VanDam and Pat Sweeney—you know—that nice senior couple always hanging around together in the halls and at basketball games. Well, the rumor around school this morning was that Pat's going to

* An astute observer of asylum activity, writing under a somewhat illuminating pen name, Zoeklicht continues his coffee cup clattering conversation from time to time in these pages.

have a baby, so as soon as I had a chance I checked it out and it's true—oh Karl—they're such nice kids and I feel so sorry for them."

Karl settled back from the edge of his chair as he listened, and his face hardened. "Sure—nice kids—but not nice enough. In fact, they're a couple of darn fools. I don't feel so sorry for them. They should've known that if you play with fire you're gonna get burned."

By this time, other faculty members within earshot of this dialogue were beginning to tune into what promised to be a more interesting discussion than Christmas trees. Others had heard the rumor and now turned to Karl and Ginny for consummation of their curiosity.

Sue Katje, in her inimitable sourpuss way, bluntly said, "Well, I think they should both be kicked out of school for good. After all, what kind of example is that to other kids," she added rhetorically as she pulled her skirt down toward her shins.

"But Sue," Ginny pleaded, "they're not bad kids. In fact, until this happened, they've both been model students—they get good grades, they're hard workers, they respect their teachers, they get along with other kids. It would be cruel to deprive them of the chance to graduate now that they're almost there. Besides, they'll need that high school diploma now more than ever."

"Baloney," snorted Vroom, raising his tie to his lips in a vain attempt to recover all of the mayonnaise that had leaked from his sandwich. "We're getting too soft on sin around here. You know that in the Bible women were put to death for sins of unchastity? And what do we do? We tell kids to let it all hang out, to dress and act any way they feel like. Why, just yesterday I saw a couple in a passionate embrace right in the hall. And you know what our softie principal said when I told him? 'Oh John, it was probably just a friendly gesture.' Friendly gesture my nose! And this just shows where friendly gestures can lead." Having delivered himself, Vroom barely stifled a burp and settled back to his lunch.

"I agree," Sourpuss severely continued, "letting a pregnant girl stay in school is a bad example to set for other girls. It'll just put ideas into their head and pretty soon we'll have all kinds of bloated bellies floating around here."

"Well, that would help take care of the declining enrollment," interjected Lucy Bright somewhat crassly. She continued, her dark eyes intense, "What's the policy around here about couples who 'have to get married' as the expression goes?"

Karl replied, "We don't have very many such cases fortunately; maybe, on an average, one every other year. In the past, the couple was immediately suspended, and then the Board always ruled that the boy could return if he wanted, but the girl was not allowed to continue."

"But why expel the girl and not the boy?" Lucy's voice was incredulous.

"I'm not sure," mused Karl, "but I've never agreed with that part of the policy. After all, he's as guilty as she is, and the punishment ought to be the same."

"But it's not just a punishment, it's something the Board felt it should do for the couple's own good," added Sue Katje.

"I'm sorry, but that sounds like pious hogwash to me," blurted Ginny. "What possible good can it serve to ostracize the kids from the community of their friends and deny them the opportunity to finish their education."

"But there are special schools for girls who get in trouble," objected Sue, "the girl can always go to one of them to finish her education if she wants to."

Lucy Bright launched her speech with the fuel of moral indignation. "How can we even think of those alternatives! What after all does it mean to be a Christian school? What kind of a model are we to the world when we put a certain kind of sinner out of sight and hopefully out of mind. Isn't it more Christian to draw them in out of love and compassion, to assure them that in spite of their sin, we love them—just as Christ loves us in spite of our daily sins? I don't see how you can insist on the need for Christian education and then when someone commits an obvious sin, suddenly let the secular school finish her education. I think that both Mark and Pat need Christian education and the love and support of this Christian community even more than before. I think they should be counseled to stay in school to finish their education if they wish. And I think the Board should not only make clear its disapproval of the sin they've committed, but also its willingness to forgive that sin and a desire to be helpful and loving. *That* would be Christian and in the best interests of both the kids and the testimony of this school to the community."

There was a complete and awestruck silence in the asylum following this outburst from a rookie teacher. Lucy herself seemed embarrassed by her uncommon outburst and shuffled her papers to conceal her uneasiness. Abruptly the bell rang, the wheels of education at Omni Christian High School began to turn, and the faculty soberly filed into the hallways.

BOOK REVIEW:

Contrasting Christian Approaches to Teaching Religion and Biblical Studies

Contrasting Christian Approaches to Teaching Religion and Biblical Studies, by Dennis Hoekstra and Arnold De Graaff. Calvin College Monograph, Grand Rapids, 1973.

Reviewed by Ary De Moor, senior, Calvin College.

When you walk into a dentist's office, the dentist has two decisions to make: first, which tooth is sore, and second, what to do about it—patch it or pull it. Dennis Hoekstra, president of Trinity Christian College and Arnold De Graaff, of the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, differ on both decisions when discussing the nature of education and the role of Biblical studies in the school.

Hoekstra's paper "Christian Education Through Religious Studies," immediately rejects what is called the rationalistic essentialism of positions held by such classicists as Henry Zylstra. He says that the basic task of religious studies in Christian schools is to help covenant children hear more clearly God's ever present address to men. They are led to *respond* more fully with repentance, faith and obedience through practice in decision-making and action, all for the purpose of an increasing conformity to the life style of Jesus in the concrete actions of everyday life. Pedagogically, this takes the form of a careful examination of the mighty acts of God (Revelation); the creating, by the teacher, of a congenial climate in the classroom; and, most importantly, a doing of the Truth (Response) by the student. Hoekstra then compares the 1960 NUCS Bible curriculum, which for him represents the Theoretic-Analytic approach, with the newly published, action-oriented NUCS Revelation-Response Series, which he prefers.

De Graaff's paper, "The Nature and Aim of Christian Education in Biblical Studies," rejects not only what is called rationalistic essentialism, but also what is called irrationalistic experimentalism. He sees both as deeply rooted in humanism. The task of the school, he says, is to enable students to take up their religious calling with a deepened understanding of the Christian view of life in the midst of our complex society. He emphasizes that since schools are basically for learning, it is important to give a child the freedom to work under the formative guidance of the teacher, and to direct that child's inner selfhood, his heart, his secret self toward his God-given task of radical discipleship.

Pedagogically, this takes the form of developing the child's analytic functioning, i.e., his experiencing the knowable side of God's many-sided, totally integrated creation. The development of this analytic functioning helps the child form his Christian world and life view. Biblical studies take the form of "Junior Theology" or "Biblical Theology." The Bible is a book for children as well as for adults. A careful discernment of the unique character and central meaning of the Scriptures—"the revealing of the mighty acts of God in Jesus Christ in creation and recreation"—can lead to a "heart-hitting" development in the faith and radical discipleship of the child.

Where then is the aching if not fatal tooth, and what should one do, patch it or pull it? Hoekstra sees rationalistic essentialism as the aching tooth. In the direct dialogue format of the book, he seems to assume that essentialists reduce God's self-revelation to theoretic-analytic knowledge. Without much detail he includes De Graaff in this group. But De Graaf disassociates himself from both the essentialistic-rationalistic approach and the reaction against it, the experimental=behavioral approach. Without much detail he includes Hoekstra in this latter group. Hoekstra would like to

patch the aching tooth. But De Graaff feels the whole tooth is beyond repair and therefore pulls it to make way for a third alternative. There is, therefore, little direct confrontation between the two points of view.

It becomes quite clear from the articles and their practical applications (Hoekstra's work in the Revelation-Response Series and De Graaff's new publication of the Toronto Workshop material) that the authors differ mainly in their interpretation of the nature of the Bible and in their way of applying the Bible in the curriculum.

Hoekstra and the Revelation-Response Series are dangerously close to giving the Bible the exemplary interpretation—seeing the mighty acts of God as a collection of separate stories, each setting an example of how to act and how not to act. The child viewing these stories (Revelation), is to respond as prescribed by the particular nature of that revelation. The teacher, applying the "then and there" situation directly to the "here and now," creates a climate in which the child must respond. Dr. S. Greidanus, in his *Sola Scriptura,* calls this the Historical Equation Mark. He says of the exemplary method of interpretation:

> The characters of the biblical persons, however far separated from us by the ages, are mirrors for us. In them every Christian can see himself more or less clearly reflected." . . . When this conviction becomes a principle for interpreting historical texts, it is bound to short-circuit that interpretation by overlooking the historical discontinuity between the person(s) then and people today, by placing an equation mark between past and present so that "then" = "now." The reality of the historical gap is undeniable, however, and this may not be concealed for the sake of a relevant application. The people in the text live at a different stage of redemptive history than we do today (page 70).

This method of interpretation, used in school for "schoolish" Biblical studies, leaves the door wide open to a directly or indirectly prescribed behaviorism which assumes a distinctly Christian character only because of its Biblical subject matter.

Hoekstra gives us an example of the Revelation-Response Series approach as a practical result of his views. In a fourth-grade lesson on creation, the objectives are stated as follows:

> 1. The students will comprehend God's greatness as Creator by seeing the bulletin board stripped of all its nature pictures.
> 2. Each student will write a thankyou prayer for one item in God's creation which he is personally glad exists.

It is then suggested that the teacher have the children pray these thank yous aloud in a group prayer time.

The teacher comes to class with these behavioral objectives. The child is then faced with a difficult situation. He must either catch on to responding properly to the teacher-created climate so he can gain approval or he must practice responding in the ways of obedient Bible figures, particularly Jesus. Neither alternative allows the child freedom to responsibly work out his service and discipleship as it relates to his own contemporary world and life view. I realize that the Revelation-Response material was written by many others besides Hoekstra, but he does offer in the book this example that shows the dangers of his approach.

De Graaff's view seems more promising. He puts particular emphasis on the unity of the Bible as a book giving us a religious direction. It is a confessional guide rather than a book of examples showing us how to live and respond. De Graaff feels that the child must be led to understand and analyze particular directives given in the "then and there" situation. He is then given the freedom and responsibility to form general and concrete directives which apply to his own particular stage of development, his own secret self, his own religious heart, and his own historical situation. If this type of Biblical study is not compromised with rationalism, which is a definite danger, it does more justice to the unique historical-redemptive character of God's self-revelation and will lead the child to continually see his confessional vision come to life in his many-sided world and life view.

Of course the Christian school must participate in "schoolish" worship activities (praying, singing, confessing, etc.). But Biblical studies involve in particular a study of the Bible as a book with particular themes rising out of the integral unity and peculiar redemptive-historical character of each of its books. This study leads to an understanding of the Scriptural directives which hold for the lives of the students. When totally integrated in the full curriculum of the school, such study can further prepare the students for taking up their many-sided religious tasks in life.

Often it is difficult to grow together as Christian educators when such basic differences emerge in our views of how the Bible functions in the Christian school and how it should be treated in Biblical studies. Yet it is essential that we maintain an open forum for lively discussion, in the light of that Bible, as mutal benefit to all those deeply committed to developing a Christian approach to the teaching of religion and Biblical studies.


FALL

Sex Education in the Intermediate Grades: a Report

By J. B. Hulst*

Since sex education in the Christian school is a controversial issue, we invite your comments on this article, either in brief or manuscript form.

Address your correspondence to Richard Vander Laan, Science-Math Editor, Christian Educators Journal, *311 Elm, Pella, Ia. 50219*

If you believe that sex education should be taught in a science course, your view will be expressed in this department; if you believe that it should be the task of another area, your article will be forwarded to the appropriate editor.

RVL

During the first week of October, 1973, I shared an exciting and rewarding experience with twelve Christian School teachers. All of us were attending the Tri-State Teacher's Institute at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. The large group present for the general meeting was divided into small groups for workshop sessions to consider the Christian School curriculum. The three sessions of each workshop dealt successively with (1) goals and objectives, (2) content, and (3) methodology. The subject our workshop was called to consider was "Sex Education in the Intermediate Grades."

What follows is a report of our two-day discussion. The report is not an academic treatise, but a summary of our mutual conclusions regarding sex education in the Christian School. Here lies the value of what you are about to read. It is the result of *communal* reflection, and those of us who participated in this reflection left the Institute convinced that continuing *communal* thought and activity are absolutely essential to our work as Christian educators.

Whose Task?

We began by seeking a definition of sex education. We agreed that it could be characterized as "instruction concerning the sexual aspect of human existence, according to the Word of God."

---

* J.B. Hulst is Dean of Students at Dordt College.

This is a rather broad definition, but it did help us in our further discussion. At least we all had a general idea of what we were talking about.

But who is to give instruction "concerning the sexual aspect of human existence?" Of one thing we were sure: our children are or will be learning about sex in one way or another. This is inevitable. But someone must see to it that, when our children do learn about sex, they do so according to the Word, the will of God.

It was noted that there are primarily three institutions involved in the training of our children: the home, the church, and the school. Usually the question, "Who is responsible for sex education?" triggers an argument between representatives of all three institutions. The argument rests on the assumption that sex education is the task of the home *or* the church *or* the school. But, because the assumption is erroneous, the outcome of such argumentation will never satisfy.

As we wrestled with this question, we came to see that sex education is not the task of the home *or* the church *or* the school, but the task of the home *and* the church *and* the school. The tasks of home, church, and school in rearing our children are closely *related,* but they are also clearly *distinct* from one another. Keeping the relationships and the distinctions in mind we came to the conclusion that:

1) The home provide sex education in the context of its duty to provide for the total nurture of the child.
2) The church must provide sex education in the context of its duty, through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, to lead the child to make a sincere, meaningful, and life-directing confession of faith.
3) The school must provide sex education in the context of its duty to form and inform the intellect of the child.

Goals and Objectives

Agreeing upon the goal for sex education in the Christian School did not call for much discussion. It was rather quickly acknowledged that the school, working in close relationship with the church and the home, should seek through Christian academic activity to prepare the child to serve God in the sexual aspect of his existence.

Having established the primary goal for sex education, we inquired as to possible secondary goals for reaching the primary goal. Endeavoring to follow the Scriptures, we felt we should make clear to students that sex is part of the being of man, *created* in the image of God. Because sex is a result of God's creative activity it is good, it must be used according to God's law, and it must be seen in proper relationship to the rest of man's created existence. But sex has been influenced by man's *fall* into sin. It is sin which has caused sexual deviations. It is also sin which has caused man either to ignore or to make too much of sex. Finally, the students should be led to understand that when Christ *redeems* us He redeems the sexual aspect of our lives and expects us to use sex, as well as the rest of our lives, in His service. Therefore they must know about sex (and not ignore it); they must see sex in proper relationship to the rest of life (and not make too much of it); and they must know God's law for sex as the only way to right knowledge and the proper use of sex.

Content

We next asked ourselves this question: How, by means of the curriculum, can we attain the goals which have been established? We began with certain presuppositions. In the Christian school we are busy studying God's creation in the light of the Scriptures. God's creation, including the structure of man's societal relationships, must be reflected in the curriculum. In this sense, then, "creation sets or determines the curriculum."

Within the context of these presuppositions, we sensed that it is a mistake simply to present a course in sex education. The danger in doing this, and nothing more, is that sex will be viewed in abstraction from the rest of man's existence and the creation order. We concluded that because sex is but one part of man's existence, and because sex must be seen in relationship to the rest of man's existence and the entirety of the created order, it is proper and desirable to present a course in sex education, but at the same time it is necessary to deal with sex as it appears in other courses, such as history, Bible history, science and literature. In this way either ignoring or making too much of sex can be avoided.

We concluded also that this approach would help in determining not only *how,* but also *when* the matter of sex should be considered. If sex is dealt with in the setting of the whole of man's existence, children will not hesitate to ask questions about it. In fact, they will want to ask questions about it, for they are naturally curious about sex and every other part of their life. But children's questions do more than show that they are naturally inquisitive. These questions also help determine at what age they are ready for formal consideration

of sex; they indicate the level of their thinking, the answers they are looking for, and the kind of answer they are capable of receiving. Thus if children ask questions about sex, they should be given answers which meet the questions at the level of progress or development reflected by the questions themselves.

And we concluded, further, that children should have basic sexual knowledge before entering puberty, when they become emotionally involved in sex. Before that emotional involvement develops, they need sex education so they may know what is happening and what is the law of God for these sexual drives and emotions.

We also discussed a possible education course. Most of the group favored the context of the general science or health course. The following outline suggests a progression:

1) Distinguish between non-living and living creatures.
2) Distinguish kinds of living creatures, showing here and throughout the course that man is unique in creation as the image of God.
3) Point out that living creatures do various things, such as moving, eating, digesting, excreting, and reproducing.
4) Point out that there are different ways in which living creatures reproduce—bacteria, plants, animals, man.
5) Deal specifically with human reproduction, making clear that
   —there are two sexes.
   —the two sexes are similar in many ways.
   —the two sexes are different in many ways.
   When the similarities and the differences are clear, the process of fertilization, development, and birth can be taught.

Obviously we could not spend much time on the details of this course. But we did feel that this kind of progression, within the setting of the science course, would enable the students to see sex as a marvelous part of God's grand creation order and a beautiful part of their personal and social lives. Here we also reminded ourselves that, in teaching the course, the biblical perspective of creation, fall, and redemption should always be maintained.

Method

In our concluding session, on methods for a program of sex education, we unanimously agreed that we must seek to establish a "communal" setting. We felt, first, that representatives of the home, church, and school should meet together for mutual discussion of goals, content, approach, timing, emphasis, etc. If these three institutions are not in continual communication with one another, conflict, division and criticism are bound to result, with our students suffering the greatest harm in the process. On the other hand, if home, church and school communicate with one another about the peculiar task each has in the sex (and total) education of the child, a far more effective and positive impact can be made.

We felt, second, that there should be communal thought and activity within the faculty. We had already agreed that it is not enough merely to present a course in sex education, but that it is necessary to deal with sex as it appears in other courses. But, if this is to be accomplished, obviously the teaching staff must unite in discussing and deciding upon perspective, goals, methods, etc. Such communal activity within the faculty is important for the entire school program, but especially in the sensitive area of sex education.

As we continued to talk about methods, several excellent suggestions were presented. The group reacted favorably to the following:

1) *Split Classes.* The boys and girls should be separated when matters such as the differences between the sexes, fertilization, birth, etc., are first discussed. The separation should be temporary and the separate classes so directed that the matters discussed in split classes may be talked about naturally when the class is together again.
2) *Questionnaires.* Questionnaires can be used to determine to what extent the students benefitted from the class. They will also give the children opportunities to ask questions they did not dare to ask in the presence of the others in the class.
3) *Conferences.* The teacher should be available at all times to carry on private discussions with the students. Then the students will know that the teacher cares and is willing to talk about anything which interests or troubles them.
4) *Material.* Many kinds of material were suggested and discussed. Many expressed appreciation for the N.U.C.S. resource book, *God's Temples,* by William Hendriks, also for the books and films of the Concordia Publishing House.

The final session ended on a beautiful note. One of the younger teachers urged us to recognize that, while we had gained much insight into why and how to teach our covenant students about sex, nothing of what we had learned would be effective unless they knew and felt in our classes that we loved them in Christ. Claiming to have that love and concern, all expressed themselves as eager to carry the things learned back to their P.T.A. meetings, faculty conferences, and, eventually, classrooms.

Administration by Objectives

By Peter Vande Guchte*

One of the difficult challenges an educational administrator faces is having to devote time and energy to matters other than "demand work." Objectives which are not immediate can too easily be pushed away in favor of the current crisis and the work at hand. Although day-to-day operations should not be neglected, somehow, sometime, the educational administrator must channel his energies toward goals and objectives that may be far more important than the matters which occupy his time day after day.

Educational administrators generally do not take the time to ask themselves, "What do I hope to accomplish this year?" or "What goals do I wish to reach this year?" Like many others—teachers, clergy, businessmen—administrators are not always clear about their personal and professional goals and objectives. They concentrate on doing well what is pressing and hope that their total effort results in something worth-while. Because objectives are not clearly defined or stated, "today's work" takes precedence every day and every week; the school, the college, the institution moves forward more by drift than by purpose . . . and the years slip by.

Some educational administrators are trying to administer more effectively by "administering by objectives." They focus their expenditure of time and energy on reaching stated objectives. Administration-by-objectives is a system of administration that is directly related to the management-by-objectives system widely adopted in business and industry in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Since the time that Peter Drucker coined the term "management by objectives" (*The Practice of Management,* 1954) there has been great interest in results-oriented systems of managing business enterprises. Management-by-objectives (referred to by the acronym MBO) is based on the premise that if objectives or results expected are carefully stated, the likelihood of attaining such objectives is great.

Dr. George Odiorne, one of the foremost proponents of MBO, defines it tersely: "In brief, the system of management by objectives can be described as a process whereby the superior and subordinate managers of an organization jointly identify its common goals, define each individual's major areas of responsibility in terms of the results expected of him, and use these measures as guides for operating the unit and assessing the contribution of each of its members." Since there is a distaste in education for the word "management" the word "administration" is substituted in the title of the system when it is applied to education.

Simply stated, ABO requires the administrator to define what he hopes to accomplish, to state such objectives in writing, and to discuss his objectives with his supervisor until mutual agreement is reached on a list of objectives. Periodically during the time period for which objectives are written and at the end of the period the administrator and his superior meet to discuss progress toward objectives. During the time period the administrator is responsible for expending the energy and resources necessary to meet his objectives. Operating within

* Peter Vande Guchte is Vice-President for Student Personnel Services, Calvin College.

his budget constraints, he uses his ability and energy to reach his objectives without clearing details of procedure with his supervisor.

ABO captures the elements of sound administrative common sense and formalizes it into a system of administration. Successful administrators who examine the MBO or ABO systems say, "I've been doing that for a long time!" The ABO method is a systematic approach to carrying out those administrative tasks which are essential to good human relationships and effective organizations.

The Steps in an ABO System

The following five steps briefly illustrate the essential steps in an administration-by-objectives system:

Step 1 The governing body and chief administrator must clearly state the goals and purposes of the school.

Administrators must know the goals of the organization if they are to plan their own objectives. The task of defining organizational goals ultimately belongs to the governing body of the institution, which may utilize the advice of other groups or of the chief administrator. Although this statement should be as clear as possible, it is intended to give general direction and unity of purpose and need not meet the requirements of being "measurable."

Step 2 Each administrator must state his major objectives for a defined period in writing.

The administrator who puts his objectives in writing usually does so with some care. He has usually given considerable thought to the objectives and may have sought advice from others. The written record of the objectives implies that there is a commitment to meet the objectives and that their completion can be measured.

Good objectives may be difficult to write. Administrative personnel may have to be trained how to write clear, concise, measurable ones. A popular reference book supplying the qualities of good objectives in teaching is R. F. Mager's *Preparing Instructional Objectives* (1962). The characteristics of good teaching objectives are applicable to administrative objectives as well. A few beginning guidelines for writing administrative objectives are these:

—Start with the word "to" followed by an action verb.

—Specify the result or outcome to be accomplished (in measurable terms, if possible; if not possible, showing how it will be known that the objective has been met).

—Set a date for completion of the objective.

Proponents of ABO recommend that administrators should write objectives in at least four different areas of responsibility.

a. *Routine* objectives are those day-to-day duties that must be accomplished to meet the basic requirements of the position. A job description is often the best source for writing such objectives. Since it may be possible for an administrator to list hundreds of routine objectives, it is important to list only those which will receive particular attention during the upcoming time period.

b. *Problem-solving* objectives are those which must be accomplished in order to solve a problem that is causing a breakdown in the routine operation of the institution or organization. If these holes are not patched by a problem solver, the ship may sink.

c. *Creative or innovative* objectives are those which move the institution forward. In a sense, they are "beyond-the-call-of-duty" objectives. New ideas, methods, procedures, dreams are the focus in this area. If routine and problem-solving objectives are met, the institution survives and is maintained. Creative and innovative objectives, however, place a premium on the ability to move into the future. Special attention should be given to such objectives only after the routine and problem-solving objectives are well met.

d. *Personal or professional* objectives define goals for a person's growth and development in his position as a professional administrator.

The number of objectives should be limited, especially if they are to be considered as major objectives. Probably about two to four major objectives in each area is good. A long list is frightening, and no one can focus on many goals at one time. A long list of objectives can be avoided by shortening the time within which they are to be attained. Instead of twelve objectives for a year, one may have three sets of four objectives for four-month intervals. Objectives are usually written for a year, but shorter times, such as six months, may be more appropriate for some objectives. The key, however, is to have a clear list of objectives that will require major effort by the administrator during a limited time.

Step 3 The list of objectives shall be finalized by mutual agreement of the author of the objectives and his supervisor.

Defining objectives opens communication between the supervisor and his subordinate about the objectives of the job. The supervisor and subordinate must talk about the job, priorities, and goals and objectives. The supervisor must be sure that objectives are realistic and attainable and must not

let his subordinate "bite off more than he can chew." A supervisor should be conscious that subordinates in this kind of discussion either set too many objectives or aim too high. Objectives should be challenging and attainable, not numerous and profound.

If disagreement initially occurs, discussion should continue until mutual agreement is reached. This communication between supervisor and subordinate before the period begins prevents later breakdowns of understanding about what the job is "supposed to be." Further, it may be advisable in the discussion session mutually to assign priorities to the objectives. In the end there should be a written statement defining the objectives to be met, the target dates for meeting them and the measures to be used to gauge this meeting.

Step 4 Periodically the supervisor and subordinate should meet to review progress toward objectives as defined.

Just as important as mutual agreement on objectives is the periodic discussion of the progress toward meeting those objectives. That discussion must avoid day-to-day operations or problems that are not directly related to the list of objectives. The periodic review is a time when successes can be acknowledged, problems exposed, and objectives restated or revised. There should be no great reluctance to restating, adding, or even deleting objectives at the time of the periodic review. Objectives are not "sacred"; they serve as administrative tools for reaching results and can be changed if conditions warrant. Obviously there should be mutual agreement on such changes and the changed objectives should be written.

Step 5 The supervisor and the subordinate should meet at end of the defined time period to review the degree of accomplishment of the objectives.

This final step in the ABO cycle serves as the basis for setting realistic objectives for the next period. This step permits the employee to appraise his own performance during the period in light of his objectives. Together the two can share the successful meeting of objectives. Unmet objectives can be discussed to determine the reasons for failing. Finally, the subordinate can use the list of objectives as a basis for setting objectives for the next period.

Benefits of ABO

ABO assumes that people are willing to work, are self-directing, and are able to set goals and objectives for their own work. ABO recognizes that people are motivated to work because of the psychological satisfactions they receive from meeting their objectives and from accomplishing something worthwhile.

ABO opens the possibility for mutual discussion about the job. Organizations often operate as if the primary objectives are "understood," when many times they are not. ABO has the potential for opening up communication about matters that are important to people in their jobs. ABO permits a clearer view of how the people in the organization are working together toward the goals of the institution.

Not Without Difficulties

ABO is not the cure-all for administrative ill. It is merely a structure, a systematic approach to working toward goals and objectives with persons in an organization. ABO is especially difficult to implement in education because many of the results expected in education are difficult to define. Adequate measures for gauging progress are difficult to find. Despite the difficulties of defining objectives and finding measures to determine progress, administrators must attempt to define results. Even if measures are not perfect, some intermediate ones can be found to serve as gauges of accomplishment. In cases where it is not possible to define objectives in terms of results, it is beneficial to state objectives in terms of programs which will be accomplished or major tasks which will be finished. If quantitative or qualitative measures cannot be stated, it usually is possible to describe conditions that will exist when an objective is accomplished.

ABO requires a great trust of subordinates. A supervisor depends on his subordinate to set meaningful objectives and to take action to meet objectives. He does not view himself as the initiator of the action to reach the results. The responsibility of reaching results is delegated to the subordinate. That is not to say that the supervisor is not vitally interested in the tasks of the subordinate. He recognizes, however, that he robs his subordinate of fulfillment in his position if he constantly advises him how to meet his objectives.

ABO can degenerate into a paper-work process where statements of objectives are typed and retyped, shuffled and reshuffled, and sent up and down the administrative hierarchy. ABO should not be used merely to serve as a "front," or as a paper answer to the accountability question. ABO must be a method of marshalling administrative energies toward meaningful objectives and goals.

Individualizing Learning and Grading

By H. Van Huizen*

Purpose: An attempt to provide greater Christian stewardship as a teacher to follow Biblical norms for educating children.

Basic Premises:

1. Each child is created by God for such a time as now in diversity of degree of talent. It follows that no one child, as shaped both by inheritance and environment, is alike.
2. In order to draw out and utilize a pupil's talent to the fullest, conditions of time, place, circumstance, monetary funds, and resource people within the community must be fully maximized.
3. The Christian grade school is merely one agent in the training and education process affecting the child. In short, at times, non-Christian agencies must be called on to aid the pupil.
4. We must have inherent trust in our Heavenly Father to incline the non-Christian toward beneficial service where Christians cannot or will not help. (c.f. The parable of the good Samaritan.)

The Situation: Life is marked by a spiritual struggle underlying all issues encompassed by it. Even where the Kingdom of God cannot be stopped in its victorious progress, we Kingdom workers often glance across to the goals and programmes of the Kingdom of Darkness.

Examples:

- We measure responses of our children acceptable to the world around us.
- We ensure that our children are successful in order to attract jobs, at best.
- We often cater to an indeterminable mean to ensure success of our programme at the cost of pupils bright and dull.
- We often encourage a competitive spirit which is unhealthy and un-Biblical, by lumping all pupils together on a report card calling for uniform criteria.

In order to meet with our true obligations as Christian teachers we cannot escape the assumption that we must do more in individualized teaching. It is through this approach that we meet each pupil as set out in our first premise. Group instruction is not out, for there are occasions where this is warranted. Many insights are gained by discussion and by interaction of pupils among one another. Too often it has led, however, to a teacher *versus* group situation. Who, as a teacher, is always able to precisely determine the degree and the amount of instruction functional to all pupils at its maximum at any given time?

I believe that individualized instruction is of greatest benefit in the basic subject areas where skill building is involved. The basic learning criteria can be best brought to bear by observing the following:

1. Each pupil, individually, is led from "the known" to "the unknown."
2. Instant checking and evaluation leads for each pupil to fulfillment of anticipation.
3. Undesirable or misunderstood procedures or approaches following misjudgments on the part of the pupil can be rectified, or forestalled.

Programme: The possibility for operating such a programme is feasible, for:

1. There are excellent individualized programmes available in kit form for the language arts and mathematical disciplines.
2. There is a multiplicity of material available these days which a resourceful teacher can choose and employ. By assessing his pupil, the teacher can "plug in" either visual, auditory or other manipulative media to drill, review, or enrich a concept under consideration.[1]
3. Teachers can adopt a card file system in which a variety of individual tasks, projects, and learning concepts can be included and which can be at hand when the need arises.

Evaluation: Evaluation of a pupil's progress has perhaps been the most onerous task of a teacher. How does one project a pupil's in a letter grade? A more equitable approach is suggested here.

1. Every pupil is measured by a series of

---

* H. Van Huizen is the principal of Calvin Christian School in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

i) These media include film loops, records, tapes, science equipment, chart, books and picture files, which pupils can handle and operate themselves.

standard mental ability tests which are indicative of a child's potential. (Whether these tests are slanted or onesided is not our argument here. The key word is indicative.)
2. Every pupil is periodically measured by standard achievement tests.
3. Some correlation factor is suggested by a comparison between mental ability and achievement factor.
4. A pupil's achievement in any given subject is measured against this correlation factor. In short, the pupil is measured against his own status in potential and achievement of the past. This to me would appear more in line with one of our basic premises, namely, to see a child work with his very own endowed talents. (Encouragement and admonition are now on a fairer footing.)

Comments: I am fully aware that such a scheme in reporting and evaluating is highly subjective. It denies much, commonly known as, objective reporting. To me this has been a myth anyway for the following reasons:
1. Our "objective" tests can easily be manipulated to bring about desired results through formulation of questions and by drawing of inferences already revealed in the class before.
2. The results of our tests have not always revealed insights, but rather "facts" which a good memory can easily supply even if the "facts" were not understood.

Ramifications:
1. A community supporting a Christian School must endorse the idea that a traditional, all at the same time, same criteria for all, approach is not the best for the pupil.
2. Some pupils who are handicapped by a variety of reasons to such an extent that an average grade school cannot sufficiently help, must be advised where better facilities exist in the community.
3. The upper grades within the grade school must be allowed to have certain subject areas as an elective. Due consideration must be given to the fact that certain pupils are more manipulatively inclined. Provision to drop more "abstract areas" for "more concrete areas" must be available. In mind I have to provide Industrial Education and Home Economics.
4. The teacher's role thus is to become more that of a coordinator by enlisting resource people, and by directing teacher-aids in a more meaningful way.

The Stuff that Literature is Made Of

By Larry Reynolds*

Changes in the high school English curriculum in the last ten years have plunged many experienced English teachers into a state of "future shock." While they long for the "good ol' days" when Shakespeare was a basic part of the high school curriculum and students knew the difference between the subjunctive and indicative mood, others are cynically observing that schools are merely going through the "progressive-Dewey stuff" all over again. Student-centered programs, individualized reading courses, and self-tailored electives confirm such suspicions. Colleges have not been immune to this process of change either. Some instructors of freshman English have complained that the programs in their colleges have become a combination of light shows and sensitivity sessions with perhaps a unit on the media thrown in. I also noticed the other day that one of our fellow colleges in northwest Iowa is now offering an elective in pornography. The teaching of literature is taking place under various guises, and the whole area of futuristics promises even more dramatic changes.

*Mr. Reynolds is Assistant Professor of English at Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa. This article is reprinted from *Pro Rege* (December, 1970).

THE STUFF THAT LITERATURE IS MADE OF

In this article I would like to deal with the teaching of literature and the basis for the structuring of a literature curriculum. English teachers, of course, soon discover that being an English teacher is more than just teaching literature. Even though most English majors on the undergraduate level spend the majority of their time taking literature courses, they will teach grammar, composition, the mass media, journalism, speech, and perhaps advise a newspaper or an annual staff. I believe that each of these areas is a legitimate curricular (or perhaps extra-curricular) concern, but should be considered apart from literature. A teacher's job description and the specific function of a classroom experience should merely be the application of a carefully constructed curriculum and all the areas such a curriculum embodies. Literature is one area.

Structuring a curriculum in literature immediately confronts the English teacher with the old student-centered *vs.* subject-centered dichotomy. In the public market place the student-centered proponents are in power, which became obvious with publication of James Moffett's *A Student-Center Language Arts Curriculum, Grade K-13* and its subsequent popularity. Very few protests have been published against the student-centered approach, and those that have been voiced have usually come from the Christian community. Although Richard Tiemersma, in his article "Sticking to One's Last: A Plea for Organizing Literature by Genre" (*The Christian Educators Journal,* November, 1972), doesn't specifically attack this approach, he does make a convincing case for what would be classified as a subject-centered approach to the teaching of literature.

And Christians should rightly be concerned about this dichotomy. A student-centered approach which states that curriculum should be determined solely on the basis of a student's needs tends to place the student in a vacuum. The student then stands independent of God and all creation, which approach results in relativistic view of reality. A subject-centered approach, however, may be just as dangerous if one tries to look at creation, which approach results in a relativistic view of reality. A subject-centered approach, however, may be just as dangerous if one tries to look at creation apart from man's heart-directed response to that creation. (Dr. Tiemersma is careful to avoid that error.) Reality should never be considered in isolation from its Creator and from man, God's image bearer on earth.

Fundamental to structuring a curriculum, then, is one's view of reality, and it is on this basic assumption that the Christian's view of God's creation should provide a distinct perspective in curriculum planning. When the English teacher deals with literature, he is working with a unique aspect of God's creation. The first question is, then, what is that creational stuff that literature is made of? What makes literature literature?

Many an English instructor has begun his course by making the distinction between any transcribed verbalization and that transcription which merits the classification literature. An article in the *English Journal,* Berkhof's *Manual of Christian Doctrine,* the *Washington Post's* coverage of the sky-lab mission, my wife's grocery list—these may communicate the thoughts of man, but they are not necessarily literature. All the above selections are probably qualified by their communicative (lingual) function; the important ingredient in such writing is clarity. Literature presupposes clarity, but is normed by its aesthetic qualifications. It is the aesthetic quality, the integrated harmony that is reflected in man's imaginative written response to the cosmos in which he has been placed, that qualifies a transcription as literature.

Man has *discovered* many ways to express this response artistically. Shelly, using the sonnet, portrays ironically the fatefully false pride of King Ozymandias; E. E. Cummings, in an innovative free verse poem "In just—", captures a spontaneous, innocent, and child-like response to spring; Hemingway, in a skillfully crafted short story "Hills Like White Elephants," probes the psychological turmoil of an affair that ends with abortion; Graham Greene describes the conscience struggle of a whiskey priest during the Marxists' rule in Mexico in his novel *The Power and the Glory;* and Arthur Miller enabled audiences to witness the tragedy of Willy Loman in the play *Death of a Salesman.* I emphasized "discovered" because I believe that man's artistic response is part of creation—a concept 20th century "autonomous" man would like to maintain.

Man never operates apart from the laws of creation, however. Rather, he discovers or unfolds new dimensions of the aesthetic principles that are a part of creation itself. Man, as he makes these discoveries, must be careful that he does not absolutize them. While the basic structure that God gave to creation has not changed, man may refine his theoretical and abstract perception of it. The initial rejection of Whitman's poetry assumed a poetic type of religious dogmatism because man failed to acknowledge an historical unfolding of the aesthetic aspect of creation, namely Whitman's use of free verse poetry. New art forms and the new expression of old art forms even now probably await discovery, and the Christian should see that

this dynamic unfolding dimension can result in a fundamental unity between structure and change.

Assuming that literature is qualified by its aesthetic function and that this function will continually find new forms of expression, the literature teacher still must determine to what extent (if any) the teaching of literature is the teaching of aesthetics. Most teachers rightly, I believe, reject the idea that teaching literature is really teaching aesthetics. There is a good case for requiring all college English majors to take a course in aesthetics, but to make every literature course a course in aesthetics would contribute to a rapid decline in enrollment in such courses.

The aesthetic may be a qualifying aspect of literature, but there are two other equally important dimensions that deal with the *response* that is being artistically expressed. That response is both historically and thematically qualified. Most literature is a distinct product of its age dealing with its value system, with its sociological, economic, and political problems, and with its philosophical vision. Literature is written within the context of the spirit of an age, and thus becomes a part of history's significant record. Even though I disagree with Henry Ford's statement that "history is bunk," I am not suggesting that the teaching of literature become the teaching of the history of literature. But seeing the historical-philosophical dimension of literature demands attention, for both the student and the contemporary literature that he would rather read are also shaped by this same historical aspect of creation. By trying the spirits of an age through its literature, the teacher helps the student to see the cultural dynamic of the literature he is studying, and perhaps to develop a sensitivity to the spirits of his own historical time.

I have to admit that the historical dimension of literature is not in vogue right now. In many high schools the historical survey courses in American and British literature have been dropped, and on the college level the enrollment in period courses is at an all-time low. Critics of the historical approach to the teaching of literature might justly ask whether the history teacher could not do a better and more efficient job of trying the spirits of each historical age. The history teacher does perform a job that the literature teacher cannot begin to replace, but the history teacher's primary concern in dealing with an historical period is analytical, and the texts he uses are not selected primarily for their aesthetic value but for their clarity. The literature teacher, however, is dealing with an art form that seeks to imaginatively project the reader into an experiential understanding of a particular time, rather than give an analytical report. Fitzgerald's *Great Gatsby* provides such an understanding of the jazz-bewitched 1920's—an understanding that the student could not gain from a history text.

The experience that a piece of literature conveys brings one to an understanding of the thematic dimension of literature—what the author is trying to say. The artist, although subject to aesthetic norms and shaped by the historical times in which he lives, is a unique creature standing before the face of God. He is responding to God's command to love Him—either positively through Christ, or negatively in his own depravity. If the literary artist is honest with his reader, his world and life vision—his view of nature, man, and God—will become an integral part of this thematic statement. The work of the Christian literature teacher is crucial at this point. Often the artist who is trying to objectify the spirit of his times doesn't realize that he is messing around with God's creation and mistakenly thinks that, with his own god-like reason, he is truthfully analyzing the society he is looking at. Many of the artist's observations might be valid, for he cannot escape God's ordering of life (just as the society he is analyzing cannot), but the central thrust will fall short of a Christ-redeeming view of reality. In 1949 J. D. Salinger in *Catcher in the Rye* prophetically warned his readers of the confrontation that took place between society and its youth in the 1960's, but Holden Caulfield at the end of the novel is in a mental institution where he will receive some God-less humanistic advice on how to face a blind man's view of reality. J. D. Salinger is a prophet but like so many authors of the twentieth century, he is a false one. The Christian reader must also try the spirits of these literary prophets, and this means dealing with the thematic statement that a literary work makes.

Related to the thematic aspect of literature is the proliferation of thematic units and minicourses on the high school level and thematically based courses on the college level. (The student cry for relevance has often been a motivating factor in the creation of such courses.) While a course that focuses its attention on the thematic aspect of literature is certainly a legitimate curriculum option, its legitimacy is valid only if the aesthetic and historical dimensions of literature also remain an integral part of the course. Otherwise, the course ceases to be a literature course and falls more legitimately under the classification of interdisciplinary, sociological, psychological, special interest, or whatever the case may be. The same

criticism would be true for any general course or survey and period course that would completely isolate its focus to the point of neglecting the other major components that make literature the stuff it is.

The aesthetic, historical, and thematic qualities of literature should not necessarily divide the teachings of literature into a three-ring circus with each aspect striving for equal time. The contest between the aesthetic and thematic elements of literature has been going on for some time under the pseudonyms of form and content, another false dichotomy in the teaching of literature. Clarence Walhout, in an excellent article on this dichotomy ("The Teachings of Literature in the Christian School," *The Reformed Journal*, September, 1965) demonstrates that content and form "are integral and in the final analysis are fused." I believe that although it adds to the complexity of the literature teacher's task, the three aspects of literature that I have dealt with are ultimately inseparable.

The three aspects that represent the stuff that literature is made of should then become a part of the objectives that determine the total structure of a literature curriculum:

I. That the student will develop a sense of the aesthetic of literature.
   A. That the student will develop an understanding and appreciation of the general characteristics of an art form and of each genre.
   B. That the student will develop an understanding and appreciation of the relationship of aesthetic principles to the structure of creation and its unfolding dimension.

II. That the student will develop a sense of the historical aspect of literature.
   A. That the student will develop an understanding of the relationship between a work of literature and the spirit of the times in which it is produced.
   B. That the student will develop the ability to Christianly try the spirits of those times.

III. That the student will develop an understanding of the thematic aspect of literature.
   A. That the student will develop the ability to discover the central statement or experience of a work of literature.
   B. That the student will develop the ability to Christianly try the spirits of that theme.

I know that these objectives would not withstand Mager's scrutiny, but I think they provide a good starting point for structuring a literature curriculum. Psychological and pedagogical concerns will, of course, determine the degree to which the teachings of literature can assume a theoretical mode and what curriculum experiences can best fulfill these goals. Then many of the changes which I mentioned at the beginning of this article (the elective in pornography excepted) might just become valid classroom experiences for such a curriculum.

Quotable Quotes...

Christian education then aims to develop young people to become mature and responsible citizens of the kingdom of God. Accepting God's special revelation, as interpreted by theology and the historic creeds, as a guide, it uses all of nature (God's revelation in nature) and all of culture (God's revelation in the cultural and historical process) as a medium in making meaningful to the student the nature of citizenship.

Christian education is, therefore, not a question of plusses or minuses. It is not neutral education in the secular subjects plus pious exhortations, prayer, and Bible study. Such a solution based on additions would simply be another form of dualism. Neither is it education minus much of nature and culture. Since sin has brought about confusion and disorganization in man's view of nature, there is always the temptation in Christian thought to set up an opposition between the natural and the super-natural and to emphasize the latter at the expense of the former. Because the fall of man has tremendously complicated the cultural problem there is the further danger of becoming anti-cultural in our educational endeavors. But any concept of Christian education which neglects the world of nature as an educational medium must of necessity lead to asceticism and any view of Christian education which drives a wedge between religion and culture and which refuses to use the totality of culture in the educative process can no longer truly be called education.

—L. Flokstra, *Tradition of Conviction?* (1958)

Maxi-Content IN MINI-COURSES

Teaching the Social Sciences by Utilizing the 9-week Courses of Study

By Martin Dekker

Mini-courses of some six to nine weeks are not new, but neither are they that prevalent in Christian schools. However, for the past two years, in social studies "cracker barrel" sessions at the MCTA and elsewhere, proponents and opponents of this innovation have been expounding their ideas. In spite of differences which seem to crop up among social studies people, the consensus seems to be that if these courses are to succeed, they should be offered at the secondary level. This article by Martin Dekker in the social studies department of Grand Rapids Christian High provides a rationale for their mini-courses, examples of courses and content, student reaction both positive and negative, and teacher evaluation. Their program is now entering its third year.

—James T. Vander Meulen

Why Do It?

In the Fall of 1971 Grand Rapids Christian High introduced nine-week courses in the various social sciences and English. At that time the school offered courses in the areas of U.S. history, psychology, sociology, economics and modern history, and government. As an example of the faculty's thinking, the primary reason for the change from a traditional study of history to this rather unconventional method was to provide a *distinct* change for students coming from the junior high schools. Teachers, sensing a general lack of interest in the study of history, were convinced that students felt they had "heard or done this same thing before;" even if the emphasis was broader, it was still repetition. Teachers were also convinced that students would appreciate the opportunity to *choose* a particular area of history in which he had or might develop an interest. We hoped these mini-courses would provide a *variety* lacking in the traditional approach of trying to cover everything in the broad scope of "textbook" oriented history. Then, too, the emphasis on specialization naturally found in a nine-week course would lend the student a greater amount of research and library work. And we also found that audio-visual materials could be utilized more in a specialized course.

We did not look upon this change to nine-week courses as an educational gimmick, for the sake of change, but rather as a concerted effort to provide something better and educationally sound for our students. We found that this type of teaching demands a more thorough utilization of staff members. Teachers must be very well equipped to teach particular areas. We have found this a stimulant for additional study and preparation. On the other hand, teachers also have the unique opportunity to teach areas in which they find a particular interest, such as their experiences during the Depression or in World War II.

How is it Done?

I am not going to say anything about how we do the scheduling, how students make their decisions or how many choices each student has. Each secondary school has its own method of schedul-

ing, and what might work for us would not necessarily be applicable elsewhere. I will explain, however, that these courses are scheduled according to grade levels; each course description (see course descriptions indicated below) indicates the grade(s) for which it is intended. Then, too, the number of nine-week courses available to the students is in direct proportion to staff members available and their preferences. At present we are offering some twenty different micro-courses, but if a course meets little or no student choice, it can be and perhaps is dropped. In fact, some courses were changed back to semester length after the evaluation dictated that course content was either too broad or too limited for nine weeks.

Samples

To best illustrate what is taking place in our social studies mini-course curriculum, I cite three courses in U.S. history.

1206

—BIRTH AND REVOLUTION OF OUR COUNTRY—Grade 10

Objectives:

1. To understand the providence of God in the birth and revolution of our country and the beginnings of a government we still live under today.
2. To see how America as a land was prepared for an influx of people and how events in Europe provided the people for movement to America.
3. To become acquainted with the events and facts of American history in this period of time.
4. To see cause and effect relationships.

Emphases:

1. Early reasons for colonizations
2. Early colonial living differences
3. Causes of the war
4. The war itself
5. Beginnings of the government
6. The new Constitution
7. American leadership through this period of time

Content:

The student will:

1. Read *The American Heritage Book of the Revolution.*
2. Be responsible for audio-visual materials used in class.
3. Write one major paper on any aspect covering this period.
4. Be responsible for class lectures and class discussion.
5. Be responsible for material covered in the AEP Harvard Series.
6. Be responsible for quizzes and nine-weeks test at the end of course.

Extras:

The student may:

1. Do any extra credit reading for the course.
2. Report (in writing or orally) on any extra reading or any other research.

Cost: $1.25

Prerequisites: None

Possible textbooks or paperbacks:

The American Heritage Book of the Revolution (American Heritage Publishing Company)

AEP Series

1. The *American Revolution*
2. *Constitution: One Nation or Thirteen*
3. *Colonial Defiance: The Boston Tea Party*

1207

—THE 20's AND 30's—Grade(s) 10, 11, 12

Objectives:

An understanding of two contrasting decades: the gay 20's with its flippers and flappers, eat drink be merry for . . . . philosophy contrasted with the ugly, hopeless, frustrating depression of the 30's.

Emphases:

The economic, sociological, psychological, philosophical, religious ideas of the decades.

Content:

From League of Nations to World War II. Films (Golden Twenties, Life in the 30's), filmstrips (on the 1930's).

Research: library

Stock Market crash: play stocks for 2 weeks to understand crash.

Family experience of depression: Dad, Mom, grandparents.

Tapes: America series.

Cost: $2.00

Prerequisites: None

Possible textbooks or paperbacks:

Only Yesterday, F. L. Allen

Since Yesterday, F. L. Allen

1208

—THE WESTWARD MOVEMENT—Grade 10

Objectives:

1. To understand something of the pioneer

spirit of those who carried the movement west.
2. To see God's providence in American growth west and in the Industrial Revolution.
3. To see how some European conditions aided the movement west.
4. To see clearly what Manifest Destiny meant to Americans and the strength and weaknesses of this view.
5. To see the richness of this land.
6. To see how all of this affected the American Indian.

Emphases:
1. The magnitude of this movement
2. The speed at which it was accomplished
3. Groups of people involved in it—the part they played
4. American expansion—Texas and the Southwest, Louisiana, Oregon—and how it was done
5. The American Indian: results of all of this for him, effects to this day

Content:

Students will:
1. Write one major paper on the Westward Movement.
2. Write one paper on the American Indian.
3. Be responsible for all audio-visual materials used in the class.
4. Be responsible for class lectures and discussion.
5. Be responsible for periodic quizzes and nine-weeks test at end of course.
6. Be responsible for AEP Harvard Series material.

Cost: $3.75

Prerequisites: None

Possible textbooks or paperbacks used:

The Far Western Frontier, Billington

Massacre (on American Indians), Marshall Sprage

AEP Series: *Conquest*: *Manifest Destiny and Mexican Land*

Evaluation

Since initiating the program a few years ago, the social studies department has had the opportunity to review and evaluate it. This included both student and teacher reaction plus a limited reaction from parents. The latter was usually given informally, sometimes through Parent-Teacher conferences and Open House. Especially the response from the students and their teachers gave us reasons for possible change.

A. Student reaction: most of it strongly in favor of the nine-week mini-course system.

Positive
1. Classes don't go so many weeks.
2. We get to choose.
3. We appreciate the variety of course offerings.
4. We get to change teachers.
5. We have no waste of time in a nine-week course.
6. We have ample time to make up a bad grade in the next nine weeks.
7. Our studies go into greater detail and provide greater coverage.
8. We get to know more students and teachers.
9. We enjoy better classes because we sign up according to interest.

Negative
1. We don't have enough time on a course.
2. We have only one chance to get a good grade.
3. Our courses are too specific.
4. We have a poor choice of courses.
5. We should always get the courses we choose.
6. We should have better explanations of the courses we choose.

B. Teacher reaction: most of it on the plus side of the ledger.
1. Overlapping of courses is a weakness in the system. For example, a course in the History of Warfare covered some of the same area as courses in the American Revolution, the Civil War, or World World II, the 40's and 50's. When this is the case, the course could be dropped from the offerings.
2. The student request for better course descriptions resulted in the publishing of a new catalog, which includes the examples previously cited.

Summing up, we feel that our program is meeting the challenge of today's youth. If we continue to offer solid content coupled with excellent required reading, then the repeated student reaction of "We get to choose" will prove to us that we have something worthwhile. We do not consider this teaching method flawless and we realize that continued re-evaluation is necessary. After two years, however, we feel that we have a generally positive reaction from the students, teachers, and parents.

Christian Educators Journal Assn.
Joel Beversluis, Circulation Manager
862 Dunham, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506
Address correction requested

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