christian educators journal

NOVEMBER 1974

A CASE FOR INFORMAL EDUCATION

—See Page 24

CONTENTS
NOVEMBER 1974

christian educators journal

NOVEMBER 1974

CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS JOURNAL, Volume 14, Number 1, November, 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
BUSINESS MANAGER-TREASURER: Arie F. Doornbos, 4341 Kimball Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508

REGIONAL EDITORS:
Don Coray, Eastern Christian High School, 50 Oakwood Ave., North Haledon, New Jersey 07508
Harriet Eldersveld, Roseland Christian School, 314 W. 108th St., Chicago, Illinois 60628
Jack Fennema, Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, 37350
Melvin Huizinga, Lambton Christian High School, 295 Essex Street, Sarnia, Ontario N7T 4S3
Ray Klapwyk, Calvin Christian School West, 14345 McQueen Road, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
Henry Kok, Randolph Christian School, 457 Second St., Randolph, Wisconsin, 53956
Philip Lucasse, Education Department, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506
Richard Vander Laan, Pella Christian High, 604 Jefferson St., Pella, Iowa 50219
James Vander Meulen, Denver Christian Intermediate, 735 E. Florida Ave., Denver, Colorado 80210
BOOK REVIEW EDITOR:
Norman De Jong, Bellflower Christian School, 17408 S. Grand Ave., Bellflower, California 90706
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: Mike Vanden Bosch, Abe Bos
For Trinity College: Dan Diephouse
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 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 or membership in the Association should be sent to the business manager. Subscription price is $3.00 per year if a majority of the members of a supporting organization subscribes and if a single check and mailing list is forwarded to the business manager. Subscription price is $3.50 per year for individual subscriptions for all members of a school faculty, if a single check and mailing list are submitted, $4.00 per year for individual subscriptions, and $10 for three years. Checks should be made payable to the Christian Educators Journal Association. Issues are published in the months of November, January, March, and May.

Correspondence concerning articles or book reviews should be sent to the nearest Regional Editor, 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, or 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.
4. A schedule of advertising rates is available from the Business Manager.

AN ENTREATY FOR EDUCATIONAL ECUMENISM

Unless my reading of recent Protestant sentiment about public schools is all wrong, the climate has never been better for offering leadership to Christian parents and teachers who are presently not involved in a Christian school. Not all the motives of those who are now more open to the option of Christian schools are the highest, of course, but neither are all the motives of its present supporters. Evangelical Protestants of many denominational stripes had barely recovered from resentment at the Supreme Court for nibbling away at the remaining token evidences of Christian atmosphere in classroom and curriculum before they were made aware of a number of other changes in their local public school: an upswing in the multi-racial nature of the student body, an upswing in the militancy of secular textbooks and teachers against certain ethical and doctrinal religious beliefs, an upswing in discipline problems and classroom disorder, and a downswing in academic standards.

The cumulative effect of these trends has caused two kinds of militancy among conservative Protestants: they have lashed out against public schools, protesting textbooks or teachers, or they have turned to alternative schools for their children. It is the second of these that concerns us directly as Christian educators, although the first is also our concern as Christian citizens.

This issue of CEJ marks the tenth year of Dr. Donald Oppewal as Managing Editor. Under his excellent leadership CEJ has flourished and the cause of Christian education has advanced. The Board hereby wishes to express its profound gratitude and appreciation for Dr. Oppewal's significant contributions. We look forward to the next decade with confidence and with the prayer that God will continue to use our Editor through these pages to stimulate our thinking and to improve our practice as Christian educators.

Henry J. Baron, President of the Board

We represent a religious tradition which has a long standing commitment to Christian schools, and, in spite of our feelings of inferiority, considerable maturity in applying our Christian commitment to the classroom. We have over a century of solid effort and achievement at building schools and training teachers for them, so that the best combination of academic achievement and Christian nuture could be expressed through them. Our collective efforts have made us the next to largest (second only to Missouri Synod Lutherans) group of conservative Protestants in the field of the Christian day school, high school, and college. We are, I believe, the envy of many Protestants whose faith in the public schools as the instrument of both quality education and Christian life style has been shaken by the events of the last fifteen years.

Elsewhere on the American religious scene similar trends toward blatant secularism in social policy have led Christians to unite in common cause to reaffirm a Christian witness in the political arena, whether in sponsoring anti-abortion rallies, or declarations on race, or proclamations against state lotteries, or simply in the marshalling of forces to elect Christian candidates for political office. Such ecumenical activity is now a feature of the political scene, and promises to change from the ripple it now is to a wave of the future.

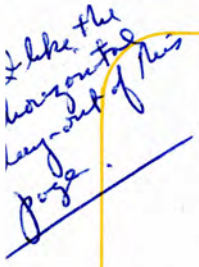
But what of the educational scene? What of the Christian community's effort to pass on the Christian vision to its young? Here similar efforts are also being made, but largely outside the circles of the readers of this *Journal.* Both denominational and inter-denominational schools are springing up all over the country, and with varying degrees of support, and with minimum expertise in the intricacies of making a school Christian.

We in our tradition now have a fantastic opportunity to engage in an ecumenical effort with like-minded Christians, like-minded in the extent to which they see the Christian faith as the best undergirding for any meaningful educational effort. We have in our tradition of parental rather

than parochial schools an opportunity to transcend denominational boundaries in search of an even better expression of the Christian witness in education.

Some schools have already risen to this challenge and have made, through board committees, contact with other church groups, seeking not merger of denominational identities but mergers of educational efforts. Some have advertised in local newspapers and have sent speakers to civic organizations soliciting both students and support for a joint Christian witness in that town or city. A few have altered constitutions of school societies to encourage other conservative Protestants to become functioning members of that school community.

Such are some of the ripples presaging an educational ecumenical movement. Whether the ripples die out or become the wave of the future depends, I believe, on the vision and vigorous action of the professional educator, that core of trained and committed Christian educators who see both the perils of our present parochialism and the



Why Study History?

By A. Kenneth Austin*

Why study history? This certainly is a fair question, and every teacher or professor of history had better have a satisfactory answer or forfeit any legitimate claim for the existence of his discipline.

Establish Identity

One very important function of history is to help us establish our identity. Man demands to know from whence he came and where he is going. Although the prophetic quality of history is somewhat questionable, certainly its ability to probe the past is not. Historian Robert V. Daniels tersely stated, "Without history we have no knowledge of who we are or how we came to be, like victims of collective amnesia groping in the dark for our identity." I think one reason black students so desire black history courses is that such courses would help establish a long denied black historical identity.

Learn How To Think

Historical study properly done should teach the student how to think. He needs to learn how to gather, categorize, and evaluate data. He must judge the reliability of his sources and differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information. Then he must draw conclusions from the available evidence. Historians are much more important than you think. If you do not study history, then they virtually dictate what you believe about the past. Do you believe Lincoln was a great president? If you do, how do you know? The answer is simple; some historian told you. The study of history enables the student to make his own judgments and to accept or reject the conclusions of other historians.

Become a Responsible Citizen

The study of history also stimulates responsible citizenship, especially if one studies the history of the country of which he is a citizen. Political parties are better understood in light of their origins. Their theories are most understandable when viewed in a broader historical context. Social

*A. Kenneth Austin is Associate Professor of History at Covenant College, Lookout Mt., Tenn.

potential of professional leadership in extending the blessings of Christian education to the young of numerous Protestant persuasions. Is it parent or professional pedagogue who should exercise leadership in such outreach, and who should be best equipped to deal with its inevitable problems if pursued?

Why stand we here idle? What is it that professional pedagogues wish? Who has heard your voice and of your vision on this challenge? If the highest motivations are needed, are they not to be found in our vision to claim all areas for Christ and to cherish this chance for all fellow Christians? If the lowest motivations be needed to make us respond, would these not be found in declining birth rates and shrinking enrollments? Are not our very jobs on the line in the next decade?

With an undersupply of future students and an oversupply of Christian teachers, need we look further for a stimulus to action?

Indeed, why stand we here idle?

—D.O.

and economic programs are more easily analyzed and evaluated and their impact more accurately predictable when compared with similar programs of the past. The study of history, I hope, would make a significant contribution in the development of a responsible voter and politically active citizen.

Evaluate Religious Climate

In addition to the benefits enumerated above there is a special value for the Christian in the study of history. God created man a religious being, and although he has been corrupted and distorted in the fall, this part of his being has not been obliterated. He is still a religious creature, and much of what he does politically, socially, and economically is determined by a prevailing religious climate. This climate may be subtle and obscure, and he may deny that he even functions within such a context. A Christian study of history will recognize, analyze, and evaluate these prevailing religious climates and warn of the dangers they create.

A conspicuous example of what I am talking about is what has been referred to in the past few years as the American "civil religion" or "civic faith." It is the blending together of Christianity, the democratic process, patriotism, and the American way of life. The product is a compound in which the elements have lost their distinctiveness. The result is that many Americans, including evangelical Christians, believe that the United States is a Christian nation—a delusion which I cannot support. The outward manifestations of the exercise of this civil religion are such things as prayer breakfast in the White House, prayers followed immediately by the Star Spangled Banner before athletic events, or devotionals at the beginning of P.T.A. meetings. Whereas these activities could be genuine expressions of worship for the Christian, the danger is in non-Christian participation. Might they not possibly delude non-Christian America into believing that it is something that it is not?

Biblical Christianity is international. Therefore, to make the American way synonymous with Christianity is to rob Christianity of its distinctiveness. A Christian can be a good American. He can vote, he can be patriotic, he can support his government. He should do or be all of these, but he must always remember that to be Christian and to be American are different. Many other religious climates have prevailed in other countries at other times, and the study of history from a Christian perspective will show how they have influenced the actions of men. Obviously, at least obviously for the historian, the study of history is of paramount importance.

Use for Professions

One last but very important question especially for the college student, "What can I do with a degree in history?" Many students who major in history do so because they want to teach it. But there are many other uses. A major in history is valuable for any endeavor that requires a liberal arts background: for example, the ministry, law, politics, library science, and journalism. Some occupations in which the history major directly employs skills he has learned in his discipline include archivist, researcher, and national park historian.

The study of history is by no means useless, valueless, or irrelevant. It is one of man's oldest intellectual pursuits and continues to be an indispensable discipline in the elementary school, the high school and the college liberal arts program.

FOR CHURCH HISTORIANS Only

Dale J. Cooper*

With a certain dismay I see developing within the Christian school a trend away from the study of Church history. It appears as a disease, beginning with the students ("Why do we have to learn this dry and boring stuff?") and rapidly spreading to the teachers. At this point we teachers either press for and succeed in eliminating the course from the curriculum by pleading that because of student apathy such a course is unteachable, or failing that, we torpedo the course by disregarding the history of the church and choosing as our subject matter "something that the students are more interested in."

But one may object: "Isn't the picture you paint a bit overdrawn?" Perhaps so, but somehow I cannot rid myself of the specter of students (and teachers too!) *dreading* (the word is not too strong) the study of church history. This is painful for me, especially when I recall that Christianity is—indeed prides itself on being—an *historical* religion.

The God whom Christians love and adore is a God who works in history. In the Bible the prophets and apostles say little about who God *is;* rather, they continually point to what He has *done.* The Christian God not only exists; what is more important, He *acts,* and history is the theater of his activity. From the earliest pages of Genesis recording his Creation to the final pages of Revelation prophecying his completed Re-creation, the Bible never tires of recalling that God is active and involved in the course of our human history.

If, therefore, one desires to know this God, he must look at what this God has done. History is the product of his activity. To know God, therefore, every Christian must become an historian. Indeed the true Christian cannot help being one.

It is my contention that God's activity in this world can be divided into three periods or testaments, corresponding with the three persons of the Trinity.[1] The first is normally called the Old Testament era. It is the era of the Father, spanning the period from Creation to the coming of Jesus Christ. Believers in that era came to know God primarily through His clear leading in and guiding of specific events in their history. Creation, the call of Abraham, the exodus, the conquest of Canaan, the years of the Israelite monarchy, the exile in Babylon—all of these events and many more, when viewed by the believers through the eyeglasses of faith, revealed to them the ever-present and controlling hand of God. Furthermore, whenever one of the believers was tempted to lose heart and faith in this God who controls, a prophet arose saying,

*Dale J. Cooper teaches Bible and English at Calvin Christian High School, Grandville, Michigan.

[1]For this insight I am indebted to Dr. F. L. Battles of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

"Remember! (shouted at the top of his voice for all to hear). . . . . Remember what great things God has *done* for us in the past; on that basis we may take hope for the present and the future."

The second stage of God's activity in history covers the life of Christ (0-33 A.D.). It is the age of the Son, the era of the New Testament. During this period God did not act only in and through history. God takes history so seriously, He *became* (part of) it, more particularly, part of human history. "And the Word (God) became flesh and pitched his tent among us . . . " (John 1:14). This is the apex of all God's activity in history: the entrance of Jesus Christ, God Himself, into it. Because of the importance of this event at the very midpoint of history, we date events on our calendars either backward or forward from the time of His coming.

If it be true, as the Bible so amply testifies, that the Lord is unceasingly active in history and that He is the same " . . . yesterday, today, and forever . . . " (Hebrews 13:8), then we must conclude that God is still at work today. In addition, we Christians are invited to believe that present history, the history of his church in particular, tells us something about God and his purposes for this world. Church history has been given to us by God as his "third testament," so to speak. During this third era, the age of the Holy Spirit (33 A.D. until the return of Christ), God through his Spirit is busy working out, via the church, his purposes for this world. Church history, then, is the book of the continuing acts of God in human history. Though this writer does not believe that God has given anyone an infallible and full understanding of what He is presently doing (as He did give to the Biblical writers), nevertheless, it is true that if one wants to know God today, he does well to take the advice of Biblical man: *Circumspice!,* Look about you, see what is *happening,* for God is printing His very signature on the events of history, especially the history of His chosen people, the church.

But the reader may ask: How and where can one see God involved in history? Is His presence that obvious? Allow me two comments in reply.

First, the very existence of the question serves to point up our malady. At the faintest whisper of doubts about God's presence in history, Biblical man would have pricked up his ears and raised his eyebrows in incredulity. For him, even to pose the question would have been preposterous. "Where is God involved, you ask? Well, open your eyes! God is everywhere!" would have been his reply.

With such a response to an honest question I do not mean to berate the inquirer or to castigate him for lack of faith. On the contrary. Both he and I live in a twentieth-century world of secularism that insulates all of us from the dimension of the supernatural and creates within each of us a mood which blinds our eyes from seeing any involvement by God in the present world of space and time. Our present situation reminds me of the position of people during the inter-testamental period; they believed that prophecy had died out, for there was no longer "any word from the Lord." God had supposedly left the world and retreated to heaven. History, therefore, as inter-testamental man saw it, was careening hopelessly out of control.

What I am saying is that it has never been easy to maintain a vision of the Divine presence in history, but the prevailing mood of secularism makes it doubly difficult today. But keep it we must, for that vision lies at the very heart of a Christian perspective on history and forms the very rationale for Christian education.

My second response to the question "How and where can one see God involved in history?" is this: "I will not tell you." Abrupt as the answer may sound, it is nonetheless true that it is illegitimate for one person within the Christian community to discern for another the action of God in history. I must not do it for you, nor must you do it for me. For either of us to perform the work for the other would rob one of us of the *joy* as well as the *responsibility* of discovering for himself that God is involved in this world of space and time. Not even we teachers of church history ought to perform for our students the task of discerning God's activity in leading and guiding his church. Ours is rather the far more awesome—and difficult—responsibility of equipping them with the means of discovering it for themselves. To be sure, Christians exist not in isolation from one another, and, therefore, those who either cannot or will not see God's involvement, we as teachers must assist. But ultimately, all of us, teachers and students alike, must be prophets—human beings who attempt to see the finger of God in history, the history of his church in particular.

Consequently, I hope that, instead of finding the study (and teaching!) of God's involvement in the church boring and dry, we—teachers especially—might become excited about this enterprise. Only then can our students catch our enthusiasm and join the army of marchers who know the meaning of history. Only then will they become confident, joyous, and excited members of his church.

To do history in the manner described above, the historian must pose eight questions. With these questions I hope to deal in a subsequent article.

The Asylum

"AN ANNOUNCE-MENT"

by H. K. Zoeklicht*

It was hot-lunch day at Omni Christian High. Teachers and kids welcomed the change from the brown bag, mothers and wives welcomed the ten extra minutes in bed, and the PTA mothers welcomed the modest profit added to their kitty. So everybody was happy.

Even The Asylum-or faculty room-exuded good will. There was the smell of barbecues mixed with coffee aroma and the pungent odor of a cigar stub left in the ash try on the center table. And there was jovial talk. For a few moments problems of inflation, deflation or vexation were displaced by pleasurable gastric juices and nonsense chatter about basketball stars, day-old bread bargains, and a sale on stretch panty hose.

John Vroom hunched over his lunch. He was in the vinyl-covered, "easily washable" arm chair to which he had been appointed by his colleagues for being the messiest eater. Just now he had bitten too deeply into his éclair and was busily concentrating on licking the squished-out cream off his mustache. (He had grown the thing during the summer, something he had decided to do after seeing a photograph of Hendrikus Johannes Lamstraal, the dominie who had concluded his career as a man of the cloth by baptizing John Henry Vroom.) Next to John sat Sue Katje, almost purring like a kitten as she licked her finger tips clean from the remnants of her chocolate covered donut.

"Well, Sue," said John after one last lingering upward sweep of his tongue, "that was good. God has again given us our daily bread, and I must confess it was better than the baloney sandwich my wife made yesterday."

Sue yawned contentedly, shifted her position, and got ready to settle more comfortably into her easy chair when a click through the wall speaker alerted everyone to an imminent announcement. The *sotto voce* voice of Peter Rip, the principal, wandered through the room: "The teachers will please be reminded that there's an important faculty meeting today at 3:45 sharp. The meeting will be held in the library as per usual. The agenda for the meeting will be in your boxes right after your last class. May I please remind you that attendance is necessary."

There was a slight pause as if the voice was searching for a more positive conclusion. Then it added, brightly: "Oh yes, you will be interested to know that my wife baked another batch of your favorite peanut butter cookies." Another click signalled the end of the announcement.

Sue Katje, the librarian, stiffened and grumbled grimly: "Your favorite peanut butter cookies my hangnail! I'd forgotten all about that stupid meeting. Now I can't put up that table display I had planned for this afternoon." She got up abruptly, stomped to the coffee urn and poured herself a cup of black Nescafé. Behind her back erupted a chorus of other dissident voices.

"Another faculty meeting-what a waste of time!"

"Yeah, we'll sit there for two hours on our duff pretending to be democratic when all the time we're only expected to be a rubber stamp for the powers that be."

"Boy, you people sound professional!"

"Professional? Let me tell you something. It's a bunch of phoney baloney, that's what! Why, every year starts out the same way. We get this big

*Our peripatetic pseudonomic pedagogue pronounces on professionalism in this chapter of the ongoing saga of mythical Omni High.

document with all the garbage about high professional standards. We're expected to turn in goals and lesson plans and courses of study and lists of teaching materials and tests and 'bright, creative' ideas for improving our educational endeavors! We're gonna be visited and evaluated and conferred with regularly. We're gonna have a say in the affairs of the school. And what ever happens to all that? Nothing, not a single blasted thing! I haven't turned in a thing in three years, and none of you has either. And none of us has ever been visited by P.R. No, I'll take that back. Jill was visited once last year after a parent had heard a rumor to the effect that Jill was flirting with the big boys in her class."

"Talking about professional standards—you all remember that P. R. told me last spring not to give such low grades to my Research Paper students so parents wouldn't complain?" Lucy Bright, the young English teacher, added the last bit to the cloud of discontent that had mushroomed after P. R.'s announcement. She now shoved aside the stack of compositions she had intended to read, and turned to John Vroom who had so far been too busy ingesting his daily apple to contribute to the fray.

"John, you teach a course in Ethics; tell me, is our attitude all wrong about faculty meetings and professionalism?"

Vroom carefully gnawed the last remnants off the apple core, then tossed the core across the room toward the tall black wastebasket; he missed, and the core broke in two pieces as it smacked against the beige wall behind the basket. Then he answered, "Well Lucy, I think it's this way: God is a God of order, and that means that we also must do things decently and in good order, and that's why we need meetings once in a while."

Lucy winced and turned to Bob Den Denker who had been puffing his pipe in silence, though he had been listening carefully. "Bob, I really want to know—are *we* all wrong or is the system wrong? I mean, shouldn't we be doing much more than what we're doing and yet when we do something or talk about something at these faculty meetings, it all seems so useless." There was frustration in her voice and dejection on her face as she waited for Den Denker's reply.

Bob stood up, walked over to the wastebasket, picked Vroom's smashed apple core off the floor, dumped the pieces into the basket and then knocked the ashes out of his pipe. He sighed and began to speak slowly as he turned back to Lucy.

"The fact is that we *are* a group of professionals here, working together at something pretty rare in a predominantly secular society, something we call Christian education. *If* what we're trying to do here is really important, *and* very difficult, and even in danger of collapse, *then* we have all sorts of vital things to discuss and do together—enough to keep us busy for the rest of the year."

"But," Karl Den Meester cut in, "you know as well as I that we never get to anything important in faculty meetings. For one thing—half of us aren't there usually or come in late. There's coaching, there's driver's ed., there's play practice, there's detention duty, there are teachers with after-school jobs. And for another, we always seem to get bogged down and bored stiff by such trivialities as the colors of the pass that will allow a student to use the bathroom during class time."

"Maybe we could agree on a more worthwhile agenda?" offered Jill Van Vuren hopefully.

"You're crazy if you think we could agree on anything around here," Steve Vanden Prikkel replied sharply. "Tell me," he continued as he ticked off the items on his fingers, "did we agree on a dress code, on what to do about smokers, on a time for daily announcements, on how many times we should have chapel, on pledging allegiance for every chapel, on a school song, on offering Latin or Dutch? Why, we can't even agree on whether we should have a gold or green carpet in this room, or whether a baseball coach should get as much as a basketball coach," he added disgustedly.

"Nor on the time of day," commented Karl Den Meester wryly, comparing his watch with the Westinghouse wall clock which showed that the noon break was nearly over.

Bob Den Denker picked up his brief case. "All right," he said, "so we have a hard time agreeing. But don't you think we could at least agree that it is of some importance to discuss the many ways we could and should try to make this place live up to its name—a Christian school, for which all of us in this community, in a shaky economy, pay the price of almost half a million dollars."

He walked toward the door but turned around before he opened it. "You know," he added, "I'd really like to see us seriously tackle this challenge once: What would it take to make Christ himself feel comfortable and honored among us—in the classroom, in the locker room, on the football field, in the halls, in chapel. What changes would we need to work for?"

When the door closed behind Bob, Sue Katje commented drily, "He forgot to mention one place."

"What's that?" asked John Vroom innocently.

"This place right here."

Should Students Be Informed of Test Results?

Peter W. De Kam*

Interest in Standarized Testing

Since the first decades of the twentieth century, there has been a growing interest in standardized testing. This interest was sparked in good measure by the work of Wilhelm Wundt, who was one of the first to try to measure man's intelligence. He inspired Cattell, Binet, and a host of others. Since then, ability tests, achievement tests, interest tests, personality tests, and others have been developed (Bruce Shertzer and Shelly C. Stone. *Fundamentals of Guidance.* Geneva, Illinois: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971). In the 1920's these tests began to be used in the schools. The advent of guidance specialists into the schools increased the use of these tests. At present, throughout their elementary and secondary school years, students are subjected to, given the opportunity to take—you choose the verb—many tests of development, achievement, interest, and ability.

Most people want a fair deal in the market place. One also has a right to expect that the money spent on testing in education be used constructively. If test results are simply stored away and forgotten, one has a right to object. One has a right to ask about the helpfulness of testing to children. One always has a right and a duty to insure that the best possible use is made of information gained through testing. Arising out of a desire to make the best possible use of money, time, and tests, the question has been asked: "Should students be informed of test results?"

Now to explore the responses to that question. "Test results" refers not to the teacher-classroom tests of achievement, but to the standardized tests of achievement, ability, etc. The "students" are in elementary, secondary and higher education. Since parents are responsible for their children, "students" includes parents.

*Peter W. De Kam is principal and junior-high social studies teacher at the Leota Christian School, Leota, Minnesota.

Review of the Literature

A review of the literature reveals a reaction against testing in general. Martin L. Gross (*The Brain Watchers.* New York: Random House, 1962) and H. Black (*They Shall Not Pass.* New York: William Morrow and Company, 1963) informed the general public that tests are not absolute indicators of achievement, ability, or whatever. They say that tests are subject to misinterpretation by anyone who learns of the results.

Elias Blake ("Test Information as a Reinforcer of Negative Attitudes Toward Blacks," *Proceedings of the 1970 Invitational Conference on Testing Problems.* Evanston: Educational Testing Service, 1970) called attention to the possibility that tests can be used to reinforce negative attitudes toward and beliefs about some minority groups. He was speaking in particular about the dangers of testing black people.

Robert L. Ebel ("The Social Consequences of Educational Testing," *Proceedings of the 1963 Invitational Conference on Testing Problems.* Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1964) presented an apologetic for testing at the Invitational Conference on Testing Problems in 1964. He did not deny the dangers of the misuse of test results, but *acknowledged* the relative value of test results. He urged that test results be used only as one more tool to help students. He said:

> . . . we shall judge the value of the tests we use not in terms of how accurately they enable us to predict later achievement, but rather in terms of how much help they give us to increase achievement by motivating and directing the efforts of students and teachers.

Black did not scorn testing so much as too much reliance on testing. He felt that test results should

be used by those concerned, but he scoffed at those who let test results use them (op. cit.).

Having acknowledged with Black, Gross, Blake, and Ebel the weaknesses of testing, we can now ask whether showing test results to students and parents is wise. John A. R. Wilson ("Let's Not Tell Parents Their Children's I.Q." *Phi Delta Kappan,* June, 1959, pp. 343-345) although cautioning the reader about the lack of validity and the danger of misinterpretation, wrote that (1) if school personnel are willing to explain the results of tests to parents and/or students, (2) if there is a reason for telling, and (3) if the results have been checked against other criteria, test results might be told to parents.

Robert F. Topp ("Let's Tell Parents Their Children's I.Q.," *Phi Delta Kappan,* June, 1959, pp. 343-345) wrote that keeping parents in ignorance of helpful information concerning their children is indefensible. He felt that if counselors and teachers needed to know test results, so did parents. He called attention to Socrates' advice, "Know thyself," adding that test results help parents and children know themselves.

In *Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming* (Arthur Combs, ed. Washington: National Education Association, 1962) the authors advocate explaining test results to those who ask for them. They wrote:

> There should be no secret information, no mystery surrounding a testing program. No one is more entitled to complete and accurate information than is the student himself; to make the information meaningful is the responsibility of the school.

Ralph F. Berdie ("Testing Programs and Counseling in the Schools," *The Impact and Improvement of School Testing Programs.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) advocated that student use their test results. He wrote:

> Tests contribute to counseling by providing information about the counselee to the counselor, but the ultimate purpose is to help the pupil learn about himself. Test results should be used to stimulate the counselee.

Lee Goldman, too (*Using Tests in Counseling.* New York: Appleton-Century Croft, Inc., 1961), favored showing test results to students. He stated, however, that everyone may not want to know about himself.

Orville G. Brim ("American Attitudes Toward Intelligence Tests," *American Psychologist,* February, 1965, pp. 125-130) wrote that it was natural for a person to want to know about his performance on tests. Especially most secondary students, he wrote, would like to know. And if people want to know, he believed they should be told.

William Turnbull ("Use of Measurement in Education," *National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin,* May, 1970, pp. 80-87) wrote that one ought to use test results as they are used in individualized learning situations. In these situations, they are used by the student to help him decide his next step. He urged testing and "banking" the information for use in such future big steps in life as the selection of school and vocation.

Many of these writers, as you may have noticed, favor showing test results to those who want to know. This implies that there are some who don't want to know. John Neulinger ("Attitude of American Secondary School Students Toward the Use of Tests," *Personnel and Guidance Journal.* December 1966, pp. 337-341) did some research on this and found that most of the sentiment against testing came from students of lower economic classes, who felt that the tests condemned them.

The next question that could be asked is: "What effect does sharing test results with students and parents have on the students?" Wilbur B. Brookover ("Improvement of Academic Achievement Through Student's Self Concept Enhancement," *Report of Cooperative Research Project 1636, U.S. Office of Education.* East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, 1965) found, in a one-year research study with three groups of low-achieving ninth graders, that the self-concept of ability to do academic work improved when students were told of high expectations from "significant others." Three kinds of significant others were used: parents, an expert, and a counselor. In this research, only those whose parents told them of high expectations improved in their self-concept of academic ability. (Brookover noted also that the self-concept of academic ability can, however, function independently of measured intelligence.)

James L. Lister and Merle M. Ohlsen ("The Improvement of Self Understanding Through Test Interpretation," *Personnel and Guidance Journal,* April, 1965, pp. 804-810. Also: "The Effects of Orientation to Testing on Motivation for and Outcomes of Testing Interpretation," *Report of Cooperative Research Project 1349, U.S. Office of Education.* Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois, 1962) found that self-understanding increased after test results were told to students. They tested 700+ students in grades five, seven, nine, and eleven. They noted a decline in accuracy of self-understanding after sixty days, but overall there re-

mained an increase in self-understanding after sixty days.

Bert W. Westbrook ("Effects of Test Reporting on Self Estimation of Scholastic Ability and on Level of Occupational Aspiration," *Journal of Educational Research,* May, 1967, pp. 387-390) tested boys in the eleventh grade and found that they raised their level of occupational aspiration after being informed of test results on the School and College Ability Tests.

Roger L. Barrett ("Changes in Accuracy of Self Estimates," *Personnel and Guidance Journal,* December 1968, pp. 353-357) conducted a study to find out the influence of self-regard on the accuracy of self-estimate and the influence of reporting test results on the accuracy of self-estimate. The tests involved were the Kuder Preference Record, the Differential Aptitude Tests, and the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress. He found that the students who received test results had a more accurate self-estimate than those who did not receive the results. He also found that the students with high self-regard made more accurate self-estimates. This report recognized the influence these tests might have on feelings, stating that no attempt was made to determine the feelings of those tested. These students were tested fourteen days after being informed of test results. Compared to some other research, this research allowed a rather short interval of time.

Summary and Conclusion

Gross, Blake, and Black pointed out abuses of testing. Over-reliance and misinterpretation were emphasized. Ebel acknowledged the misuse of tests but asserted that if used along with other criteria they are helpful in understanding one's self. Wilson, Topp, and others felt that, with some qualifications, test results should be open information. Neulinger found some evidence that those who don't want to know test results probably did not make favorable scores.

Research in which test results were explained to students indicates that this knowledge enhances self-understanding to a limited but significant degree for those who want the information.

On the basis of the opinions expressed and the results of research, it seems advisable to explain test results to pupils. Caution should be exercised though. The test results should be explained by competent persons. They must be used along with other information the student has about himself. They also need to be made more useful to those who do not want to know them.

TALL TALES

As a culminating activity for a unit of literature involving myths or legends, share with students in the discussion of "tall" or exaggerated tales they must have heard such as *Davy Crockett, Pecos Bill, John Henry, Joe Magarac, or Paul Bunyan.* Provide long strips of 3" wide adding machine tape on which students may write original tall tales. Mount these on strips of black construction paper, add legs and feet, and display on a bulletin board. Add a unique "touch of personality" to each tall tale!

Children's Understanding of Parables

by Ruth Beechick*

Are parables suitable material to use in the teaching of your children? Are the analogies and interpretations in them appropriate for the instruction of children?

These questions have been discussed pro and con by Christian educators. To help supply some answers, a research study was conducted at Silver State Baptist School in Denver, Colorado.

Fifty children of ages 7 through 11 were interviewed concerning their understanding of three parables. The parables used were "The Two Houses," "The Potter," and "The Rich Farmer." The interviews were taped so the children's answers could be studied exactly as given. Analysis of the children's answers has provided an outline of three levels of understanding which children pass through as they mature in their understanding of parables. Each of the three levels will be discussed here separately, and they will be followed by recommendations for teaching.

Level 1

At this early level, children can repeat facts from the story in answers to questions. Or, if they think outside of the story, they are limited to concrete elements.

For instance, to the question "What does Jesus want us to learn from this story?" a child may answer, "To build your house on a rock." The kind of house these children refer to is usually the ordinary kind that people live in. From the story of the potter they may learn that "God can smash the nations," and their mental picture of smashing may be very like the potter smashing the clay. These children, at Level 1, will not "get the point" of why God called the rich man a fool. They grasp at events in the story and say he was a fool because he was rich, or because he was going to die, or because he tore down his barns.

Nevertheless, at this level there is something beyond a simple literal understanding. The mere fact that a child attempts a question and realizes that the story can "mean" something is a beginning of learning the interpretation of parables. At times there is a non-literal understanding that comes through "whole". That is, a child cannot explain the steps in his reasoning; he cannot analyze it part by part; but he achieves an insight, such as that he is like the story of the potter "cause someone made me—God made me." A child at this level cannot explain that God is like the potter, and he is the clay, but the insight occasionally flashes through to him in "whole" form.

Children in this study at age 7 showed a medium rating of Level 1 in their understanding of parables. By age 11 practically all children were beyond this level of understanding.

Level 2

At Level 2 a child can make an application of the story in a simple way. For instance, at this level the children understand that the parable of the houses teaches us to build our house on the Lord. And they realize that "house" stands for something besides a literal house. Some of their explanations are "your heart," "Heaven," "a lighthouse," "one that honors God," "me," "your faith," "our salvation."

These children understand from the story of the potter that God is strong and powerful, that He can destroy nations, that He can "smash" us and build us up into something better. They understand from the rich farmer that we should not be proud, greedy, or selfish; that we should not want to be rich, but be content with what we have.

The children's attempts to compare earthly riches with heavenly riches are like the interpretations of "house;" they fall short of a really satisfactory explanation, but they do reach out in some ways for spiritual explanation. The man is a fool "because thieves could break in and take all the riches. [He should] get rid of them or put them in a safe or something and wait for them

*Ruth Beechick is, after eighteen years of teaching at all levels, Children's Editor of Baptist Publications, Denver, Colorado

when he gets to Heaven."

Although these children at Level 2 can make many applications, they still cannot analyze their reasoning and explain how they arrive at the application they give. Many times they can name the underlying analogies, such as that God is like the potter and the clay is like the nations, but this ability of naming the analogies does not seem to be a prerequisite for giving an application. Rather, it appears that the abilities develop in the other order; children can give applications first, and can support them with logical reasoning later.

For example, one boy learned that we should "build our house on Jesus." When questioned about the kind of house, he said it was "a nice house and a good house." Later, "kind of like riches." As he was pressed to describe exactly what this was he realized he couldn't and finally said, "One thing I know, that God wants us to obey Him. But don't follow the foolish man's way because if you follow his way you go down to Hell." This boy felt sure of the application of the story but could not support it with logical reasoning.

Level 2 largely describes the thinking of children aged 8 to 10 in this study, as these ages showed a median rating of Level 2. But 7-year-olds, also, often reached this level, and 11-year-olds occasionally were still at this level.

Level 3

At Level 3 a child can do the abstract thinking required to make relations between the story situation and its application in the life situation. Children at this level can not only give the application of the story, but can support their answers by giving some of the reasoning behind them. They can translate "house" into "life," "rock" into "foundation," or "clay" into "person."

Some examples of children's understanding at this level are: "I think He wants us to learn that we should build our faith on a strong foundation." "They use a rock, but it means you're built on Jesus Christ and that you're saved." "Before I was saved I wasn't turning out good, [and then] He made me better." "He has complete rule over the world."

On the story of the rich farmer these children can "get the point" of why the man was called a fool. They can compare earthly riches with heavenly riches and learn "not to put all your faith in things on earth, and to put all your faith in salvation and to the Lord," or "that we shouldn't try to be rich on earth but we should be saved so we can be rich in Heaven."

By age 11 the overwhelming majority of ratings in this study were at Level 3. In all the other ages, from 10 down through 7, there also were occasional ratings at this highest level.

Recommendations for Teaching

Such a complex of skills and abilities is needed for interpretating parables that they cannot be learned all at once. A teacher who understands the sequence of levels will be better able to guide children through them on the way to a more mature understanding. The teaching should be aimed at the level the children are on.

Before Level 1 and at Level 1, a parable can be presented to children as a good story, simply for the sake of its story. At this level, children can learn something about house foundations and clay pots and other such concrete matters. This type of learning is a basic step necessary to any higher level of understanding. When beginning to teach the meaning of a parable, the teacher should start with a "whole" thought—a major point to be learned from the parable—and then should not analyze the details of reasoning behind it. For instance, in the story of the potter, the children can learn how the potter has absolute control over his clay and can do what he wants with it. Then the point can be made that God is like that; He can do what He wants with people. This point jumps in "whole" fashion from the story to its application. It does not dart back and forth between the two, saying that the potter is like God, the clay is like people, and God has power over people just as the potter has power over the clay.

As the children gain experience with interpreting parables they gradually will understand better the reasoning involved. And eventually they will reach Level 3—the level at which they can give an interpretation and can also explain how it is reached.

Each level is important to the ones that follow it. Christian educators who advocate waiting for a high level of understanding before presenting certain stories are really advocating that children work through the levels of understanding on secular literary material, and then when they reach a high level of understanding they can switch over to biblical material, as they are "ready" for it. The "level" concept does not imply such waiting. It implies, instead, that children need plenty of experience at their own levels so that growth may come.

Call for Manuscripts on...

THE EXCEPTIONAL LEARNER

An invitation to any Christian Teacher, Administrator, Parent

who wishes to write on any phase of dealing with the exceptional learner in Christian schools. Articles may be for or against the approach, but should include:

(1) why we must concern ourselves with the exceptional learner (both the advanced and the slow)
(2) practical methods for dealing with the exceptional learner

---

Suggested Topics:

We wish to publish a special issue devoted to this phase of Christian teaching. We seek manuscript on topics dealing with administrative procedures, teaching methods, parental expectations, student participation, referral services for learners. Specifically, articles should focus on any of the following:

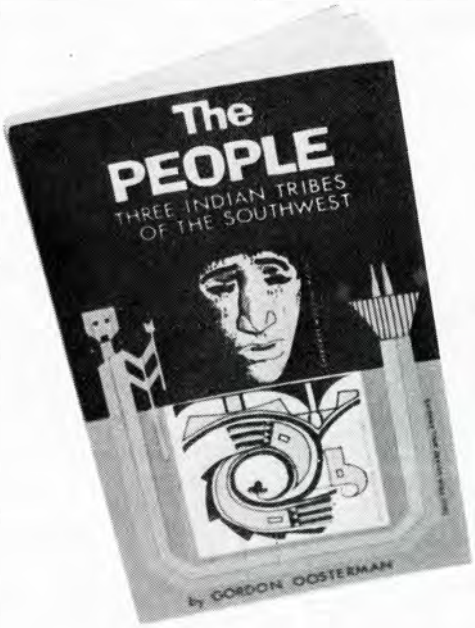
What parents can do
How the small school can cope with the exceptional child
Using non-school agencies (volunteer aides, tutors, professional specialists)
Specific approaches to the exceptional learner in kindergarten and primary grades
The exceptional learner and art (or music, sports, etc.)
School administrators and the problem child
Book reviews on the topic
Ability grouping: Cure or Curse?

Format Requirements:

Follow usual guides (typed, double-spaced, 1,000 words or less)
Submit to Manuscript Editor on or before January 1, 1975

BOOK REVIEW SECTION

THE PEOPLE:
Three Indian Tribes of the Southwest



by Gordon Oosterman. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. and National Union of Christian Schools, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1973. 117 pp. $2.45. *Reviewed by Marian J. Vander Ark, Assistant Professor of Education, Dordt College.*

Ms. or Mr. Elementary Teacher, if you are looking for materials for your fifth graders (give or take, depending on the reading ability of your students) that will supplement and complement your sketches of Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and Sequoyah, here is a book for them and you too. In a brief introductory chapter, "openers" for a unit discussion are suggested: our "notions" concerning Indians, contributions of the Indians, and, most important, a basis for respect and love for all men regardless of personal and cultural diversity. An outstanding feature of the book throughout is that it is a Christian Message to Christians.

There is a chapter each on the Cherokees, the Navajos, and the Zunis. Geographical, sociological, anthropological, political, and economic concepts are presented in a historical framework. Each chapter ends with sources for further reading. Eight maps and nearly thirty pictures are included. The maps are invaluable aids for clarifying location of tribes, their displacement, and their present reservations. The pictures portray something of their accomplishments, customs, dress, and appearance.

A resourceful teacher will recognize opportunity for amplifying coverage of topics according to student and/or teacher interest and expertise. Some possible study and research topics suggested by the content of the book are: the concept of legends; biographies of missionaries, military leaders, traders, scouts, and Indian leaders; terms of treaties; other Indian tribes; certain arts and crafts; and the history and/or present status of the Christian Reformed Church's mission to the Indians.

Accompanying the books is a very helpful *Teacher Guide* by Mr. Oosterman. It provides extra information on the tribes discussed in the book, suggests available appropriate resources, and gives teaching helps in the form of questions for discussion and for recall of information.

The teacher who is a devotee to the discovery method may find that in Chapter 1, especially, and occasionally in the other chapters, statements are made in the form of conclusions or value judgments when he would rather have the student conclude or discover for himself as he studies. In that case, chapter 1 could be used as a concluding chapter as well as or instead of an introductory chapter.

If you feel uneasy, as I do, with a realization that we have been condescending toward the Indian even while sharing the Gospel with him (perhaps this makes it more difficult to recognize and admit our condescending attitudes), then you wish to remove your own prejudices and develop in your students the quality of love and concern for all men. Books like this can help both you and your students develop genuine concern without condescension.

PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE, a Curriculum Department Publication. National Union of Christian Schools, Grand Rapids, 1973. 101 pp.

Reviewed by Norman De Jong, elementary principal of the Bellflower Christian Schools, Bellflower, Calif.

Principles to Practice is addressed primarily to teachers, but also to principals, parents, and board members. Its stated purpose is "to describe the direction of effort in the NUCS Curriculum Dept. and to ask some pertinent questions for guidance in the development of" the daily work of teachers (preface). It is a direct outgrowth of a Curriculum Policy Writing Conference held during the summer of 1972, but also the accumulation of years of philosophical thought and practical application. Its editors assert that it "will not provide you with pat answers," and "is only a blueprint" for action, not a complete product (p. 3).

"Each chapter treats a separate discipline (art, Bible, language arts, music, science, social studies) and is intended to show the contribution of each to the whole development of the Christian child" (preface). The organizational pattern leaves much to be desired and raises the following questions: Does the sequence of chapters suggest a logical pattern? a priority rating? or simply a haphazard arrangement? Continuous page numbers would also make the book more usable.

The basic, undergirding principles to be put into practice are clearly enunciated in the introduction, scaled down to a scant three pages. These same principles reappear in subsequent chapters, sometimes as mere repetition, sometimes with helpful elaboration, and sometimes with valuable refinement. Although the taxonomy of learning goals (intellectual, decisional, creative) outlined on pp. 1-2 has merit and represents a definite improvement over the current taxonomy of secular educators (cognitive, affective, and motor), the inherent tendency in even this taxonomy is to dissect the whole child and to relegate certain learnings to the head, others to the heart, and still others to the volition or will.

While legitimate emphasis is placed on these labeled "dimensions of learning," no awareness is shown for a taxonomy based on comparative values or axiological concerns, a taxonomy which would allow for a much more precise and comprehensive set of learning goals. The chapters on music and physical education are the most admirable examples of breakthrough, leaving behind the restrictions of the intellectual, decisional, creative taxonomy and giving full rein to the diversity of learnings that ought to characterize our learning centers.

The basic *purpose* and *definition* of Christian education as enunciated in the introduction (p. 1) are sound and worthy of acceptance if viewed as complementary statements, always understood in close conjunction rather than as separate, definitive statements used independently. If the definition of

Student–9 P.M.

Tunes in his favorite station till it's the best there is
then settles down to study for a long expected
quiz;
lays out six pencils in a row,
calls up a girl (left and down a row),
to check the assignment given this week
but really just to hear her speak,

learning (. . . a lifelong process of studying . . . ") were focused on exclusively, the object of attention and concern would be the external world around us rather than the person to be transformed as a result of such study. Crucial to the use of this book, then, is the continuous reminder that "the central *purpose* . . . is to accomplish the unique development of each child as a member of a Christian community" (p. 1).

Another potential danger of the book is the over-emphasis on *individuality* without sufficient counterweight given to the *commonality* of all believers. This may lead to a loss of our full awareness of corporate responsibility, the possibilities of sharing and communion, and the basic similarity of all men. This drift toward individualism is further accelerated by a heavy emphasis on creativity, which, while not evil in itself, does break down corporate character and encourages each child to do his own thing (see. e.g., pp. 2-3, p. A-3, pp. LA-7-8). This emphasis, thankfully, is partially counterweighed by occasional insistence on community and social interaction (see, e.g., pp. B-3-4, LA-3-4, and M-1-9). The balance is struck most pointedly and most beautifully in the following statement:

> Science education in the Christian school must promote the unique, God-given individuality of each learner in the classroom community. When they leave the science class students should be more diversified than when they entered, able to function as the hands or feet or eyes or head of the Christian community (p.S-12).

The unabashed reliance on explicit Scriptural directives in some areas of the text is certainly to be commended, while in other chapters its noticeable absence leaves something to be desired. To the extent that we wish to be truly Christian, to that extent we should be apt to search for the clear directives from God's Word.

Principles To Practice represents a noble and worthy attempt to deal with the time-honored tensions between the community and the individual, between theory and practice, and between unity and diversity, those seemingly contradictory themes which have so long characterized analytical thought. The net result is one of generally good balance and sometimes beautiful harmony.

A basic question raised by the content and tone of the book is this: Does this book reflect and/or accelerate a gradual breakdown of *discipline* (not to be construed narrowly in the sense of "punishment") within our Christian community? If so, is it a sociological phenomenon accompanying our definite trend toward increasing affluence and laxity? Are we less of a "community," a "body" of believers now than we were, say, ten or twenty years ago? Is this presumed loss of identifiable structure, corporate character, and disciplined cohesion in our school program a sign of weakness and decay, or the necessary ingredient for new vitality, expansion, and growth? Does this book really constitute a genuine effort to put our faith into practice, thus implying that our former lives were dead and not alive in Christ? By implication, but never by explicit statement, the book is more than a "blueprint for teachers;" it is also a serious indictment of our past, a stinging, but not ringing, condemnation of our Christian educational heritage. Whether that implication is justified deserves careful consideration, especially at this time when our Christian community seems highly distrustful of itself and ready to tear out the threads that hold it together.

Principles to Practice deserves frequent and careful use by all our principals, teachers, and school boards. Those who have not yet received copies should order them immediately and use them at faculty and educational committee meetings. Especially valuable for faculty growth and development are the "Discussion Questions" at the end of each chapter. It would be good to involve the whole faculty (not just separate departments) in a series of meetings designed to answer these questions and thus to formulate policy for each particular community. Because of the book's loose organization, there is no need to follow the chapters in sequence, even though each one deserves separate consideration.

discards a pen, erases mark,
puts out the light, writes name in dark,
turns light on after lighting match,
pulls on his hair to lengthen thatch,
checks wallet for pictures, for money (there's none),
opens book, reads notes, closes (wrong one),
hollers to mom for something to drink,
turns radio louder so he can think,
checks shoes to see if they still are muddy.
Clock strikes ten! Now it's too late to study.

Marie J. Post

by Arnold DeGraaff and Jean Olthuis, Editors. Toronto: Curriculum Development Centre, 1973. 619 pages. $14.50.

Reviewed by Gilbert Besselsen, Professor of Education, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Teacher of lower elementary grades: if you are interested in reorganizing your use of school time, and if you wish your Christian expression to be a normal occurence within the teaching and learning going on about you, *J I L* is for you.

This loose-leaf binder contains four units under an overview, GOD'S PLAN–MAN'S TASK (1) The Earth–Man's Home, (2) The Realm of Plants, (3) The Realm of Animals, and (4) Man: Working and Living Together. The planning of these units gives no separate attention to science studies, social studies, or Bible studies. Rather, these studies are integrated into a teaching plan that crosses them all. In each unit are Scriptures that apply, observations about what scientists do, activities that suggest ways of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, projects that include what is commonly called art, music and literature, and so on.

Use a few or all of these activities. Use them in sequence for an hour daily throughout the year or all four at once, as your methodological views dictate. But the units may serve you better if you prefer an informal style of managing learning. Although it is not expressly stated, the informal schools of England may be a pattern most supportive of these materials.

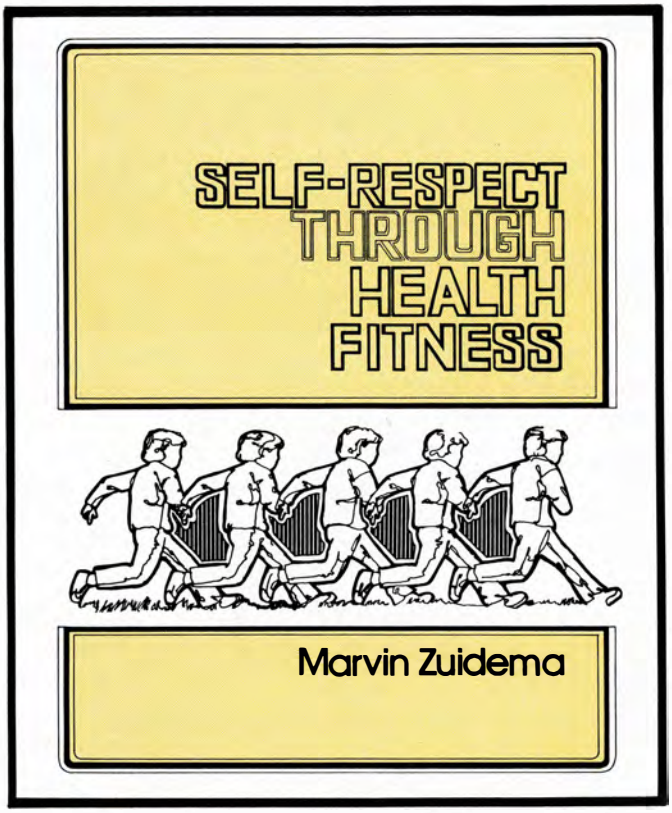
J I L does not do your work for you. It gives you cues, added resources! It may lead you to another perspective about teaching and learning! But planning–both short and long range–whether formal or informal classrooms–is still yours to do.

What I like best about *J I L* is the matter-of-fact presentation of Christian concepts and patterns of thinking. No one reading it or observing its intended use in the classroom will doubt the confessional stance. It is refreshing to discover resources that allow the studying and sharing of God's creation and revelation as a normal, integrated part of school activity. Perhaps if more of this kind of activity occurred in lower elementary grades, we teachers would hear less in later grades of "We've had that!"

The intent of the editors is as follows: integration of Christian expression into the whole of the school day. They describe this curriculum as "a conscious attempt to go beyond past efforts of the Christian community at curriculum building." They wanted to "describe the facts from a Biblical point of view" (page 1). To do this required the reorganization of the use of school time as an unlimited opportunity for Christian expression.

How well did they succeed? This is a first attempt. It will require revision and augmentation. So I am willing to live with the criteria for success stated by the editors. The Christian community will answer, the user through his additions and deletions submitted to the editors, and non-user through a lack of sales.

Buy it. At the least, it will be a reference for working out Christian values as you teach from secularized materials. (An index would be useful, but missing.) At best, it may help you to move toward a more integrated school day and a more integrated confessional stance.



by Marvin Zuidema. Grand Rapids, Michigan: National Union of Christian Schools, 1974. 135 pp.

Reviewed by Frank Calsbeek, Health Education Coordinator, Southwest Texas State University.

Elementary school children look to their classroom teacher for knowledgeable leadership in physical education as well as in other courses. However, the goals, purposes, and objectives of physical education leadership are often hazy at best.

Many elementary teachers are clamoring for help, which suggests their inadequate preparation. Many teachers, including those in Christian schools, feel threatened when asked to plan and give leadership in physical education. Teaching in the traditional classroom is challenging enough, let alone attempting to help active boys and girls learn through movement experiences. Shaping the physical education curriculum seems complex, futile, and beyond the reach of most elementary school teachers.

Now available to teachers, principals, and school boards is a valuable physical-education curriculum guide, *Self-Respect through Health Fitness*. Zuidema's work is unique in its emphasis on the creative (doing) dimension of health education.

A possible outcropping of this blend between health education and physical education may call for some re-thinking of physical education concepts currently in vogue. Perhaps those large-space areas now called gymnasiums must be re-defined as health centers. Maybe the high-calorie feasts occasionally served in our gyms (to an already overweight society) could be planned with concern for calorie-nutrient values. Items in the gym's concessions stands may also need closer screening for their contributions to good dental and nutritional health. Smoking, now tolerated in gym lobbies, could also become taboo if the prevailing theme of this curriculum guide is taken seriously.

The outstanding strength of this curriculum is the well-developed health fitness goals that have been identified for each grade level, K through 6. Activities that enhance each goal are clearly described in several illustrations and easy-to-comprehend written descriptions. Lower elementary materials seem the strongest. Sixth-grade program suggestions appear somewhat sketchy and lack the fresh, innovative ideas for the lower elementary levels.

The accompanying rationale, justifying the presence of physical education in the Christian school curriculum, is thought provoking. It should be of significant interest and value for dedicated Christian teachers.

Classroom teachers attempting physical education leadership may need *personal* self-respect development before attempting to teach in this area. Their potential for successful physical-education teaching can be enhanced, however, by the several cogent in-service workshop suggestions also included in this guide.

Twice-a-year personal fitness evaluation serves both student and teacher in assessing which fitness goals have been reached and which need further development. Individual improvement is the focus of this personal fitness evaluation, rather than the customary comparison with pre-established norms. Some good suggestions for fitness enrichment activities that students can do at home are also given.

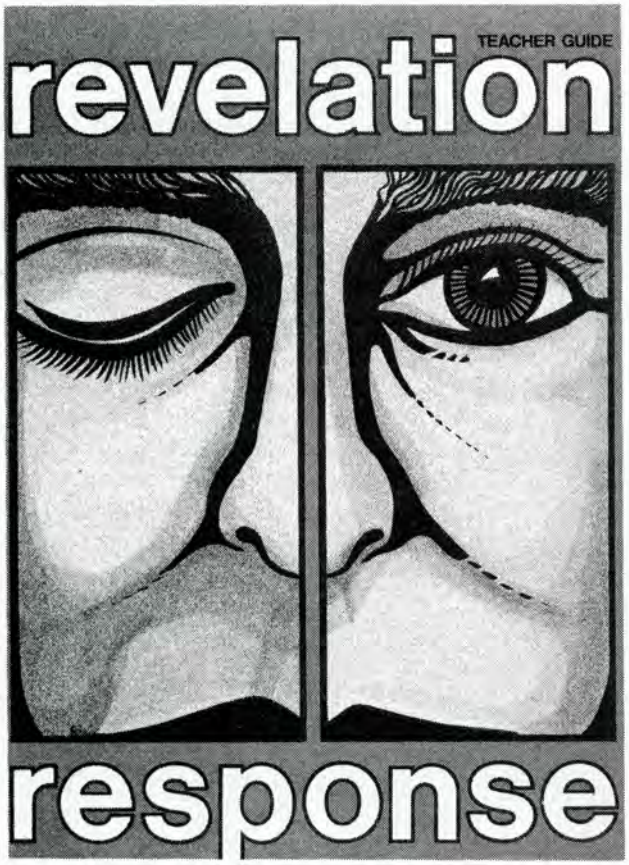
Student motivation is vital to success in a program such as this. Some attention has been given to the guide to student motivation. Seven student hand-outs are included and ditto masters are available upon request from the NUCS.

Additional attention will have to be directed towards strengthening this student-motivation dimension. Some students are easily motivated by the adequacy or inadequacy of their personal-fitness test results. Other students may be severely discouraged when they notice their poor performance. Counseling and helping techniques might well be the subject of another teachers' in-service

workshop.

Involvement and cooperation of parents, community leaders, and others will be essential for this guide's eventual success. These groups must understand the inherent value and scope of this proposed curriculum. Such preparation involves public relations at its best. Perhaps these groups could give impetus to the purchase of the few equipment items needed for implementing the program. Also, the community must be made to sense that this guide's proposed curriculum involves much more than a white, fan-shaped board, orange rim, and a leather-covered ball. Students will need concerned adult encouragement equal to that given a championship athletic team.

The dominate emphasis on the physical dimension of health fitness is praiseworthy. However, full-orbed teachers will also recognize the worthiness of the social, spiritual, and mental components of health fitness. These, too, must be developed. Nonetheless, I feel that its strong physical-health-fitness is deserving of dedicated effort. I urge all Christian teachers, principals, and school boards to seriously implement the distinctly Christian physical-education emphasis embodied in this curriculum guide.



Revelation-Response Series. Student Activity Book 7, 8, and 9. Teacher's Manual 7, 8, and 9, by Arnold Snoeyink and others. National Union of Christian Schools, Grand Rapids, 1973.

Reviewed by Simon Kistemaker, Professor of New Testament, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Miss.

In 1970 the *Revelation-Response Bible Series* was launched with textbooks for grades 4 through 6. Two years later material for grades 7 through 8 was published. And in the course of 1973 the trial edition for grade 9 came off the press. The Student Activity Book and the Teacher's Manual for each grade have been designed as valuable helps in studying the Bible.

The underlying assumption in this series is that students in grades 7 through 9 have gained a thorough knowledge of Biblical history. They have attended a Christian elementary school and most likely have been instructed all along in Sunday School. The material in these textbooks is therefore selective and topical. One excellent feature of the selected topics is that they coincide with the calendar of the church. When Christmas approaches, the teacher and students study the birth of Christ; in March and April they study the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

Appealing to the students of grades 7 and 8 is the art work in the Student Activity Books. In all three student volumes, the language is at the level of early teens. And the teachers for grades 7, 8, and 9 will appreciate the freedom allowed in working out the lessons, activities, and projects.

The student must work with his own Bible to

the extent that the Book becomes his *vade mecum.* In the ninth grade he learns how to interpret the Bible by using prescribed hermeneutical principles; he is trained to become a junior theologian.

I would like to make a few suggestions for improving the general content of the *Student Activity Book,* especially the one for grade 9. Topics such as Law, God—The Holy Spirit, Church, are presented in a somewhat elementary form. The question will not down: "Is this all a ninth grader is able to learn?" Comparing the level of instruction to other subjects offered in grade 9, one may conclude that this Bible course is not the most difficult in the curriculum.

For example, in the section on the Church, the teaching that the true Church of Jesus Christ consists of members chosen to eternal life is left out. Certainly something ought to be said about God's electing grace. Paul's observation in this respect is still very much to the point: "For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel" (Rom. 9:6). Moreover, though R. Brown's rephrased hymn of "Onward Christian Soldiers" is presented in the context of a community of God's people, it seems printed merely for its comical effect. However, the purpose of referring to this hymn should be to teach the meaning of the true church of Jesus Christ as it comes to expression in a multiplicity of denominations. It would be better to quote the next stanza of "Onward Christian Soldiers" to teach the doctrine of genuine membership in the universal Church:

> Elect from every nation,
> Yet one o'er all the earth.

Ninth graders do raise some penetrating questions concerning the essence, nature, and characteristics of the Church. These questions should be taken up in their workbook.

This series has been designed to elicit response from the student, because God's revelation demands an answer. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see what a self-analysis chart has to do with a response to God's revelation. Even an adult would not be interested in answering some of the questions of this chart. Take, for instance, the following question: "The thing I like most about myself is . . . " (page A-18). Deletion of the self-analysis chart, I feel, would enhance the appearance of *Student Activity Book 9.*

In all three volumes of the *Teacher's Manual,* the same list of "Books You Should Purchase" is presented. No care has been taken to bring the list up to date; the list has merely been duplicated. In fact, the manuals for grade 7 and grade 9 instruct the teacher to buy these books "in order to do the best job of teaching the eighth-grade [*sic*!]

The list could easily and profitably be expanded by including a few more books written by evangelical scholars. The works of R. K. Harrison, *Old Testament Times,* and M. C. Tenney, *New Testament Times,* should be mentioned. It is debatable whether books with questionable teachings on the doctrine of Scripture, such as those published by the Covenant Life Curriculum Press, ought to be recommended. There are books on this subject written from an evangelical point of view.

The trial edition of the Revelation-Response Series for grade 9 is a step in the right direction. I trust that when the final edition appears in print, teachers, students, and parents will receive it with satisfaction and appreciation.

A Case for INFORMAL EDUCATION in Christian Schools

by Peter P. DeBoer*

I would like to focus attention on a recent innovation—the informal classroom. I would like to advocate the informal classroom and attempt to provide a rationale for informal education.

Background and Clarification

I chose the terms "informal classroom" and "informal education" rather than "open classroom" quite deliberately. The term "open classroom" is often associated with the necessity for the removal of walls or with the need for unusually large open spaces. While not opposed to openness of space, I don't think open space necessarily has much to do with informal education. Actually, informal education has been taking place more frequently in self-contained classrooms. Some advocates are eager to point out that what is needed is not open space, but private space, where the students can work in learning centers either in small groups or all alone.

There are at least four excellencies, or norms, associated with the informal classroom. First, the room itself is to be divided into functional learning centers for reading, language, arts, mathematics, drama, art, woodworking, science, and the like. Second, the children are to be free much of the time to explore the room, individually or in groups, and to choose their own activities. Third, the environment is to be rich with learning resources, including many manipulative materials, as well as books and other media. Fourth, the teacher is to work most of the time with individual children or with small groups, though there are times when he will present the same material to the class as a whole.

Structure and the Informal Classroom

I think there is widespread misunderstanding about informal education, partly because it is often confused with the "free school." Though there are similarities between the two, a crucial difference is the degree of structure that one builds into the entire classroom program.

In a recent best-seller, John Holt recommended the following:

> The alternative—I can see no other way—is to have schools and classrooms in which each child in his own way can satisfy his curiousity, develop his abilities and talents, pursue his interests, and from the adults and older children around him get a glimpse of the great variety and richness of life. In short, the school should be a great smorgasboard of intellectual, artistic, creative and athletic activities, from which each child could take whatever he wanted, and as much as he wanted, or as little (*How Children Fail*, Dell, 1964, p. 180).

Holt is urging that the child be permitted to "take" from a variety of activities *whatever* he wants and *as much* as he pleases. When one puts the burden to learn much, or little, or nothing at all completely on the "back" of the child, he has what is best called a "free school."

Such is not the case with informal education. Note the accent on structure which emerges from the following remarks (from an Occasional Paper entitled "The Open Classroom: Informal Education in America," published by the Institute for the Development of Educational Activities):

*Peter P. DeBoer is Professor of Education at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

A child walks into the reading corner and the environment denotes that it is the reading corner. It is a place to pick up a book, to do some writing, or to think about things; it is not a place to wrestle on the carpet!

The physical arrangement of the informal classroom enhances the relaxed atmosphere. . . . Activities are in specified areas. . . . A hidden asset of this arrangement is that the teacher can see what subjects the children are slighting because of the empty chairs in a particular area. The challenge then is for the teacher to make learning in this area interesting and more attractive.

Even the child's seemingly spontaneous activity is not left to chance. Before his class enters the room, the teacher has manipulated the environment to provide a variety of interest areas geared to maximizing learning.

The teacher has a high degree of structure in his informal classroom. However, the structure is in the physical surroundings rather than a lesson plan and time schedule.

The intellectual activity level of a classroom depends to a large extent upon how the stage is set. This is the teacher's job.

When a student is able to achieve success in a topic of his own choosing but within a discipline of the instructor's choice, he encounters much less of the usual classroom conflicts.

It is the teacher's responsibility to be cognizant of each child's state of mental development and the implications which this has for his learning needs.

An entirely new role of friend and counselor emerges for the teacher.

The teacher is anything but a passive element in the informal classroom.

Beatrice and Ronald Gross (see "A Little Bit of Chaos" in *The Radical Papers,* Harper and Row, 1972, pp. 88-96) note that the freedom, autonomy and independence of the child—as well as his responsibility—are "epitomized" by a huge "activity chart" which they find in informal classrooms listing all the possible activities. Next to each of the listings is a hook on which the child hangs his name tag to indicate his choice. "A simple device," they comment, "but it says much about the respect for the child and the relationship between the child, the teacher, and the room."

Vito Perrone, Dean of the New School of Behavioral Studies in Education at the University of North Dakota (see *Open Education: Promise and Problems,* Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1972, pp. 18-19), describes the structure of a day of informal education in the following three steps: (1) During the first hour the children engaged in so-called "free activities," picking up where they left off the previous day or beginning a new activity. (2) The class then gathered for a planning session when everyone drew up a personal plan for the day. Perrone writes, the teacher generally used this occasion

> to call attention to new additions to the learning centers and new possibilities for using outside resources. She also takes this opportunity to organize a specific time to meet with particular groups of children . . . to work on a specific skill, for example, using reference materials, or using context in reading or number facts. These groupings come about as a result of her observations and discussions with children. They usually change week to week.

Perrone notes that at a minimum the children were expected to read, to write, and work in the math center. The children were aware of these teacher expectations and knew they must include them in their daily planning. (3) At the end of the day the children came together to evaluate and share what they had learned and found interesting.

Assumptions

What sorts of assumptions about Christian education could justify recommending the preceding excellencies and others associated with them?

Assumption I: The Child

Recently I received a letter of invitation to speak about innovation in Christian education. The author of the letter clearly indicated his belief that our children are "by nature depraved with all the behavior aberrations that implies." Contrast that to this statement by Beatrice and Ronald Gross: "Respect for and trust in the child are perhaps the most basic principles underlying the Open Classroom" ("A Little Bit of Chaos," p. 89) and one senses some conflict.

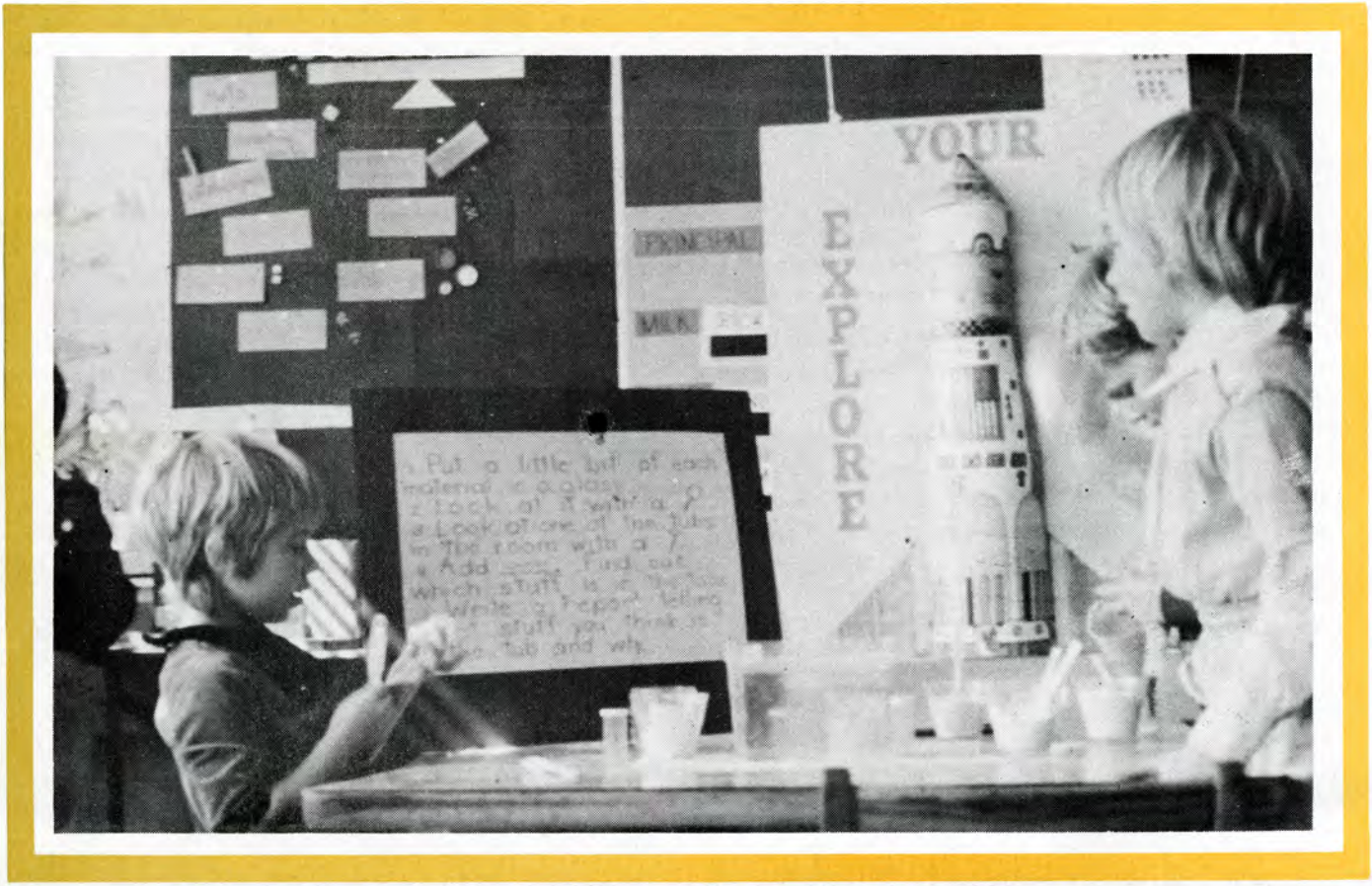
Perhaps we should ask: if informal education rests on a fundamental respect for and trust in the child, can we Reformed Christians practice informal education if we believe in total depravity? My answer is yes. To establish the point I refer to an article by Leonard Sweetman entitled "Models of Man: Their Classroom Consequences" (*Christian Educators Journal,* May, 1971).

Sweetman writes that all of us who teach operate with a "model of man" in mind. He contrasts two such models. The first was illustrated

by a letter from *The Banner* stating: " 'The ivory-towered critics should get their heads out of the clouds, plant their feet on the ground, and see the young image-bearer of God as a totally depraved individual in need of the regenerating work of the Spirit.' " The focus of that model, Sweetman contends, is total depravity. The other two factors, he adds, that man is the image of God and that man needs regeneration by the Spirit of God, are essentially subordinate to the central focus of depravity.

Sweetman contends that the emphasis of the second model clearly diverges from the first. Of the second he writes:

> Total depravity is present. That must enter into the model of man with which we operate if that model is to reflect adequately the thrust of the Bible and the content of one's experience. The fundamental characteristic of this model of man, however, is not total depravity. That characteristic is a subordinate clause. The focus . . . is 'our children are sanctified in Christ,' holy, new man. The most radical characteristic of the students in our Christian school is: they are holy in Christ. In Christ, they are new creatures.



To this first model Sweetman contrasts a second, a model of man to which we who are Reformed subscribed when our children were presented for baptism. Sweetman here refers to the first and third questions of the baptismal formula:

> First: Do you acknowledge that our children, *though* conceived and born in sin and therefore subject to all manner of misery, yea to condemnation itself, *are sanctified in Christ,* and *therefore, as members of His Church ought to be baptised* . . . ? Third: Do you promise and intend to instruct these children, as soon as they are able to understand, in the aforesaid doctrine, and cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power? (Emphasis added by Sweetman.)

Further, as Sweetman points out, this is no "ivory-towered" speculation; this model of man arises from St. Paul's letter to the "down-to-earth-concrete-real-situation" of the church at Corinth in which Paul "could have been tempted, easily, to make total depravity the radical characteristic of the members of the Corinthian community."

I think we should conclude that the Christian teacher, while affirming man's depravity, ought to look upon the child, at least on the basis of the promises of God granted to parents through the sacrament of baptism, as sanctified in Christ—as holy in Him. Confidence in the promises of God in

Christ ought now to become the basis for our Christian respect for and trust in the child.

Assumption II: The Child and the Nature of Education

Arnold DeGraaff (in *Contrasting Christian Approaches to Teaching Religion and Biblical Studies,* Calvin College Monograph, 1973) suggests that the nature of Christian education is nurture. That is, "a conscious and deliberate attempt on the part of the educator to lead the child . . . in a particular direction according to certain norms." By nurture he does *not* mean "forcing someone to submit to one's will," "emotional over-powering," "mental engineering," or "persuading someone by logical argumentation" (p. 37).

DeGraaff wants nurture to be deliberate, but cautions Christian educators never to think of a child as an *object* of our deliberate leading. To think of the child as anything other than a subject, says DeGraaff, would be a violation of his human nature (p. 38).

DeGraaff has deliberately created a problem which I wish to view in the context of informal education. The problem is this: can we maintain a fundamental respect for the child we seek to educate (see Assumption I above) while maintaining that the basic character of Christian education is nurture—that is, deliberate, conscious leading according to norms?

DeGraaff's answer is as follows: "Our forming can only direct itself lawfully to the various aspects of a person's existence, in order that he may be the better prepared for his life's calling" (p. 38). That is, one does not mold the child as if he were an object of some sort. Rather, one nurtures the child by directing attention to aspects of his existence, thereby showing respect for his "religious selfhood" (p. 38).

Cornelius Jaarsma has similarly contended that in our nurturing the child we must not say "we can structurate the child" as if he were "a docile object pliable to any mold to which we desire him to conform." Nor should we say "we can build structure *in the child.*" What we must do, according to Jaarsma, is build structure into the *life* of the child. Jaarsma recommended the structures of love, faith, and obedience. (See "Teaching according to the Ways of Child Life," *Fundamentals in Christian Education,* Eerdmans, 1953, pp. 315-316, 318).

I would argue that building structures of love, faith, and obedience into the life of the child, or directing our nurturing formation to the various aspects of a child's existence are useful concepts, but they could be implemented in any sort of classroom. To discover what I think are compelling reasons for establishing a classroom radically different from what we have, permit me to return to Sweetman's second model of man.

On the basis of his reading of I Corinthians 12, Sweetman discerns two aspects of the Christian's existence, or two structures, of which the Christian educator must take account. The one is that of "community," the other "individuality." Sweetman asserts that, something like the church at Corinth, the Christian classroom must be transformed into a community where each child is looked upon as an individual. He argues that, properly understood and rightly implemented, the second model of man transforms the classroom into a community which respects individuality. In this Christian community there is *recognition:* the teacher must know the unique ability of each pupil. In this Christian community there is *sharing:* the teacher must share his most radical characteristic—that he is new man in Christ. And there is *serving:* the teacher must help each uniquely functioning individual serve the classroom community and thereby the Lord.

I believe there is no better classroom environment than a community where individuality is encouraged and respected. If the nature of Christian education is nurture according to norms, if we must maintain a fundamental respect for the child as subject rather than object, then the informal classroom just described has, I believe, much greater potential for meeting such requirements than does the traditional classroom.

Assumption III: The Primary Task of Christian Education and The Needs of the Child

The Calvinistic Day School community has tended to settle without serious disagreement on statements regarding ultimate aims in education. Some of us have said that the aim of Christian education is to help the learner live the Christian life in contemporary society. Others, that the ultimate aim is to impress on the person being formed that his is a religious calling; that he has no other (ultimate) task in life than to love God above all and his neighbor as himself. This "religious vision" has been termed a call for "radical discipleship."

But statements about aim in Christian education which are somewhat less than ultimate meet somewhat less agreement. One of those who is fond of making rather careful distinctions between

the ultimate aim of education and the primary and more limited aim of the school is Arnold DeGraaff. The school, so he argues (in the work cited, p. 47), both because it is a divinely normed societal relationship and because of an historical process of differentiation, has come to take a limited place among other educational institutions that prepare the child for his religious calling.

The Primary Task

Whereas the church's primary task, DeGraaff writes, is "to help the young person to take up the full responsibilities of his church membership when he comes of age," and the parental primary task is to lead children so "they can take up their responsibilities independently when they reach adulthood," so the school's primary and limited task is "to form the child's analytical functioning in order that he may gain a deeper understanding of his many-sided religious calling in life" (p. 41). The nurture of the school is to be systematic and disciplined, aimed at helping the child "discern the regularities *(regula)* of God's creation" as the child experiences such creational revelation (p. 41). This truthful distinguishing—this Christian scientific analyzing, this ability to experience, and through experiencing learning to perceive and conceive—we must make the primary though limited task of the school, says DeGraaff, in order that the child "may deepen his understanding of his place and task before the face of the Lord and thus be prepared for radical discipleship" (p. 47).

Having limited the aim of the school, DeGraaff feels he can now do justice to the child's needs, that is, his developmental limitations and possibilities. Within the Christian perspective, DeGraaff notes, analytical discerning can never be an end in itself. According to DeGraaff,

> The only important question is whether or not *this* particular child learns to understand his place and task in life. *These* pupils, with these peculiar personality traits, these family backgrounds, in this developmental stage must deepen their understanding of their religious calling before God (p. 48). (Emphasis in the original).

At this point and without further elaboration, DeGraaff adds the following remarks relevant to a case for informal education: "The scope of the curriculum and the methodological approach should rightly be geared to these 'needs.' In this respect too we must dare to be radical. Doing justice to these different factors would lead to a very different type of Christian school than we have at present" (pp. 48-49). What DeGraaff had in mind, I can say with confidence, was informal education in the informal classroom.

Aims and Needs

I believe, with DeGraaff, that the chief purpose of classroom instruction in Calvinistic day schools is the "truthful discerning of the richness of God's creation." But whereas Sweetman's analysis of the Reformed Christian model of man, entailing community and individuality, readily leads to the implementation of informal education, I do not believe such an implication readily follows from DeGraaff's concept of primary task. The reason relates to the manner in which DeGraaff speaks of both *aim* in Christian education and *needs* of the child.

DeGraaff is correct in showing that while the church, the home, and the school all engage in nurture, they nurture the child or adult in different ways. So there is a "primary" task for each of these spheres. These so-called primary tasks have a way of being, at once, *limiting* factors when these spheres are considered in relation to one another. But just as I do not think that DeGraaff would want to limit the nurture of the church to helping a youth take up his full responsibilities of church membership when he comes of age (though that is its primary task), so I do not think DeGraaff ought to limit the aim of Christian Day School instruction to the primary task of nurturing the child's analytical functioning. What DeGraaff is doing, I believe, is confusing the use of *primary* with *limited,* by using the terms interchangeably.

I think the confusion relates to the difficulty which I think DeGraaff has in dealing with the needs of the child. In his paper he writes,

> If the school achieves its limited objective, it has achieved a great deal. Whatever else the child may gain by going to school, like respect, politeness, friendliness, co-operation, a sense of responsibility, the general development of his personality, a deepened faith, emotional maturity, and whatever else, these are the happy 'by products' as it were of good 'academic instruction' that is, of deepened insights in God's norms which he has taken to heart (pp. 47-48).

Notice that DeGraaff, having made the "primary" task of the school its only (i.e. limited) task, he can only call qualities such as "respect," "co-operation," "a sense of responsibility" and the like, "happy" or mere "by products."

The problem can be resolved. We should start by

admitting that the school *qua* school does have a limited role to play in the kingdom. As Henry Zylstra once put it, "Our schools must be schools" (see "Christian Education" in *Testament of Vision,* Eerdmans, 1958, pp. 90-101). But we play havoc with that notion if in pressing the claims of analytical functioning we limit the aim of the school to that one primary task. Schools as schools can have secondary aims and tertiary aims, provided they are consistent with the primary aim.

For example, I think the child needs to *learn* to be responsible. Now responsibility is something the church can nurture in so far, say, as it teaches its members to tithe. Parents nurture responsibility when they teach personal cleanliness. Schools, too, can nurture responsibility but they must do so in an "academic" or analytical setting. The avoidance of plagiarism is an obvious example. It should be *through* a focus on analytical functioning that the school meets a large number of developmental possibilities or needs.

Needs

What are these needs? Henry Beversluis argues (*Christian Philosophy of Education,* N.U.C.S., 1971) that it is through intellectual growth that the student achieves moral growth, and through both of these, creative growth. Jacques Maritain (*Education at the Crossroads,* Yale, 1943) desires an academic education to foster in each child a regard for truth and justice, a disposition to exist gladly, respect for a job well done, and a sense of cooperation. Leonard Sweetman stressed the unique functioning of each member of a classroom community which the student is called to serve.

Sweetman's notion of individuality within a community has been elaborated in a recent book (Mayers, Richards, and Webber, *Reshaping Evangelical Higher Education,* Zondervan, 1972) aimed at the college level. But what the authors say about the individual and the group is pertinent.

In a chapter entitled "The Functioning Individual," Richards notes the following marks of responsibility as being "particularly significant for an evangelical education": (1) self-motivation, or "that motivation for learning which flows from an awareness that a particular enterprise is 'important to me'"; (2) self-direction, which "involves extending to each student the right to direct his own learning within a subject, to the extent that his personal needs are being met and his personal goals achieved"; (3) self-evaluation, which "involves a student in evaluating his own achievement, both by objective criteria and by progress toward achievement of his personal learning goals"; (4) interdependence, which "recognizes that . . . teachers and learners alike bring important ideas, feelings, and understandings to any course which they need to share with each other."

But we need more than just functioning individuals, according to Richards; we need a "functioning classroom." Richards quotes with approval the remark of an academician that " 'We spend twenty years in education training students to compete as individuals, and then send them out into a world where success is usually based on their ability to cooperate with others in getting a job done!' "

Richards therefore argues that, just as the teacher or college professor ought to accept the authority to build a classroom structure which accents the freedom of the individual student to function responsibly, so the teacher must accept the authority to build a structure which facilitates cooperative learning, the development of group cohesiveness, and interdependent behaviors.

These individual and communal needs are no mere by-product, but integral, organic elements in a style of education primarily aimed at forming "the child's analytical functioning in order to prepare him for his many-sided religious calling in life." Understanding "aim" and "need" in this fashion, Christian administrators and teachers should accept the authority to build informal classrooms where a student is responsibly free to function analytically, for only in such an environment can the child's needs be met.

Assumption IV: The Process and Content of Informal Education

Gerald Bonekamp, a principal in one of the Calvinistic day schools, recently argued (*Christian Home and School,* July-August, 1973) that "the informal school is a contradiction in terms." In coming to that conclusion he noted, with approval, that the "formal school" is a place where one enters at nine, leaves at three, does math at ten, science at two, and when he does it, so does everyone else. Later he defined "informal" as "not to follow the customary, usual methods of procedure." I rather like that, for Mr. Bonekamp has a fine sense for central differences.

I recall that a few years ago, when I served as chairman of the Education Committee of the Grand Rapids Christian School Association and we were just getting a sub-committee called the Curriculum Council underway, a document was drawn up which listed, in *minutes per week* precisely how much attention was being given to language arts, mathematics, science, Bible, and the like, in the seven elementary schools of that system. There were some slight differences between the schools in this matter, and some of the difficulties we as a Council faced in proposing change in the curriculum related to this whole matter of time allotted to each subject. After all, the "pie" of school time can be divided into just so many "slices"; to enlarge one slice was to decrease some other slice of the curriculum pie.

Now if I read Mr. Bonekamp correctly, the situation above represents "formal education" from a content point of view. He seems to recommend such an approach to curriculum and to the structured use of time. I find it objectionable, particularly so at the elementary levels. Such a regulated, systematized, punctilious approach to, say, third-grade language arts (358 minutes), Bible (150 minutes), art (80 minutes) is only remotely related to the classroom implications of a Reformed Christian model of man!

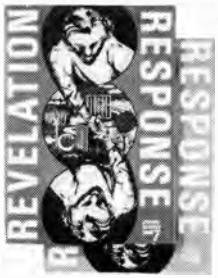
I am not rejecting the *study* of language arts, math, science, Bible, and the like, for as I pointed out earlier, the primary task of the school is the forming of the child's analytical functioning. What would he be analyzing but—for his stage of development—theoretical learning, disciplines, or creational reality. And I am certainly not pressing for the anarchy of a John Holt who would allow the child to study whatever he wanted, as much as he wanted, or as little!

But that math-at-ten, science-at-two, and-when-you-do-it-so-does-everyone syndrome has to be evaluated in relation to some pretty clear classroom implications of I Corinthians 12. Such a structured time-bound approach does not jibe with the accent I think we must place on the unique functioning of each child in the classroom community.

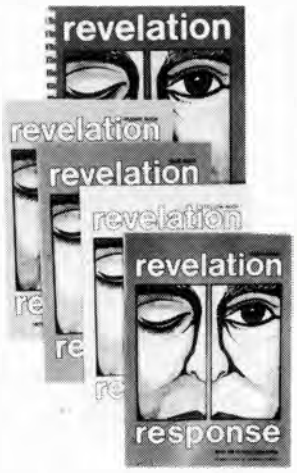
Nor does it jibe with some recent studies of how children learn. According to Piaget, the third-graders mentioned above could be in a pre-operational stage of development, or the stage of concrete operations, and some of them, in certain respects, in the stage of formal operations. Yet if Mr. Bonekamp had his way, the third-grade child would do his science at 2:00 p.m. as would all the others in that class, presumably with the same content, in the same manner, and all the members of the class would have their work judged by the same standards of achievement. I object!

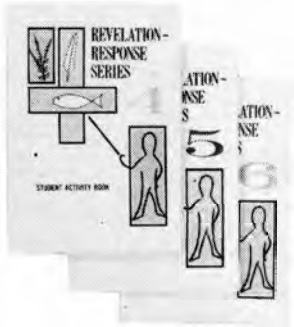
Instead, we do much better if we transform that classroom into a community, a workshop for learning:—a workshop carefully planned by the Christian teacher to reveal to the student his many-sided religious calling in life—a workshop where the child can learn how to learn, how to think, to speculate, to respond to beauty, to make choices—a workshop where he can nurture his analytical functioning in an atmosphere of responsible freedom—a workshop where he is free to do what he ought to do—a workshop where he can function independently and interdependently, privately and communally—a workshop where he can learn to love himself, and his neighbor in the same manner, because he has learned that he is, and all his classmates are (to use Sweetman's phrase), "God's custom-made work."

Revelation-Response K – 9



Finished Editions





FOCUS on God's Revelation in the Bible

GUIDING daily classroom actions

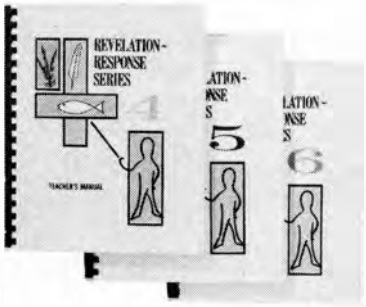
SENSITIZE students to respond in all of life!

WATCH for NUCS *Curriculum Newsletters* announcing:

DESIGNED as the core curriculum for Christ-centered learning.

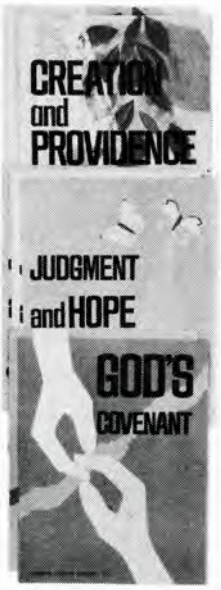
(1) *Revelation-Response Bible Teaching, Its Distinctive Approach,* a Professional Growth Module with cassette and transparency masters.

DEVELOPED by a community of over 100 Christian educators - writers, theologians, editors, artists, curriculum designers, and evaluating teachers - with typists and printers, etc...



(2) Five booklets: *Test Items for Revelation-Response (gr. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) A Resource Pool of Items Matched with Objectives.*

...and over 2500 Christian students over a period of five years.



TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

REJOICE WITH US!

NATIONAL UNION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
865 28th ST., S. E., GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. 49508

Christian Educators Journal Assn.
Arie F. Doornbos, Business Manager
4341 Kimball Ave., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508
Address correction requested

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
BULK RATE
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN
49507
PERMIT NO. 414

Notice To All Readers...

ALL INDIVIDUALS LISTED IN THE NATIONAL UNION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS' DIRECTORY FOR 74-75 ARE RECEIVING THIS ISSUE OF THE *JOURNAL* AS A COMPLIMENTARY COPY.

I. IF YOU BELONG TO THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS WHICH HAVE OFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE JOURNAL ASSOCIATION AND IF YOU HAVE PAID A SUBSCRIPTION THROUGH YOUR DUES, YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE THE REMAINING ISSUES THIS YEAR.

CALVIN COLLEGE FACULTY
CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS ASSOC.-MIDWEST
COVENANT COLLEGE FACULTY
DORDT COLLEGE FACULTY
EASTERN CHRISTIAN TEACHERS ASSOC.
NATIONAL UNION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS (STAFF)
PACIFIC NORTHWEST CHRISTIAN TEACHERS ASSOC.
S.W. MINNESOTA TEACHERS ASSOC.
TRINITY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE FACULTY

II. IF YOU BELONG TO A CHRISTIAN TEACHERS ORGANIZATION WHICH IS NOT PRESENTLY A MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION, AND IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE THE *JOURNAL* YOU MAY ELECT EITHER TO

1. Persuade your professional organization to join as a body at the rate of $3.00 per person per year, or your whole school faculty join at $3.50 per member; have the secretary forward the mailing addresses and subscription cost to the Business Manager listed in the masthead of this issue.

–OR–

2. Subscribe as an individual at a rate of $4.00 per year or $10.00 for three years by completing the form below and by sending it with your check made out to Christian Educators Journal Assoc.

MAIL TO: The Christian Educators Journal Assoc., Arie F. Doornbos
4341 Kimball Ave. S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508

☐ **I enclose $4.00 for 1974-75 year.**
☐ **I enclose $10.00 for next three years.**

Send Copies to:

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____